STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS
CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

# CIVIL ENGINEERING OF STUDY

# AT KLAIPEDA UNIVERSITY

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT


**Expert panel:**
**Panel chair: Dr Maria Kyne**
**Academic member: Prof. Dr Alfred Strauss**
**Academic member: Prof. Dr Silke Ursula Wieprecht**
**Student representative: Mr Vėjas Strelčiūnas**

**SKVC coordinator: Dr Ona Šakalienė**



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Report language: English

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# I. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The field of study evaluations in Lithuanian higher education institutions (HEIs) are based on the following:

- Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport;
- Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC);
- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The evaluation is intended to support HEIs in continuous enhancement of their study process and to inform the public about the quality of programmes within the field of study.

The object of the evaluation is all programmes within a specific field of study. A separate assessment is given for each study cycle.

The evaluation process consists of the following main steps: 1) Self-evaluation and production of a self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by an HEI; 2) A site visit by the review panel to the HEI; 3) The external evaluation report (EER) production by the review panel; 4) EER review by the HEI; 5) EER review by the Study Evaluation Committee; 6) Accreditation decision taken by SKVC; 7) Appeal procedure (if initiated by the HEI); 8) Follow-up activities, which include the production of a Progress Report on Recommendations Implementation by the HEI.

The main outcome of the evaluation process is the EER prepared by the review panel. The HEI is forwarded the draft EER for feedback on any factual mistakes. The draft report is then subject to approval by the external Study Evaluation Committee, operating under SKVC. Once approved, the EER serves as the basis for an accreditation decision. If an HEI disagrees with the outcome of the evaluation, it can file an appeal.On the basis of the approved EER, SKVC takes one of the following accreditation decisions:

- **Accreditation granted for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points), or good (3 points).
- **Accreditation granted for 3 years** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).
- **Not accredited** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

If the field of study and cycle were **previously accredited for 3 years**, the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle is initiated no earlier than after 2 years. After the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle, SKVC takes one of the following decisions regarding the accreditation of the field of study and cycle:

- To be accredited for the remaining term until the next evaluation of the field of study and cycle, but no longer than 4 years, if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).
- To not be accredited, if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points) or unsatisfactory (1 point).

## 1.2. REVIEW PANEL

The review panel was appointed in accordance with the Reviewer Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC.

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: Dr. Maria Kyne, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Technology at Technological University of the Shannon (Ireland);
2. Academic member: Prof. dr. Alfred Strauss, Head of Institute of Structural Engineering at BOKU university (Austria);
3. Academic member: Prof. dr. Silke Ursula Wieprecht, Professor at Department of Hydraulic Engineering and Water Resources Management Institute for Modelling Hydraulic and Environmental Systems at University of Stuttgart (Germany);
4. Student representative: Mr Vėjas Strelčiūnas, Fourth year student of the of the first-cycle bioengineering study program at Vilnius Gediminas technical university (Lithuania).

## 1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 28 February 2025 onsite.

Meetings with the following members of the staff and stakeholders took place during the site visit:

- Senior management and administrative staff of the faculty(ies);
- Team responsible for preparation of the SER;
- Teaching staff;
- Students;
- Alumni and social stakeholders including employers.

There was a need for translation during the meeting with some staff having good English and other staff with little English.

## 1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

### Overview of the HEI

The Klaipeda University (hereafter – KU) is a public higher education institution which was founded in 1990 and is the only multidisciplinary university in the western region of Lithuania and the coastal area, as per the Self-evaluation report (hereafter – SER). The university focuses on technical sciences and research studies in the Baltic region with a particular interest in marine education and research. KU cooperates with the Klaipeda Science and Technology Park and KU Business Incubator and has developed a Marine Research Institute and other relevant educational laboratories in recent years.

The university, along with five other European universities, created a European University for Smart Urban Coastal Sustainability (EU-CONEXUS). KU participates in many international projects, programmes and networks globally such as the INTERREG Baltic Sea Region Programme 2021 – 2027.

The university is overseen by the nine-member Council and the thirty-five-member Senate, all members elected for a five-year period. The activities of the university are managed by the Rector, Vice-Rectors, Chief Financial Officer and Rector Advisors.

KU has three faculties (Social Sciences and Humanities, Marine Technology and National Sciences, Health Sciences) and two institutes (Baltic Region History and Archaeology, Marine Research). There are sixteen departments, 9 research centres and more than 55 laboratories within these faculties and institutes.

The Faculty of Marine Technology and National Sciences has three departments (Engineering, Marine Engineering, Informatics and Statistics). The Department of Marine Engineering offers first and second cycle programmes including two programmes in the civil engineering study field (first cycle civil engineering and port facilities and second cycle port constructions). The civil engineering and port facilities programme was first offered in KU in 1959 and the Masters programme commenced in 2007.

The last external evaluation of both civil engineering study field programmes was performed by the Centre for Quality Assessment of Studies in 2021 and both programmes were accredited for 3 years until May 2025 with a recommendation to ensure the structure of the study programmes comply with legal requirements.

The civil engineering study field programmes form a crucial part of the study field as they are the only structural engineering-oriented programmes in the region.

### Documents and information used in the review

The following documents and/or information have been requested/provided by the HEI before or during the site visit:

- *Self-evaluation report and its annexes;*
- *Annual Study Programme Improvement Plans 2023-2025;*
- *Actual student numbers on the bachelor and master degrees;*
- *List of participants KU Civil Engineering.*

# II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

### First cycle/LTQF 6

| | |
|---|---|
| Title of the study programme | **Civil Engineering and Port Facilities** |
| State code | 6121EX067 |
| Type of study (college/university) | University |
| Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years) | Full-time (4 years) |
| Workload in ECTS | 240 |
| Award (degree and/or professional qualification) | Bachelor of Civil Engineering |
| Language of instruction | Lithuanian |
| Admission requirements | Presented in section 3 of the self evaluation |
| First registration date | 19-05-1997 |
| Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision) | |

### Second cycle/LTQF 7

| | |
|---|---|
| Title of the study programme | **Port constuctions** |
| State code | 6211EX070 |
| Type of study (college/university) | University |
| Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years) | Full-time (2 years) |
| Workload in ECTS | 120 |
| Award (degree and/or professional qualification) | Master of Civil Engineering |
| Language of instruction | Lithuanian |
| Admission requirements | Presented in section 3 of the self evaluation |
| First registration date | 12-10-2007 |
| Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision) | |

# III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **first cycle** of the *Civil engineering* field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

| No. | Evaluation Area | Evaluation points* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum | 3 |
| 2. | Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education | 4 |
| 3. | Student admission and support | 4 |
| 4. | Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment | 3 |
| 5. | Teaching staff | 3 |
| 6. | Learning facilities and resources | 3 |
| 7. | Quality assurance and public information | 3 |
| | **Total:** | 23 |

The **second cycle** of the *Civil engineering* field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

| No. | Evaluation Area | Evaluation points* |
|---|---|---|
| 1. | Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum | 3 |
| 2. | Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education | 4 |
| 3. | Student admission and support | 4 |
| 4. | Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment | 3 |
| 5. | Teaching staff | 3 |
| 6. | Learning facilities and resources | 3 |
| 7. | Quality assurance and public information | 3 |
| | **Total:** | 23 |

*

**1 (unsatisfactory)** - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are substantial shortcomings that hinder the implementation of the programmes in the field.
**2 (satisfactory)** - the area meets the minimum requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings that need to be eliminated.
**3 (good)** - the area is being developed systematically, without any substantial shortcomings.
**4 (very good)** - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings.
**5 (exceptional)** - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.
2*

# IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

## AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.1. | Programmes are aligned with the country's economic and societal needs and the strategy of the HEI |

### FACTUAL SITUATION

#### *1.1.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the needs of the society and/or the labour market*

The aims of the study programmes at Klaipeda University reflect the specialist nature of the civil engineering programmes offered at the university. With the rapid growth of the engineering and construction industry in Lithuania, the continuing investment in the development of the Port of Klaipeda and the ambitious plans for offshore construction, the need for graduates from the first and second cycle civil engineering study field programmes is likely to increase. The focus on sustainable engineering and construction, through the university's participation in the European University (EU-CONEXUS), will ensure that graduates of these programmes will have opportunities to work in Klaipeda, Lithuania or abroad. Surveys by industry have indicated a severe shortage of engineers with the marine engineering specialism. The number of graduates from these programmes are low and unable to meet the local and national needs.

The Bachelors degree programme in Civil Engineering and Port Facilites aims to develop specialists capable of analysing, designing and managing construction works using the latest technologies and best practice. The Masters programme in Port Constructions endeavours to create specialists who can assess problems with research and make optimal design and construction decisions. Both programmes are unique in Lithuania and produce graduates particilarly relevant to the Klaipeda region. However, these civil engineering programmes also include modules on smart home construction, advanced construction techniques and general/soft skills to ensure graduates are able to successfully certify and practice their professional activities. The content of modules are continuously updated to include modern trends.

#### *1.1.2. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the HEI's mission, goals, and strategy*

The university in its mission and vision highlights its activities as supporting development in the Baltic Sea Region and the Blue Economy. In recent years the KU *Development Strategy* and the KU *Operational Plan* has focused on the sustainability within programme offerings. To support this initiative, KU has participated in international rankings which examine the UN SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals). The aims of both civil engineering study field programmes support KU in regional development.

The KU civil engineering study field programmes have a strong focus on sustainable design, construction and research. This is compatible with the strategy documents '*Lithuania 2030'*, '*Klaipeda 2030'* and Klaipeda Port's vision to 2040. The KU 2023-2024 *Action Plan* has committed to increasing the number of domestic and international students and mobility of staff and students. The EU-CONEXUS project will enable this vision to be implemented. Students on these programmes are taught by scientists and practitioners with expertise in the subject matter and this is reflected in the titles of the final theses at Masters level.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.

The expert panel conclude that the needs of society for graduates in the civil engineering study field of civil engineering and port facilities, at first cycle, and port constructions, at second cycle, are well reflected in the programmes and based on engagement and interactions with relevant social partners and stakeholders. The SER and site visit confirmed that there is a strong need for additional graduates from these programmes. The majority of second cycle students are working full-time as well as attending the full-time port constructions programme.

These programmes are offered only in the Lithuanian language which reduces their ability to attract international students. Port facilities and port construction is a global civil engineering concern so offering the programmes in English may attract more students. As KU is a member of the European university EU-CONEXUS, the programme staff have already created Blended Integrated Programmes (short one-week programmes) which are offered to their European university partners.

The expert panel analysis of the SER and related documents show that the civil engineering and port facilities and port construction programme outcomes are defined to comply with the mission, aims, goals and strategy of KU.

| | |
|---|---|
| 1.2. | Programmes comply with legal requirements, while curriculum design, curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment methods enable students to achieve study aims and learning outcomes |

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### *1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements*

The objectives of the programmes and the learning outcomes have been identified in accordance with the national legislation, including the Orders of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania - *Description of the Engineering Fields of Study Group (No. V_948 of 5 July 2023)*. Both the Bachelor and Masters degree programmes are included in the engineering field of study Civil Engineering (E05).

Table 1.1 and Annex 1 of the SER presents compliance between the civil engineering and port facilities programme and the general requirements for study at bachelor's degree level in the legal Acts in terms of ECTS (credit) limits. The bachelor's degree programme comprises 240 ECTS credits. The general subjects should be at least 15 credits with 21 credits allocated in the programme. The study field subjects should be at least 120 credits with 189 credits allocated in the programme. Practice credits should be 15 credits and this is equal to the credits allocated in the programme and the final thesis should be at least 15 credits and this is also equal to the allocation in the programme. The number of subjects per semester is not more than 7. The contact hours and individual independent learning exceed the minimum values set out in the legal documentation. Completion of the Civil Engineering and Port Facilities programme allows the students to apply for a second cycle of studies in the field of technological sciences.

Table 1.2 of the SER presents compliance between the port constructions programme and the general requirements for study at master's degree level in the legal acts in terms of ECTS limits. The master's degree programme comprises 120 ECTS credits. The study field subjects should be at least 60 credits and this is equal to the credits allocated in the programme. Optional subjects, chosen by the students, should be at least 30 credits and this is equal to the credits allocated in the programme. The final thesis should be at least 30 credits and this equate to the credit allocation in the programme. A maximum of 5 modules per semester is offered. The contact hours and individual independent learning exceed the minimum values set out in the legal documentation.

### *1.2.2. Programme aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods are aligned*

The study programmes contain specialist knowledge and skills in engineering design, analysis, construction and research methods. Table 1.3 of the SER outlines the study outcomes for both

programmes. The logical progression of subject development across the semesters shows an ordered progression from basic knowledge to more complicated topics. The graduate level modules are based on extending the undergraduate studies. The spectrum of necessary knowledge seems to be covered in the first level studies but is unclear for the second level studies. The SER does not show the link between the study outcomes, subject learning outcomes, methods of subject delivery and subject assessments. These groups are intrinsically connected and the rationale should be presented to facilitate the evaluation of the quality of the educational context.

#### *1.2.3. Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences*

The study subjects in the bachelor's programme are arranged from general knowledge in year 1 through specific knowledge in year 2 and on to detailed design and construction practices in years 3 and 4. All eight semesters have a range of design, practical and construction knowledge taught to students.

For the port constructions master's programme, the initial subjects are devoted to specialist knowledge followed by parallel research on the chosen topic with the production of a thesis at the end of the fourth semester. Design, construction and research skills feature in the programme. Logical arrangement of the studies with increasing competence are evident from the programmes which ensure consistent development of competencies.

#### *1.2.4. Opportunities for students to personalise curriculum according to their personal learning goals and intended learning outcomes are ensured*

Students can personalise their study programme by selecting subjects from the list of subjects offered in the programme, Erasmus + travel to another higher education institutions and the EU-CONEXUS minor and micro catalogues. A list of compulsory, alternative and free-choice subjects are provided to students to allow them to personalise their learning. For the civil engineering and port facilities programme, students can take optional subjects in semesters 1 to 5 whereas for the port constructions programme the optional subjects can be taken in semesters 2 and 3.

Tables 1.4 and 1.5 of the SER summarise the opportunities of personalising the studies claiming 35% of the bachelor's degree and up to 50% of the master's degree. Much of the personalisation of subjects comprises course projects and pre-defined elective subjects which in reality limits the optional subjects available to students.

Participation in exchange programmes will be difficult to support with the options offered.

#### *1.2.5. Final theses (applied projects) comply with the requirements for the field and cycle*

The requirements for the preparation, composition and defence of final theses are laid down in the *General Requirements for Independent Written Works of KU Students by Senate Resolution No 11 _35 of 6 February 2020*. Students are supported in theses preparation in regular meetings with staff. Detailed procedures of thesis assessment are provided to students. Student progress is recorded and the final outcomes of the last few years have been very good. Scores for Masters students are excellent. Some of the theses are completed in conjunction with placement in companies. Thesis topics are related to the specialist area for both programmes and social partners contribute to the thesis topic selection.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The expert panel agrees that the overall structure of the civil engineering and port facilities first cycle and the port constructions second cycle programmes do formally comply with the legal requirements of university education. This has been clearly demonstrated in the SER documents and the expert panel discussions with the programme teams.

The civil engineering field study programmes contain specialist knowledge in engineering design, analysis, construction and research methods with a strong emphasis on sustainability to be consistent with the EU-CONEXUS focus. Logical arrangement of the programmes subjects with increasing competence are evident which ensures consistent development of competencies.

Students select the electives on as consensus basis, but in reality, only a limited number of electives can be chosen because of the small number of students on the programmes. Students can also select subjects from the EU-CONEXUS minor and micro catalogues.

The expert panel recognises that the procedures and regulations for selecting, preparing and defending the final theses is adequate and compliant with cycle requirements. Students can select their theses topics based on their work experience. Thesis topics for the second cycle programme are directly relevant to the port construction area but the bachelor theses are less clearly linked to the port facilities area.

## AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

| AREA 1 | Unsatisfactory - 1<br>Does not meet the requirements | Satisfactory - 2<br>Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated | Good - 3<br>Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated | Very good - 4<br>Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings | Exceptional - 5<br>Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First cycle | | | X | | |
| Second cycle | | | X | | |

### COMMENDATIONS

1. The programmes cater for the engineering labour market of the coastal region of Klaipeda in Lithuania by providing unique first and second cycle programmes with the aims, goals and content aligned to the civil engineering study field but specialising in the marine engineering specialism.

2. The overall structure of the programme complies with the legal requirements of the first and second cycle university education and are aligned to the university's strategic objectives and the European university's (EU-CONEXUS) objectives. There is a strong focus in the programmes on sustainability which supports the development of the Baltic Sea Region and the blue economy.

3. There is design, practical and construction subjects throughout the programmes as well as sufficient civil engineering content to allow students to consistently develop competencies and graduates to be professionally certified.

4. There is evidence of cooperation with social partners on the relevance of programme competencies and on the selection of the topics of theses.

5. Topics of final theses at second cycle are chosen by each student. The content of the second cycle final theses, as well as the defence procedures, are compliant with field and cycle requirements.

6. The outcomes of the previous expert panel evaluation have been considered and appropriate adjustments to the programmes have been implemented.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Further consideration to be given to increasing the number of students attending both programmes to ensure that the demand for graduates in the marine engineering specialism is met. Engagement with the social partners to encourage prospective students to envision careers, rather than study programmes, may be helpful.

2. Consider opening the possibility of international students joining the programmes by offering both programmes in English.

3. The topics of the final theses for the first cycle studies are not clearly related to the marine engineering specialism.

For further improvement

1. Continue to grow international connections with the support of the European university EU-CONEXUS.

2. The opportunities for students to study foreign languages could be considered.

## AREA 2: LINKS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC (OR ARTISTIC) RESEARCH AND HIGHER EDUCATION

| | |
|---|---|
| 2.1. | Higher education integrates the latest developments in scientific (or artistic) research and technology and enables students to develop skills for scientific (or artistic) research |

### FACTUAL SITUATION

The reports and visits provided clear insights into the well-structured operations of the university, including academic programmes, good faculty qualifications, student demographics, and balanced resource allocation. The site visit also showed good infrastructure, classroom environments, and very good interactions between students and staff.

#### 2.1.1. Research within the field of study is at a sufficient level

R&D activities are highly recognised both locally and nationally. The responsible parties have already identified and injected measures to ensure the publication in internationally renowned journals, participation in relevant conferences, promotion of international mobility of researchers, and attraction of foreign experts.

Collaboration with economic actors exists, but clearer agreements are necessary. Strong connections between science, industry, and society require broader international engagement.

The KU technology unit has solid infrastructure plans, including a new laboratory building and specialised facilities for marine and energy research, which may need upgrades.

### 2.1.2. Curriculum is linked to the latest developments in science, art, and technology

The university collaborates with open-access infrastructure and research networks such as EU-CONEXUS. While the personnel resources are adequate, attention must be paid to young researchers and the gender ratio. Recruiting new researchers remains a challenge. The KU technology unit has solid infrastructure plans, including a new laboratory building, and is developing advanced building materials as well as methods for assessing the technical condition of port structures. Faculty members in civil engineering programmes gather scientific and practical experiences, which they pass on to students.

A new research direction was initiated, which aligns with the priority area *Resource-efficient technologies based on the principles of the circular economy*. Researchers are developing advanced materials and engineering solutions to ensure the sustainability, functionality, safety, and circularity of technical objects. Civil engineering programmes correlate with the latest design and construction technologies as well as the introduction of digital technologies. Marine research focuses on clean transport technologies.

### 2.1.3. Opportunities for students to engage in research are consistent with the cycle

Students primarily engage in research activities through course assignments, term papers, and theses. Additional opportunities include submitting proposals and participating in projects. Students learn methods and use equipment for scientific experiments, conduct experiments for theses or scientific publications, and prepare parts of scientific project reports. They are informed about scientific events via email, websites, and social networks.

Research experiences are shared with both bachelor and master students. Master students attend research seminars and dissertation defences, and second-cycle theses are developed according to civil engineering research topics.

**ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)**

Research within the field of study is conducted at a sufficient level, ensuring that the curriculum is closely linked to the latest developments in science, art, and technology. Opportunities for students to engage in research are consistent with the academic cycle, providing them with access to various scientific fields and integrating them well into ongoing research activities. The alignment within the Erasmus programmes with strategic orientations and partners, as well as the acquisition of ECTS credits through exchange programmes, needs to be carefully managed to ensure coherence and effectiveness. Clear and conscious communication to students about their integration into research and the opportunities available to them remains an important issue that needs continuous attention.

## AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

| AREA 2 | Unsatisfactory - 1<br>Does not meet the requirements | Satisfactory - 2<br>Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated | Good - 3<br>Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated | Very good - 4<br>Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings | Exceptional - 5<br>Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **First cycle** | | | X | | |
| **Second cycle** | | | X | | |

**COMMENDATIONS**

1. Areas in which the university demonstrates best practice include research and development (R&D) with industry.

2. Students are actively involved in research projects, which enhances their practical experience and understanding of scientific methods.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To address shortcomings

None.

### For further improvement

1. Students should be proactively informed about scientific work at the beginning of the curriculum.

2. Continue to grow their international collaborations by using EU-CONEXUS.

# AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

| 3.1. | Student selection and admission is in line with the learning outcomes |
|---|---|

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 3.1.1. Student selection and admission criteria and procedures are adequate and transparent

Student admission to the first-cycle civil engineering and port facilities and the second-cycle port constructions study programmes at Klaipėda University follows the national and institutional regulations. Admission is primarily based on a competitive selection process, considering prior academic achievements and entrance requirements.

For the first-cycle programme, applicants must have completed secondary education and demonstrate competency in mathematics and sciences. The second-cycle programme requires a relevant bachelor's degree in engineering or a related field. Candidates from other fields may be required to complete additional prerequisite coursework.

The admission process is transparent, with detailed guidelines provided on the university's website and through consultation services. International applicants must follow additional procedures for diploma recognition ensuring compliance with the national education system.

### 3.1.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications, periods of study, and prior learning (established provisions and procedures)

Klaipėda University has established a structured process for recognising foreign qualifications, ensuring smooth integration for international and transfer students. The recognition process is carried out by the university's academic affairs office in line with national and institutional regulations.

Students transferring from other institutions can apply for credit recognition under the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). Prior learning and professional experience are also considered for credit transfer in specific cases, with a structured evaluation process in place.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

During the evaluation visit, students expressed overall satisfaction with the admission process, highlighting its clarity and fairness. The programme's structure is particularly accommodating for working professionals, with many master's classes scheduled in the evening.

Furthermore, students appreciate the practical aspects of the curriculum, especially its strong focus on port construction, which aligns with the region's economic needs. Many master's students also select their thesis topics in collaboration with their employers, enhancing the relevance of their research and strengthening industry connections.

| | |
|---|---|
| 3.2. | There is an effective student support system enabling students to maximise their learning progress |

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

KU actively supports student academic mobility through participation in the ERASMUS+ programme, bilateral agreements, and international research collaborations. Students have the opportunity to study abroad at partner universities, from EU-CONEXUS alliance, or undertake internships in international organisations.

While international mobility options exist, student participation remains limited due to work commitments and the structure of the study programmes. The university promotes short-term exchange programmes and virtual mobility options to address these challenges.

### 3.2.2. Academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support provided to students is relevant, adequate, and effective

KU offers a range of student support services, including academic advising, career counselling, financial aid and psychological support. Scholarships and financial assistance programmes are available for students facing economic difficulties.

Social and psychological support services ensure student well-being, and various mentorship programmes help students integrate into university life. The student community benefits from organised events, networking opportunities, and university-wide support initiatives.

### 3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

KU provides academic and administrative information through multiple channels, including the official website, student portals, and orientation sessions. Career guidance services help students make informed decisions about their academic and professional paths.

International students receive specialised counselling on residence procedures, cultural adaptation, and integration into the academic environment. Regular career events and informational sessions further support student decision-making.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

KU provides comprehensive student support services, including academic advising, financial aid, career counselling, and psychological support. Students highlighted a close and friendly relationship with the administration, contributing to a positive academic environment. They also reported feeling well-informed about study-related matters, indicating that the university's communication channels are effective.

Students praised the industry related aspects of the curriculum, with courses such as Building Information Modeling (BIM) being among their favorites. Additionally, the programme's strong ties with employers allow for practical and career-focused learning, particularly at the master's level. This integration of industry needs within the curriculum ensures that graduates are well-prepared for the job market.

## AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

| AREA 3 | Unsatisfactory - 1<br>Does not meet the requirements | Satisfactory - 2<br>Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated | Good - 3<br>Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated | Very good - 4<br>Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings | Exceptional - 5<br>Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First cycle | | | X | | |
| Second cycle | | | X | | |

### COMMENDATIONS

1. KU provides clear, fair and transparent admissions processes and recognition of foreign qualifications.

2. The structure of the programmes accommodates working students with master's classes scheduled in the evenings.

3. The strong focus on port construction in the curriculum aligns well with the region's needs.

4. Students often select their thesis topic in collaboration with their employers which enhances their relevance to industry.

5. KU provides comprehensive student support services with effective communication channels.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

None.

For further improvement

1. Further encourage students to participate in international mobility.

2. Continue to support the industry related aspects of the curriculum which ensures graduates are well prepared for the job market.

# AREA 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT ASSESSMENT, AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

| 4.1. | Students are prepared for independent professional activity |
|---|---|

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 4.1.1. Teaching and learning address the needs of students and enable them to achieve intended learning outcomes

The civil engineering and port facilities study programme offers diverse teaching and assessment methods, including lectures, teamwork, individual projects, lab work, case studies, and presentations. Assessment follows a ten-point scale and a cumulative scheme. Independent learning skills are fostered through assignments, projects, and theses, while teamwork is developed via group work and seminars. Students can choose presentation and project topics relevant to their programmes. Programme descriptions outline assessment criteria, deadlines, and grading, all accessible via the Academic Information System (AIS). Graduates earning a Bachelor of Engineering Science can pursue a masters degree, particularly in port constructions. The programme prepares students for careers in Lithuanian and international construction companies, equipping them with the skills for management and engineering roles focused on sustainability and efficiency.

### 4.1.2. Access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs is ensured.

Klaipėda University promotes an inclusive and accessible academic environment for individuals of diverse backgrounds, including those with special needs. The *KU Code of Academic Ethics* ensures that students with disabilities receive appropriate accommodations during assessments. Remote tutorials, virtual learning materials, and accessible campus facilities support students with mobility and visual impairments. New university buildings feature lifts, adapted toilets, and surveillance cameras for safety.

The university library provides specialised software, such as Dolphin EasyConverter for text-to-audio conversion, SuperNova Magnifier for screen enlargement, and JAWS 14.0 for screen reading. Additionally, specialised hardware like Braille printers, video magnifiers, and adaptive keyboards assist visually impaired students.

A project funded by the European Social Fund has further enhanced accessibility, equipping the university with advanced assistive technologies. In older buildings, wheelchairs are available for ground floor access. These measures reflect KU's commitment to ensuring equal study opportunities for all students, regardless of their needs.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The bachelor degree programme in civil engineering and port facilities is very much focused on the general field of civil engineering. Specialisation in port construction, a unique selling point of the KU, only appears in the masters programme. Student numbers are very low and could certainly be increased by opening up the programme to international students.

Port construction is a subject area that is in great demand internationally. A partial internationalisation of the programme would both broaden the horizons in the education of its own students and increase its attractiveness for foreign students. The master degree programme in port constructions has a particularly unique characteristic and deserves to be better advertised.

It is noticeable that some of the final theses are very application-orientated at the level of project work. Particularly in the master programme, the focus could be placed even more on students demonstrating their ability to work independently and in a research-oriented manner. An even better integration of fundamental research would be highly desirable.

The KU is a partner university in the European CONEXUS alliance. The potential of this network should be better utilised. The active involvement of the KU with the other partner universities in the field of port construction is not visible.

All the measures and facilities mentioned in the SER with regard to socially vulnerable groups refer only to physically disabled people. Groups of people with other sensitivities, such as different cultural origins, nationality or religion, caring responsibilities, specific ways of life, first-generation students, gender or mental health impairments, are not considered in this context.

There is also no professional contact point or person of trust, for e.g. discrimination, sexualised violence, religion, abuse of power, etc. These are all dealt with by an internal contact person. This person is neither independent nor professionally trained. However, the professional handling and establishment of appropriate contact and support points should be a university-wide task and cannot be covered by one faculty or even one study programme alone.

| | |
|---|---|
| 4.2. | There is an effective and transparent system for student assessment, progress monitoring, and assuring academic integrity |

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 4.2.1. Monitoring of learning progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and learning progress planning is systematic

Klaipėda University closely monitors student progress at the subject, course, and programme levels. At the subject level, lecturers assess students using cumulative evaluations and provide feedback to improve study methods. The Moodle learning environment facilitates progress tracking and individual feedback. Small student groups allow for personalized assignments, particularly for postgraduate students.

At the course level, academic staff monitor student performance trends and discuss results with administrators. Students who fail exams receive personalised support, including advice on examination resits. At the programme level, departments evaluate internship feedback, thesis defense outcomes, and dropout rates. Discussions help refine thesis preparation and study plans.

Between 2021-2024, bachelor students maintained stable exam results, though some were affected by the COVID-19 transition. Dropouts often result from personal, financial, or academic difficulties, with increasing cases of students struggling with engineering studies. Faculty and administration actively support at-risk students through counseling, flexible study plans, and financial aid options.

Overall, 80% of full-time bachelor and master students complete their degrees, though part-time students have a lower success rate. Measures such as periodic thesis evaluations, faculty guidance, and study supports contribute to high academic performance and successful thesis defenses.

KU ensures anonymity in student surveys, analysing feedback for quality improvements, curriculum adjustments, and faculty development. Feedback is provided formally and informally, including peer assessments and Moodle-based comments. Study programme committees review feedback annually, implementing changes to enhance learning quality. These measures contribute to high academic performance and successful degree completion.

### 4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

A survey of civil engineering and port facilities graduates (2022-2024) shows that 100% were employed immediately after or during their studies. Around 83.3% work in jobs related to their degree, while others changed fields due to health reasons, entrepreneurship, or emigration. Graduates hold various roles, including engineers, project managers, and company owners.

For the master programme in port constructions, 100% of graduates were employed before enrollment, with 71.4% working in their field. Data from the Government Strategic Analysis Centre indicates that 100% of civil engineering graduates are employed at their qualification level twelve months after graduation.

Employers have a positive view of the programme, suggesting some curriculum updates. Graduates also express satisfaction but suggest more practical training. Overall, the programme ensures strong employability and career prospects.

### 4.2.3. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are implemented

Klaipėda University upholds academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination through its *Code of Academic Ethics*. Students sign a contract committing to ethical conduct, including independent scientific work, proper citation, and avoiding plagiarism. Written work authenticity is checked using the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library system and Oxsico plagiarism detection software.

Violations such as plagiarism or cheating may result in expulsion. Examinations are designed to assess practical and cognitive skills, minimising opportunities for dishonesty. Lecturer-student relationships are based on transparency and fairness, with impartial assessment methods. Lecturers must report academic dishonesty and protect students' personal data. No violations of academic integrity have been recorded in the last three years.

### 4.2.4. Procedures for submitting and processing appeals and complaints are effective

Students who disagree with their exam or coursework grades can appeal within 2-3 days by contacting the head of the department. A reassessment may be conducted with the lecturer or a committee for oral exams. If the lecturer is also the department head, the appeal is directed to the dean. The final grade considers semester assignments, and students receive a response within 3 working days.

Thesis assessments cannot be appealed, except in cases of procedural violations or unfair prevention from defending. Appeals go to the dean or vice-dean, who appoints a review panel. A decision is made within 3 working days, ensuring fairness in the grading process.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

The response rate to student surveys is not always sufficient. It would be highly desirable to motivate students even more to complete the survey forms. It might be helpful to communicate to students that all feedback is very welcome and to emphasise this with a feedback session. This could be used to present and discuss the students evaluation results and to discuss how, for example, suggestions for change can be implemented. This can have a positive effect on the willingness of students to participate in evaluation. It is also worth considering making course evaluations compulsory for students. However, it should be ensured that a minimum number of responses is required for an evaluation to ensure anonymity and that no conclusions can be drawn about individuals.

Interaction with employers is very positive and closely monitored. The programme management works closely with employers. The labour market is very satisfied with the content of the programme, but would like to see significantly more graduates.

Competition between employers for graduates is very high. Potential employers, especially in the private sector, often recruit students with job offers at a very early stage of their studies in order to bind them to the company at an early stage. However, public sector jobs (e.g., fire brigade) are at a disadvantage, as students without a degree cannot be employed for legal reasons.

The structures for dealing with academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are not yet highly developed. There is no ombudsperson to turn to in case of problems. All complaints offices are linked in some way to the teaching staff, the dean's office or the university management. This means that there is no independent person to whom a student can turn in confidence.

## AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

| AREA 4 | Unsatisfactory - 1<br>Does not meet the requirements | Satisfactory - 2<br>Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated | Good - 3<br>Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated | Very good - 4<br>Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings | Exceptional - 5<br>Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First cycle | | | X | | |
| Second cycle | | | X | | |

### COMMENDATIONS

1. The expert panel are impressed with the interactions and engagement of staff, students and employers.

2. Students are happy with their experience of the programme.

3. The interaction between faculty and students seems very strong.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Identify an independent staff member who would be the person of trust for students who have personal, social or academic concerns.

2. Consider surveying the students earlier in the semester where there will be time for appropriate feedback.

For further improvement

1 Continue to market these programmes to attract more students. Promote the unique features of the programmes and consider opening the possibility of international students joining the programmes by offering the programmes in English.

2 Continue to grow international collaborations by using the EU-CONEXUS opportunity.

# AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

| 5.1. | Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes |
|---|---|

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 5.1.1. The number, qualification, and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff is sufficient to achieve learning outcomes

The recruitment of staff for the civil engineering programmes follows defined laws and the decisions of the KU Senate. The workload of lecturers varies based on student numbers and chosen subjects. Programme lecturers also teach general education or engineering subjects to other KU students, causing fluctuating lecturer-student ratios. The full-time teaching load of the lecturers to civil engineering study field students is approximately 11.39, and the staff ratio is 5.

Lecturers are also employed in other positions within and outside the university, which allows them to impart practical knowledge. Lecturers contribute to updating the study programme, participate in defense committees, and supervise theses. The low turnover of lecturers facilitates the integration of new staff.

The qualifications of the lecturers meet the requirements of internationally oriented universities and the recommendations of the European Commission on the *European Charter for Researchers*. The university also meets the national requirements of the national regulatory bodies.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The number of teachers, as well as their qualifications and competencies in the areas of science, didactics, and professional practice, are appropriate to achieve the learning outcomes. However, it should be noted that a systematic approach to teacher career development is not entirely evident. It is also not clearly recognisable which approach is applied to guarantee the upskilling and reskilling of teachers when there are new requirements in teaching.

| 5.2. | Teaching staff is ensured opportunities to develop competences, and they are periodically evaluated |
|---|---|

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

The outgoing academic mobility of civil engineering faculty is promoted through various programmes and projects.

Participation in ERASMUS+ teaching visits, internships, and the Experience Partner Project facilitates visits to companies or research institutions. The ERASMUS+projects enhance mobility and internationalisation through joint degree programmes, research initiatives, and modern learning technologies.

Further mobility funding is also provided by the *KU Research and Study Support Fund*, which aims to promote academic mobility. Not all faculty members engage in mobility.

### 5.2.2. Opportunities for the development of the teaching staff are ensured

In 2022, the qualification development of the teaching and research staff at Klaipėda University was updated, and the procedure was implemented in 2022-2023. Competence groups are identified to promote professional development and enhance specialised, scientific, pedagogical, and general skills (digital, communicative, intercultural, management-related).

Teaching staff can be exempted from teaching duties for up to one year every five years to conduct research and further develop their qualifications, with full salary. There is an opportunity for qualification improvement and preparation for doctoral studies, with full costs of a long-term research trip covered every five years.

Qualification development increased significantly from 2016 to 2020: from 59% to 85% of teaching and research staff and from 19% to 36% of non-academic staff. External and project-related sources, including the Erasmus+ programme, were increasingly used for university visits abroad.

**ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)**

The qualifications and competencies of the teachers, as well as their number in the areas of science, didactics, and professional practice, are sufficient to achieve the desired learning outcomes. However, it was not clearly evident from the documents and interviews whether a master plan is being pursued for the short- and long-term carrier development and replacement of personnel, for example, due to the retirement of older staff or to create incentives for the career development of young scientists. It also needs to be clarified who is responsible for such a master plan at KU.

## AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

| AREA 5 | Unsatisfactory - 1<br>Does not meet the requirements | Satisfactory - 2<br>Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated | Good - 3<br>Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated | Very good - 4<br>Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings | Exceptional - 5<br>Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First cycle | | | X | | |
| Second cycle | | | X | | |

**COMMENDATIONS**

1. Teachers of the civil engineering study field programmes possess high scientific, didactic, and professional competence, which is well-suited for achieving the desired study outcomes.

2. Teachers actively participate in international mobility, effectively utilising the Erasmus+ mobility programmes.

3. Conditions for enhancing teachers' competencies through involvement in national and international research projects are favourable - evidenced by the numerous projects undertaken by the programme's teachers.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To address shortcomings

1. Develop teachers' competence in the English language which may support offering the programmes in the English language.

### For further improvement

1. A more systematic planning of competence development for teaching staff to better identify weaknesses and areas for improvement is necessary.

2. Establish clear guidelines and objectives for exchange programmes to ensure they lead to meaningful and productive collaborations rather than administrative burdens.

3. Implement regular evaluations of exchange programmes to assess their impact on both the university and the participants, making adjustments as necessary to optimise outcomes.

4. Practice-oriented further training of lecturers in civil engineering should be encouraged. For example, the management of construction projects, work in planning offices, conducting expert assessments, and participation in professional development events. This will allow continuous updating of teacher's practical knowledge which would be useful for students' studies and career planning.

# AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

| | |
|---|---|
| 6.1. | Facilities, informational and financial resources are sufficient and enable achieving learning outcomes |

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### 6.1.1. Facilities, informational and financial resources are adequate and sufficient for an effective learning process

Klaipėda University provides extensive facilities for civil engineering studies, including modern laboratories and well-equipped classrooms. Students have access to specialised laboratories for physics, materials science, hydromechanics, and other laboratories. Lecture halls accommodate large student groups and include digital teaching tools. A new laboratory building is planned for 2027, to support the expansion of research capabilities.

Internships are an essential part of the programmes, with students placed in leading companies in the Klaipėda region. Research collaborations with international universities offer opportunities for advanced studies and thesis research. The university also provides high-quality laboratory equipment for material testing, geotechnical studies, and structural analysis.

Specialised software, including AutoCAD, Revit, and FEMAP, supports technical training. Open-license software options are also available. The KU library offers a vast collection of books, journals, and Digital databases, with remote access options.

The university ensures accessibility for students with special needs through assistive technologies such as screen readers, Braille printers, and adjustable furniture. The ESF-supported project *Ensuring Accessibility of Studies* has further enhanced support services. KU fosters an inclusive environment, providing flexible learning accommodations for all students.

### 6.1.2. There is continuous planning for and upgrading of resources.

Klaipėda University continuously updates its resources for civil engineering studies in collaboration with lecturers and researchers. Departments request new publications through the library's online system, while the library informs them about new books and foreign publications.

Infrastructure and software are funded through state, university, project, and donor contributions. Plans include a new laboratory building, faculty renovations, and ongoing minor upgrades for lighting and ventilation efficiency.

The *Strengthening the International Competitiveness of Klaipėda University* project, launched in January 2023, has a €1.88 million budget. €1.4 million is allocated for equipment, including hybrid classrooms, conference tools, data center upgrades, and a supercomputer, enhancing the university's research and learning environment.

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

Students are satisfied with the learning environment and the programmes offered at the KU. The equipment is adequate and supports effective teaching and learning.

The laboratory facilities we were able to visit are very modern and up to date. For those located some distance from the main campus, and of which we only saw photographs, modernisation seems appropriate.

## AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

| AREA 6 | Unsatisfactory - 1<br>Does not meet the requirements | Satisfactory - 2<br>Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated | Good - 3<br>Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated | Very good - 4<br>Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings | Exceptional - 5<br>Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First cycle | | | X | | |
| Second cycle | | | X | | |

### COMMENDATIONS

1. Students are happy with their experience of the programme.

2. The equipment is adequate and supports effective teaching and learning.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

To address shortcomings

1. Prepare a strategy to replace out of date equipment on a regular basis.

For further improvement

1. Endeavour to have up to date relevant laboratory equipment and software for the programmes.

# AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

| | |
|---|---|
| 7.1. | The development of the field of study is based on an internal quality assurance system involving all stakeholders and continuous monitoring, transparency and public information |

## FACTUAL SITUATION

### *7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective*

Quality assurance processes at KU are aligned to the European provisions and guidelines for quality assurance in higher education and the main laws and regulations governing higher education in the Republic of Lithuania.

A new description of the quality assurance procedure for all levels of KU study programmes was implemented since 2022 which sets out the university's quality assurance processes for the development, implementation and improvement of programmes. Internal evaluation of all programmes occurs on an annual basis to ensure timely monitoring and improvement of study programmes and to introduce innovations. An improvement plan is prepared for each study programme as an outcome of this process.

The quality assurance of the study programmes is implemented and monitored by the Committee for Civil Engineering Studies (hereafter – SCS) and all quality assurance decisions by this committee are made collegially. The Head of Department of Marine Engineering is directly responsible for the implementation of the civil engineering study programmes and for submitting any change proposals from stakeholders to the Faculty Council. The Faculty and Department of Marine Engineering at KU have designated persons responsible for the quality delivery of the civil engineering study field programmes.

Study subjects are reviewed and re-approved every three years. Students evaluate the study subjects and the implementation of the study programmes by completing questionnaires which are analysed and the outcomes are made public.

Other external social partners and companies in the Klaipeda region are involved in the development, evaluation and improvement of the study programmes.

### *7.1.2. Involvement of stakeholders (students and others) in internal quality assurance is effective*

The inclusion of stakeholders in the processes of implementation, evaluation and improvement of study programmes is an essential factor in ensuring the quality of programmes of study. The KU study programme stakeholders include teachers, students, social partners, employers and alumni. A combination of surveys, meetings and direct communication is used to illicit stakeholder views on the necessary curriculum development and programme improvement.

Teachers submit proposals for subject improvements to the SCS and some teachers are members of the SCS, other department and faculty committees and working groups.

Students complete a standardised questionnaire to evaluate the quality of the teaching and assessment on the programmes and are also interviewed. Student representatives attend the SCS meetings, the Faculty Council, the KU Council and the Senate.

Employers and other social partners are invited to meetings on theses defences, practical conferences and as guest lecturers where their views on the programmes and graduate skills are expressed. Alumni are involved in meetings and committees of the department.

### *7.1.3. Information on the programmes, their external evaluation, improvement processes, and outcomes is collected, used and made publicly available*

The university conducts the following internal reviews:

- Student evaluation of the content of the programme and the quality of teaching;
- Alumni evaluation of the performance of the quality assurance process;
- Student evaluation of the internship;
- Alumni evaluation of the effectiveness of the study process;
- Teacher evaluation of the delivery of the study programmes;
- Other processes to gather relevant data.

The results of the internal reviews are discussed with all stakeholders at meetings and presented in reports. A summarised version is made publicly available on the KU website and in annual reports. A list of published information on the KU Website is given in section seven of the SER.

### *7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed*

Electronic surveys of student's opinions about the quality, teaching content and organisation of the study programmes revealed that most students have a positive experience attending the university.

Students rate subjects as good or excellent. In addition to the formal survey, teachers and leaders discuss with students the progress of their studies, problems encountered and they are encouraged to participate in competitions and mobility. Students also take part in the EU-CONEXUS survey for minor studies.

All survey results are discussed with teachers and Academic Council. Plans are made for programme improvements which are then implemented.

## ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

Quality Assurance of programmes is regulated at KU using policies and procedures with a new procedure for all study programmes in place since 2022. Quality assurance is implemented and monitored at university, faculty and study programme level where the individuals responsible for quality assurance have been identified.

The Committee for Civil Engineering Studies (SCS) is the main body responsible for the ordination of the programme and its appropriateness to labour market needs. The review of the SER and the site visit meetings confirmed that surveys and meetings are the main methods used to illicit information about the programme from social partners and stakeholders and this occur regularly. Suggestions for programme improvement have been implemented and this is evidenced in the annual quality assurance plan created by the SCS.

Student responses to the end of semester surveys is low but there are face-to-face meetings between individual students and teaching staff which may be affecting this response rate and with low student numbers the anonymity of students taking the survey is questionable.

Based on the SER and the information provided at the site visit, the expert panel can confirm that the various surveys influence the decisions taken about the civil engineering study field programmes and these are captured in the annual quality assurance plan. Meetings with employers, graduates and students provided positive feedback regarding the quality of the programme and the appropriateness of the skillset of graduates.

# AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

| AREA 7 | Unsatisfactory - 1<br>Does not meet the requirements | Satisfactory - 2<br>Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated | Good - 3<br>Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated | Very good - 4<br>Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings | Exceptional - 5<br>Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| First cycle | | | X | | |
| Second cycle | | | X | | |

## COMMENDATIONS

1. The university has established quality assurance procedures and processes for all of its programmes. Quality assurance is monitored at university, faculty and programme level in the university where the SCS manages the quality assurance of the civil engineering study field programmes.

2. Information relating to the marine engineering programmes is obtained from all stakeholders using various means including electronic surveys, discussions at meetings and direct one-to-one communication.

3. Feedback obtained from the stakeholders influences the decision-making on the quality of the study programmes.

4. Surveys are analysed and the quality assurance outputs are published on the university's website.

5. An annual programme improvement plan is prepared by the SCS and implemented.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### To address shortcomings

1. The participation rate of students is low for the end of semester subject surveys. Consider surveying the students earlier in the semester where timely feedback would be possible.

### For further improvement

1. Continue to use technology to gather information about the study programme from social partners and other stakeholders.

2. Conferences, seminars and site visits could be organised to allow students to interact more with social partners.

# V. SUMMARY

The expert panel reviewed the SER and relevant documents prior to the site visit and would like to thank the university and programme team for the preparation of a well-written SER, providing the requested documentation and for their positive engagement with the expert panel during the site visit.

The first and second cycle civil engineering and port facilities and port constructions programmes are unique in Lithuania and provides graduates with appropriate skills for the labour market with specialist knowledge of marine engineering and sustainable construction. Social partners engage actively with the programme to ensure graduates have the skills appropriate to this civil engineering study field as there is a shortage of these graduates. The university should consider offering these programmes in the English language to attract international students to meet the need for these graduates. The staff engagement with the European university EU-CONEXUS should continue to be supported.

KU has qualified teaching staff and a competent structure to achieve the desired learning outcomes and meet the curriculum requirements. Coordination within the Erasmus programmes and the acquisition of ECTS credits through exchange programmes should be communicated more clearly. The clear interaction between research and teaching, as well as the targeted involvement of students in research projects, effectively support the learning objectives.

The admissions and recognition of foreign qualifications processes are well structured and transparent at KU. The strong focus on port construction in the curriculum and active links with local industry ensures that the graduates have the skills which aligns well with the region’s needs and the job market. KU provides comprehensive student support services and communicates effectively with students. Students could be further encouraged to participate in international mobility.

KU's bachelor degree in civil engineering and port facilities focuses on general civil engineering, while port construction appears mainly in the master degree, which is considered a unique selling point. Low enrollment could improve with internationalisation. The programme needs enhanced research orientation and better use of the CONEXUS alliance. The feedback from student evaluations should be increased. The employer engagement and feedback is quite positive. However, the graduate numbers remain insufficient for the current labour market. Support for vulnerable groups is limited, lacking independent contact points and persons of trust. Academic integrity and non-discrimination systems need enhancement.

Mobility plans ensure the long-term competencies of the teaching staff. Additional incentives, such as career developments through master plans, should be created to increase interest in a scientific career. Implement regular evaluations of exchange programme to assess their impact on both the university and participants, making adjustments to optimise outcomes. Encourage staff to develop their competence in the English language.

Students are satisfied with KU’s learning environment, modern laboratory facilities, and up-to-date teaching software. Some distant laboratories may need modernisation, and equipment and software should be regularly updated.

Quality assurance at the university is regulated where policies and processes are implemented and updated regularly, individuals responsible for ensuring quality are identified and improvements implemented through the annual quality assurance plan for the programme. Student could complete the end of semester surveys anonymously earlier in the semester when the opportunity to provide timely feedback is available.