

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF ECONOMICS AND MANAGEMENT



VYTAUTAS
MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
M C M X X I I

Field of Study:
MARKETING (L05)

SELF EVALUATION REPORT

November 2020

Study Field Data

No	Title of the study programme	State code	Type of studies	Cycle of studies	Mode of study and duration (in years)	Credit volume	Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Language of instruction	Minimum education required	Registration date of the study programme	Study programme termination date (if applicable)
1.	Marketing	6121LX028	U (university studies)	Bachelor (first cycle)	Full time (4 academic years)	240	Bachelor of Business Management	Lithuanian	High school degree	2011-02-22	-
2.	Marketing and International Commerce	6211LX044	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (2 academic years)	120	Master of Business Management	Lithuanian English	Bachelor's degree	1997-05-19	-
3.	Advertising Management	6211LX045	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (2 academic years)	120	Master of Business Management	Lithuanian	Bachelor's degree	2011-03-01	-
4.	Marketing and Sales	6211LX043	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (1.5 academic years)	90	Master of Business Management	Lithuanian	Bachelor's degree	2011-04-24	-

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In line with the Methodology, there was Self Evaluation group organized for all the study programmes in the field of Marketing. The group was formed by the Dean of the Faculty on 31st of January 2020 and approved by the order of VMU Rector. The Chair of the Academic Council, heads and members of the Study Programmes Committees (hereinafter – SPC,) as well as FEM administration, students and social partners have been invited as members of the Self-assessment groups. The Self Evaluation group had regular meetings (twice a month) from January, 2020, where the progress in development of the report, the analysis of different areas of the study programmes in Marketing field implementation have been discussed till the submission of the report in November, 2020.

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INTRODUCTION

Vytautas Magnus University (hereinafter VMU) was established in 1922 and re-established in 1989. It is a classical university based on the common beliefs and values of freedom, openness, and dialogue, and orientated towards humanistic culture. The University provides degree studies of all three cycles – bachelor, master and PhD studies which cover a broad spectrum of fields ranging from humanities, social sciences and arts to the fundamental sciences, environmental sciences, and biotechnologies.

The University's *Artes Liberales* education profile, with core emphasis on studying broadly themed subjects, ensures that the studies offered at VMU are comprehensive, they are not restricted to specialized, pre-defined subjects. VMU's liberal study policy lets students themselves plan their studies by choosing general study courses and part of the study field courses, they also have the possibility to move from one study programme to another and change the form of studies. Alongside a bachelor's degree diploma of their major specialty, VMU graduates can also get a certificate of minor studies and later apply for master's degree programme of another study field.

VMU works with many universities and scientists around the globe, implementing projects, enhancing student and staff exchanges, and improving the study and research system. It is an international and multilingual institution that continuously develops international networks and intercultural dialogues, participates in international scientific, academic, and social projects, encourages teacher and student mobility.

VMU is managed by two collegial bodies, the Council and the Senate, and the separate managerial body of the Rector. The Council is a collegial management body which affirms the University's vision, mission and the strategy, financial and other strategic issues; the Senate is a collegial body managing the academic affairs of the University. The University is headed by the Rector, and the Rector's advisory institution is the Rector's Council.

There are 15 academic divisions at VMU: Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Catholic Theology, Faculty of Economics and Management, Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Informatics, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, Faculty of Social Sciences, Agriculture Academy, Education Academy, Music Academy, Innovative Studies Institute, Institute of Foreign Languages, Botanical Garden.

The Faculty of Economics and Management¹ (hereinafter FEM) is recognized as economic, business and management study and research centre both on the national and international level. VMU by Eduniversal was evaluated as excellent business school nationally strong with continental links and has been repeatedly awarded (from 2016 till now) the Eduniversal 3 Palmes' ranking, what means it is in the league of the top 700 business schools in the world from 7000 by Eduniversal ranked world business universities and schools, representing 154 countries².

Study programs and research are organized by 3 departments in FEM: Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies and Scientific Research departments. FEM represents VMU in the Consortium of 5 European Business Schools (CBS, Denmark; HEC, Paris, France; IAG, Louvain, Belgium; NHH, Bergen, Norway; VMU, Kaunas, Lithuania) in the international EMBA Program which is organized at Baltic Management Institute in Vilnius. The Faculty had 929 students in all three levels of studies, 52 academic staff personnel members and 7 other employees of non-academic staff, according to Report of FEM, 2019.

¹ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/en/> in EN.

² See <http://evf.vdu.lt/en/vmu-fem-international-recognition-eduniversal-award-3/> in EN.

FEM has a unique faculty-level based decision-making organizational structure which is very helpful for tight cooperation and good coordination of study programs implemented in different departments. The main management bodies of FEM are the Faculty Council and the Dean. The Faculty Council is the top self-governance body of FEM. The Dean, 2 Vice-Deans and 7 administrators (for bachelors, master’s and doctoral study process, for international relationship, for research activities, for students internships and for technical support in study process.) comprise FEM Dean’s office which is in charge of day-to-day implementation of resolutions, decrees and other decisions adopted by the main self-governance and management bodies of VMU and FEM. In addition, the Academic Council in FEM, including the heads of all SPCs, plays important role in the study programmes’ management.

FEM has undergraduate (bachelor), graduate (master) and postgraduate (doctoral) levels of studies. Figure 1 shows that currently there are four study fields – study field of Marketing, study field of Business, study field of Economics, study field of Finance. These fields of study cover five study programmes at FEM on the undergraduate (bachelor) level of studies and nine graduate (master’s) study programmes at FEM. According to the University’s regulations undergraduate studies duration is 4 years, 8 semesters, 240 ECTS (study programs at FEM are “Marketing”, “Business Administration”, “Business Finance”, “Economics”, and “Economics and Finance”). Master’s studies duration in FEM is 2 years, 4 semesters, 120 ECTS (“Marketing and International Commerce”, “Advertising Management”, “Strategic Organization Management”, Executive MBA at Baltic Management Institute, “Finance”, “International Economics”) or 1,5 years, 3 semesters, 90 ECTS (“Marketing and Sales”, Sports Business MBA by EB Institute, “Business and Entrepreneurship”).

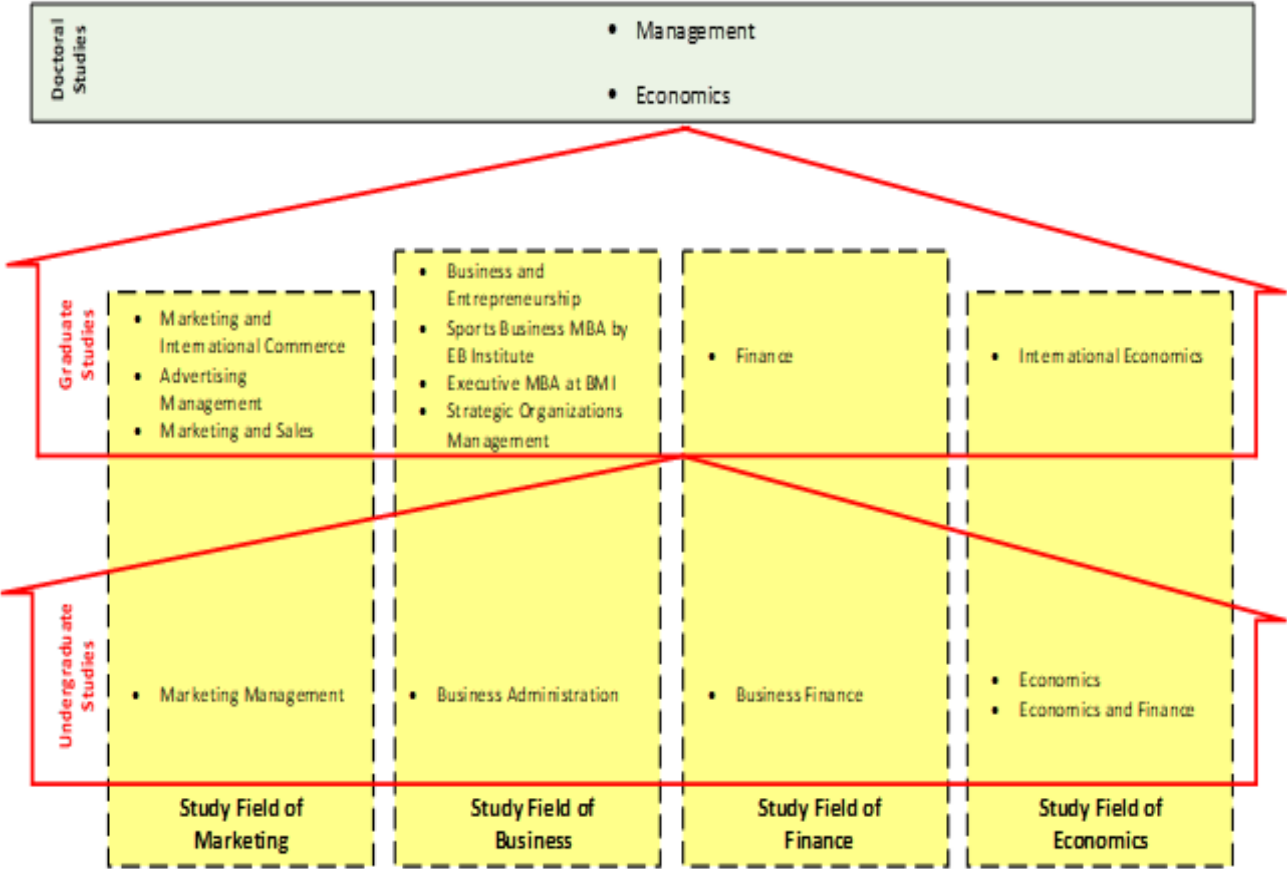


Figure 1. Study Fields and Programmes in different study cycles at FEM, VMU (2018-2020)

At present, 4 degree-programmes are offered at the *Study field of Marketing*: 1 undergraduate study programme – *Marketing*, and 3 graduate study programmes: *Marketing and International Commerce*, *Advertising Management*, *Marketing and Sales*.

Studies in Marketing field are provided at VMU FEM since 1993. The study programmes are developed according to the environmental changes and labour market demand needs.

Graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce was among the first graduate study programmes developed in FEM in 1993. Additional two graduate study programmes – Advertising Management and Marketing and Sales were introduced in 2011. In the same year undergraduate study programme in Marketing (Marketing Management till 2019) was also developed. Reasons for such expansion were several – the marketing research cluster has grown into well-functioning school of marketing studies and research, as well as marketing field in general has also undergone substantial transformations (and is still changing) due to new technological advancements and other social changes such as globalization of markets and ideas. Also, after 18 years of experience working only with graduate programme (Marketing and International Commerce) decision was made to introduce undergraduate level studies. Discussions in SPCs and the other FEM decision making bodies allowed to differentiate first and second cycle studies as well as 3 graduate study programmes. Undergraduate level study programme is aimed to introduce students with the diversity and complexity of marketing while graduate level programmes would then focus more thoroughly and address more closely all issues related to the changes and developments in targeted areas.

The study programmes in Marketing field are carried out, at first, in close collaboration with all above-mentioned departments of FEM and also with other faculties, as the institutional structure of VMU enables the involvement the most competent and student acknowledged teachers from all the faculties and departments. Due to the specificity of these study programmes, a very close collaboration is developed with the Department of Mathematics and Statistics (Faculty of Informatics), Department of Private Law (Faculty of Law), the Department of Lithuanian Language (Faculty of Humanities) also the Institute of Foreign Languages. This enables the provision of certain courses tailored to the needs of the programmes.

The self-assessment in study field of marketing is prepared for the first time and it includes the period from 2018 till 2020.

ANALYSIS OF FIELD AND CYCLE OF STUDIES

1. Study aims, outcomes and content

1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market.

All study programmes in Marketing field are well justified by the existing needs of the labour market, the economy, and the society as a whole.

The Lithuanian Department of Statistics³ indicates that at the beginning of 2020 there were 87 143 business enterprises. Based on continuing FDI flows and GDP growth tendencies (except pandemic period) the number of available working places shall keep growing⁴. The State Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”⁵ states that Lithuania has set ambitious goals to reach the position not lower than 10th by the year 2030 according to the EU indicator “The new enterprise percentage of the overall enterprise number”. Since all companies and start-ups especially need the services of marketing specialists to reach the markets and to sell their products or services, these numbers show that there is and will be a demand for marketing, advertising, and sales specialists in Lithuania. According to the Lithuanian Labour Exchange⁶ data, graduates of both undergraduate and graduate study programmes – marketing, advertising and sales specialists – are continuously on the most popular professions’ list in the Lithuanian Labour Exchange (with an average salary of 1090 €/month). The need for study programmes’ graduates could also be validated by the data provided in the Lithuanian Department of Statistics⁷, which indicates that in 2018 sales management (15,146 job advertisements) as well as marketing/advertising specialist (2,360 job advertisements) were among the most popular professions in Lithuania.

Information provided in AIKOS⁸ shows that the number of marketing and related study programmes was increasing in Lithuania during the last decade. However, based on the results of the annual graduate surveys EXIT 2018-2020, it did not influence employment opportunities of FEM undergraduate and graduate students in Marketing field⁹. Labour Exchange data for 2019 also demonstrates that just after graduation 88% students from undergraduate study programme and 100% of students from all 3 graduate study programmes get employed according to their study field.

Since Lithuania is a member of the EU, the labour market area has expanded, and graduates have opportunities to get employed not only in Lithuania, but also in the other EU countries. The global demand for marketing professionals shall remain increasing faster than market average with an estimated growth of on average 7% to 10% during 2018-2028¹⁰. According to the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP), in the recent trends growth of demand of marketing managers was significant, and this tendency will remain¹¹.

The Methodology of Linking Subgroups of Occupations to Study and Training programs of the Lithuanian Classification of Occupations¹² states that better matching of labour supply and demand is one of the most important goals of the European Commission's Employment Package

³ See <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=46660eeb-aebf-4114-ada6-c8cde2649c05#/> in EN.

⁴ See <https://tradingeconomics.com/lithuania/gdp-growth> in EN.

⁵ See https://lrv.lt/uploads/main/documents/files/EN_version/Useful_information/lithuania2030.pdf in EN.

⁶ See <https://uzt.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/baro6.pdf> in EN.

⁷ See <https://www.stat.gov.lt/services-portlet/pub-edition-file?id=33268> in EN.

⁸ See <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/SitePages/Home.aspx?ss=e3525251-1754-404b-92d9-4bfb55b33b> in EN.

⁹ Annual graduate surveys EXIT 2018-2020, are annually organized by VMU Studies Department.

¹⁰ See <https://www.onetonline.org/link/summary/11-2021.00> in EN.

¹¹ See <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en> in EN.

¹² See http://eimin.lrv.lt/uploads/eimin/documents/files/zip/Susiejimo%20metodika_psw.pdf in LT.

Strategy, it would help the relevant authorities to better plan labour market measures, perspectives for choice and professional development. Therefore, understanding of the needs of Lithuanian labour market had laid a background for formulating the aims and the learning outcomes, as well as identifying career perspectives of graduates of the study programmes in Marketing field.

Study programmes in Marketing field are designed to help the private and public organizations and the economy to deal with the emerging medium and long run challenges. Looking for perspectives, we notice that various organizations, institutions, and experts concentrate on future competencies much more often than future professions. Because of fast technological, social, economic changes, in future labour market the map of professions becomes very unclear. *Artes Liberales* principle adapted in VMU helps to educate people who should be able to find their places in labour market for decades. The learning outcomes of the study programmes in Marketing field concentrate on the competencies of marketing professionals, as well as on the future competencies, that are the most promising in the future, therefore, relevant for undergraduate and graduate students in Marketing field¹³.

The undergraduate study programme of Marketing prepares marketing specialists who are able to work in organizations as marketing specialists performing complex marketing activities, and to perform functions that require knowledge of the latest marketing theories, systematic and innovative application in practice. Upon completion of undergraduate study programme of Marketing, graduates will acquire the fundamental and specific competences to plan activities according to the intended goals; to analyse and record the results of its activities and report to the persons coordinating marketing activities; to adjust activities taking into account the results of performance analysis and recommendations of specialists; to carry out various project activities; to adapt to the constant and usually unpredictable changes brought by advances in knowledge and technology in the marketing profession; to learn independently after evaluating one's own activities.

Graduates of study programme of *Marketing* will be able to work as managers of companies of various profiles; heads of marketing and sales departments; marketing and sales project managers; marketing and sales managers; marketing specialists; consultants who are able to undertake research activities and apply marketing skills and knowledge for self-employment and further learning, able to make decisions in solving marketing problems, initiate and implement various marketing projects, creatively apply interdisciplinary university education in various areas of modern marketing activities and business environments; start their own business; also to continue studying in graduate study programmes in marketing, business administration and management and other related fields.

Upon completion of the graduate study programme *Marketing and International Commerce*, students will acquire the fundamental and specific competences to integrate theoretical, empirical and methodological knowledge acquired during the studies, and demonstrate strong ethical and social responsible perspective in marketing and international commerce. Graduates will be able to integrate up-to-date theoretical approaches in the field of strategic, digital and entrepreneurial marketing, neuromarketing, corporate marketing, international business and marketing, global value chain management; to choose and utilize concepts and methods in a given context, initiate and implement in practice marketing

¹³ The Lithuanian profession classification data base presented in the website of the Lithuania Ministry of Economy: http://www.ukmin.lt/web/lt/verslo_aplinka/zmogiskuju_istekliu_pletra/627/lietuvos_profesiju_klasifikatoriaus_duomenu_baze, and the list of professions given in „AIKOS“ (open information, consulting and guidance system, established by the Ministry of Education) website: http://www.aikos.smm.lt/aikos/profesijos_pagal_svietimo_sritis_ir_posricius.htm) show that the program graduates can take up several professions.

decisions; to work as marketing managers and heads of marketing departments in domestic and foreign companies; to offer consultancy service to organizations solving marketing and international commerce problems; to offer consultancy service to organizations solving marketing problems; to establish private business; to initiate and carry research in field of marketing and international commerce; to continue studies in management and administration doctoral programme, as well as in other doctoral programme of social sciences area.

Graduates of the graduate study programme *Advertising Management* will be able to prepare and implement innovative and creative customer centric advertising strategies based on scientific knowledge, research, as well as local and global experience; to work as advertising managers and heads of advertising, communication, public relations departments in business companies and other organisations; advertising sales representative; advertising or communications strategist; foreign companies' advertising managers; specialists at in-house advertising, marketing, communication, public relations department; to offer consultancy service to organizations solving advertising problems; to establish private business effectively; work as hired consultants in business consulting firms or establish personal consulting firm or as journalist; to continue studies in management and administration doctoral programmes, as well as in other doctoral programmes of social sciences area. The programme examines variety of concepts in creative advertising strategies and tactics, innovative decisions, content and experience marketing, advertising psychology, and business performance. This combination allows building the knowledge and skills necessary for critical, creative, and sustainable approaches towards advertising management in complex and dynamic environment.

Graduates of graduate study programme *Marketing and Sales* will be able to develop and implement marketing strategies, to create, communicate and deliver value for customers, to prepare integrated marketing communication campaigns, to develop and implement digital business strategies, to communicate effectively with stakeholders, to employ customer centric approach managing customer relations, to manage customer experience, to apply sales management concepts, to design and manage distribution channels bridging strategic, tactical and operational decisions and operating under uncertainty in local and global environment; to work in local and international organizations as marketing and (or) sales project managers, marketing and (or) sales managers, heads of marketing and (or) sales departments in business companies; hired consultants in business consulting firms in the field of marketing and sales. As well postgraduates will be able to continue studies in management and administration or other doctoral programmes of social sciences area.

FEM offers three graduate study programmes in marketing, yet they all have their unique features and target somewhat different segments. The longest running graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce is marketed as the broad profile programme with the emphasis on value based marketing and strategic decision-making. The programme clearly has strong international direction as well as the studies balanced between scientific and applied activities. Graduate study programme Advertising Management is a specialized knowledge deepening study programme in marketing, which concentrates on decision-making, application, and evaluations of innovative advertising ideas. The programme builds on contemporary marketing knowledge and empowers students to plan and implement scientific research based applied advertising solutions ranging from strategic to operational or their combination. On the other hand, graduate study programme Marketing and Sales was introduced as practice oriented lifelong learning programme for working people with study schedule and study methods adapted to their needs. The programme concentrates on strategic and operational marketing decisions and explores sales, as operational activity. It is customer centricity focused, complex and concentrated study programme providing with the newest

theoretical knowledge and applied solutions in such areas as consumer behaviour, communication etc. FEM community and members of all SPCs see the clear need for all three graduate study programmes. Such opinion is also supported by growing numbers of the entrants over the last few years.

All 4 study programmes received positive evaluations by the international experts in 2013-4, resulting in six-year accreditations.

1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI

VMU strategy for 2012–2020 was approved by VMU Senate on February 29, 2012 and VMU Council on April 19, 2012¹⁴. After re-election of VMU Rector in September 2020, VMU is undergoing development of a new strategy (which was not yet published at the time of self-evaluation). Under the existing documents, VMU mission – VMU is a community-based research, art and study institution, which pursues the mission of the University of Lithuania, established in Kaunas in 1922, creates liberal learning conditions for an individual, develops partnerships, takes active part in the life of Kaunas, advances the future of Lithuania, and contributes to the global cultural and academic development.

The strategy for 2012–2020 is based on 5 fields with more detailed objectives: 1. Socially active and responsible community. 2. Reliable international partner. 3. Studies favourable for unfolding talents and personalities. 4. The highest level of science and arts. 5. Harmonious and creative environment.

While developing the programmes, their aims and outcomes were matched with the strategic plan of VMU of that time. When new University's strategy is adopted, the programmes are reviewed and, if necessary, to reflect updates in the Strategy.

At the moment, both the aim and learning outcomes of the programmes are in compliance with VMU's propositions as raise personalities, strengthen interdisciplinary study organisation experience, creates conditions for the students to develop various professional skills and put them in practice through internships, foster students' international mobility and encourage students to foreign languages. It could be noted that the second field of the strategy *Reliable international partner* is particularly evident in graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce which had well working double degree studies agreement with Louvain Catholic University School of Management, and it is taught in both English and Lithuanian for more and attracts substantial number of international students each year.

1.3. Evaluation of the compliance of the field and cycle study programme with legal requirements

The composition of the undergraduate study programme Marketing is in conformance with general requirements of studies¹⁵ as presented in Table 1. The volume of undergraduate study programme Marketing is 240 ECTS, duration is four years, eight semesters (15 weeks per each semester). Study plan (see Annex 1) of the programme consists of two stages.

The first stage is dedicated (as in all the other undergraduate study programmes at VMU) to study mostly general courses of Artes Liberales (group A and B). Core attention in this stage is primarily given to a general and broad education of students. These courses ensure partial achievement of the study programme aim to prepare broad erudite bearing such values as cognition of the world and its diversity employing modern cognitive means – foreign languages

¹⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/35129.pdf>, in EN and LT.

¹⁵ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/347_7858349827a3d9143ad751db4f056a85.pdf, in EN.

and IT. In addition, students have more opportunities, compared with students at other universities, to extend their knowledge in the fields important for their career as they can choose law, psychology courses and the like. The courses are divided into 3 parts, where a student is free to choose any course from a compulsory part (see 1.7. for details). 50 ECTS credits are allocated for VMU *Artes Liberales* courses.

The second stage of study plan in undergraduate study programme Marketing is dedicated to the study field courses in FEM level (group C). This part of the study plan enables the achievement of the aim and all learning outcomes of Marketing study programme. 128 ECTS are dedicated to the Marketing study field courses (15 ECTS are allotted for internships and 15 ECTS - for the Final Bachelor Thesis), 62 ECTS for other field courses (co-faculty courses and optional courses) at FEM level.

Table 1. Undergraduate study programme Marketing – conformity to general requirements for first cycle study programs

Criteria	Legal requirements	In Marketing study programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	128 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	112 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	15 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis	No less than 15 ECTS	15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	37 %
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	63 %

Duration of 2 graduate study programmes Marketing and International Commerce (as presented in Table 2) and Advertising Management (as presented in Table 3) is four semesters (15 weeks per each semester). Volume of these programs is 120 ECTS credits: 102 ECTS are dedicated to the Marketing study field courses (10 mandatory courses, which amount to 60 ECTS credits; 2 Term Papers - a total of 12 ECTS credits; 30 ECTS - for the Final Master Thesis), and 18 ECTS for optional courses (3 options). A single system for the course content and workload planning allows to better administrate study programmes and manage their quality. It also allows students to individualise their study plans by having ability to choose courses from the other study programmes.

Table 2. Graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce – conformity of the study plan to the general requirements for graduate programs

Criteria	Legal requirements	In Marketing and International Commerce study programme
Scope of the program in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	102 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	18 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10% of learning	24 %
Individual learning	No less than 50% of learning	76 %

Table 3. Graduate study programme Advertising Management – conformity of the study plan to the general requirements for graduate programs

Criteria	Legal requirements	In Advertising Management study programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	102 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	18 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10% of learning	24 %
Individual learning	No less than 50% of learning	76 %

The volume of graduate study programme of Marketing and Sales is 90 ECTS (see Table 4): it has 90 ECTS of study field (10 mandatory courses, which amount to 60 ECTS (9 courses and 1 Term Paper) and 30 ECTS for Final Master Thesis. After multiple deliberations in SPC, the Academic Council and the Dean’s Office at FEM, the decision was made not to offer optional courses in this study programme, mainly aiming to properly achieve both marketing and sales-oriented learning outcomes.

Table 4. Graduate study programme Marketing and Sales – conformity of the study plan to the general requirements for graduate programs

Criteria	Legal requirements	In Marketing and Sales study programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	0 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10% of learning	22%
Individual learning	No less than 50% of learning	78%

Student workload includes their time in classes, i.e. lectures, consultations, group work (using IT tools), individual work. Contact hours involve lectures, consultations, group work, while individual learning involves study of literature, preparation for cases and seminars, solutions of homework and/or the other assignment.

The volume of both undergraduate and graduate study programmes and allocation of their credits is sufficient for achievement of expected learning outcomes.

The allocation of ECTS in each study programme depends on its aim and learning outcomes. Also credits allocation in all Marketing field study programmes is structured based on Lithuanian and VMU regulations (basically on VMU Regulations on Studies) and under the logics of *Artes Liberales* education.

The study programmes’ aims and intended learning outcomes reflect the needs of the market and social-economic development and take into the account General Requirements for Studies¹⁶, Description of Study Levels¹⁷, and the other European and Lithuanian normative

¹⁶ See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/a4caf862ced511e6a476d5908abd2210> in LT

¹⁷ See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/d32e4f70ad0811e68987e8320e9a5185?jfwid=-9dzqntza2> in LT

documents¹⁸. The learning outcomes of the undergraduate study programme of Marketing correspond to the Level 6 and the learning outcomes of the graduate study programmes of Marketing and International Commerce, Advertising Management, and Marketing and Sales correspond to the Level 7 of the European and national qualification framework¹⁹. At the same time, the study programmes address to one of the main concepts of VMU system of studies - *Artes Liberales*, which promotes the interdisciplinary approach, free broad choice of optional courses in social science area by the students. Interdisciplinarity together with cross-cultural competency and social (emotional) intelligence is also among the top 10 future competencies listed by the World Economic Forum²⁰.

The study programmes' aims and learning outcomes assure that undergraduates will acquire competences of the first cycle level, and graduates in master level programmes will acquire higher competences in comparison with the first cycle study programme graduates. All learning outcomes of the study programmes are broad, interrelated and supplement each other following certain logic. Learning outcomes match 5 categories of skills and abilities in accordance with the Bologna Qualifications Framework²¹: 1) knowledge and its application; 2) research skills; 3) special abilities; 4) social abilities; 5) personal abilities. All categories are equal weight. In general, the aim of the study programmes, its learning outcomes, outlay, and implementation follows the idea of educating core literacies, domain knowledge, competencies, mindset, and talents presented by European Political and Strategy Centre²².

The aim of the undergraduate study programme of Marketing is to prepare high qualification marketing specialists able to work as marketing specialists, marketing department managers in the companies of different profile and consultants, who can do research and apply skills and knowledge of marketing to independent activity and further education. After graduation they will be able to perform complex marketing activities, will be capable of decision making when solving organisation marketing problems, initiate and implement various marketing projects, perform functions that require the knowledge, and systematic and innovative application of the latest marketing theories in practice, creative application of interdisciplinary university education in different business environments and spheres of modern marketing. To realize the aim of the undergraduate study programme Marketing the following learning outcomes were composed as presented in Table 5.

¹⁸ Law on Higher Education and Research; Descriptions of General Requirements for Master Study Programs; Lithuanian Lifelong Learning Strategy; Bologna Declaration on the European Space for Higher Education; Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region; Memorandum of Lifelong Learning; Dublin Descriptors; Qualifications Framework for the European Higher Education Area; The European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning; Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area; Tuning Education Structures in Europe; A Guide to Formulating Degree Program Profiles.

¹⁹ Description of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework:

https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/documents/files/EN%20versija/National_qualifications/LT_qualifications_framework.pdf in EN; The Descriptor of Study Cycles:

https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/346_6b83703b532be84be32dd512a348eae6.pdf in EN

²⁰ See https://www.iftf.org/uploads/media/SR-1382A_UPRI_future_work_skills_sm.pdf

²¹ See http://ecahe.eu/w/images/7/76/A_Framework_for_Qualifications_for_the_European_Higher_Education_Area.pdf in EN

²² See http://ec.europa.eu/epsc/sites/epsc/files/strategic_note_issue_13.pdf

Table 5. Learning Outcomes of the undergraduate study programme Marketing

Group	Learning outcomes of study programme Marketing
Knowledge and its application	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To demonstrate the knowledge of the fundamental theoretical provisions and concepts of marketing and related areas – consumer behaviour, economics, management, finance, etc. 2. To apply modern knowledge when analysing, assessing the main phenomenon's, activities of marketing. 3. To apply modern theoretical innovations and practical achievements, tendencies, and peculiarities of modern (domestic and international) business environment, as well as different business contexts to the analysis of marketing situations.
Research skills	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. To investigate marketing problems of different nature applying scientific research, analysis methods and interpretation related to marketing actions.
Special abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. To demonstrate skills for the independent analysis of various, interrelated marketing situations/problems, decision making, making recommendations and implementation, as well as marketing actions planning. 6. To assess marketing issues and substantiate their relevance when analysing the impact of the different, changing business environment factors.
Social abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. To demonstrate skills of oral and written effective communication, using professional Lithuanian, international business, marketing terminology properly. 8. To demonstrate group work skills: the ability to communicate and discuss with others, organize team work, share work, take responsibility for the quality of their own work and team's activities, etc.
Personal abilities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. To demonstrate skills of working individually and responsibly, making ethical, innovative, and creative decisions in marketing, taking responsibility for the decisions made and its effect on the society and the environment and, continuous formal and informal learning.

The aim of the graduate study programme of *Marketing and International Commerce* is to provide students with the modern marketing and international commerce knowledge, skills, and abilities to analyse and understand global trends, respond rapidly and creatively to changing environments, to make decisions and execute marketing activities in the local and global market under uncertainty. To realize the aim of the graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce the learning outcomes were composed as presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Learning Outcomes of the graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce

Group	Learning outcomes of the graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce
Knowledge and application	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To apply fundamental and empirical research based latest marketing and international commerce knowledge, which forms the basis for the ability to create and (or) complexly apply original marketing and international commerce ideas solving practical problems under conditions of uncertainty.

Research skills	<p>2. to identify complex and interdisciplinary (contemporary and marketing related) research problems, to recognize, collect and critically assess information on relevant marketing field theories, empirical research findings and practices on a global scale and in different local and global business contexts.</p> <p>3. To initiate, plan and to perform independent scientific and/or applied research by developing research methodology, collecting and systemizing data and information and applying them for the analysis and assessment of the relevant marketing and international commerce problems.</p> <p>4. To propose scientific research based innovative, complex marketing and international commerce as well as related fields' solutions assessing their outcomes, importance and consequences on a global, local, organizational and personal level.</p>
Special abilities	<p>5. To analyse complexly and critically evaluate marketing and international commerce strategies, activities, and results of various market participants, applying scientific research results.</p> <p>6. To comprehensively plan and properly solve complex tasks in the field of marketing and international commerce fields in a new and unknown environment.</p> <p>7. To initiate, create and manage implementation of innovative value-based marketing strategies and tactics, projects, processes at the global, local, organizational, personal level.</p>
Social abilities	<p>8. To work efficiently and creatively in a team and lead it, take responsibility, share knowledge and cooperate solving problems.</p> <p>9. To communicate with stakeholders smoothly, properly using professional language orally and in written, presenting research results and practical ideas, constructively discussing, defending opinion, consulting and (or) performing expert evaluation.</p>
Personal abilities	<p>10. To demonstrate skills of critical, systematic, creative and strategic thinking independently making decisions, understanding moral and social responsibility for one's activities and its ethic consequences.</p> <p>11. To demonstrate abilities of independent learning and continuous interdisciplinary and professional development.</p>

The aim of the graduate study programme Advertising Management is to provide students with the modern knowledge, skills, and abilities in advertising field enabling them to research, analyse and assess advertising and its strategies, tactics and activities responding rapidly and creatively to the constantly changing environment, as well as respecting professional and ethical performance standards while making relevant customer centric decisions. To realize the aim of the graduate study programme Advertising Management the following learning outcomes were composed as presented in Table 7.

Table 7. Learning Outcomes of the graduate study programme Advertising management

Group	Learning outcomes of the graduate study programme Advertising management
Knowledge and application	1. To apply fundamental and empirical research based latest knowledge of advertising and related fields, complexly and systematically identifying and assessing the theoretical and professional phenomena of advertising under conditions of uncertainty.

Research skills	<p>2. To identify complex and interdisciplinary problems of advertising and related fields, to recognize, select relevant and critically assess theories of advertising and related fields, empirical research findings and worldwide practices in different business contexts.</p> <p>3. To initiate, plan and conduct independent scientific and (or) applied advertising research by developing research methodology, collecting, systemizing, analysing data and information critically assessing and interpreting research results.</p> <p>4. To propose scientific research based innovative, complex advertising and related fields' solutions assessing their outcomes, importance, and consequences on a global, local, organizational, and personal level.</p>
Special abilities	<p>5. To analyse and critically evaluate strategic, tactical, and operational decisions of advertising and related fields at the global, local, organizational, personal level, applying scientific research results.</p> <p>6. To comprehensively plan and properly solve complex tasks in the field of advertising and related fields in a new and unknown environment.</p> <p>7. To initiate and create innovative value-creating solutions in the field of advertising and related fields to achieve strategic, tactical, and operational goals at the global, local, organizational, personal level.</p>
Social abilities	<p>8. To work efficiently and creatively in a team and lead it, take responsibility, share knowledge, and cooperate solving problems.</p> <p>9. To communicate with stakeholders smoothly, properly using professional language orally and in written, presenting research results and practical ideas, constructively discussing, defending opinion, consulting and (or) performing expert evaluation.</p>
Personal abilities	<p>10. To demonstrate skills of critical, systematic, creative, and strategic thinking independently making decisions, understanding moral and social responsibility for one's activities and its ethic consequences.</p> <p>11. To demonstrate abilities of independent learning and continuous interdisciplinary and professional development.</p>

The aim of the graduate study programme of *Marketing and Sales* is to provide students with complex knowledge, skills and abilities in marketing and sales enabling them to analyse and assess practical marketing and sales situations in dynamic global environment and make relevant strategic, tactical and operational customer centric decisions under uncertainty. To realize the aim of the graduate study programme Marketing and Sales the learning outcomes were composed as presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Learning Outcomes of the graduate study programme Marketing and Sales

Group	Learning outcomes of the graduate study programme Marketing and Sales
Knowledge and application	<p>1. To apply fundamental and empirical research based latest marketing and sales knowledge, complexly and systematically identifying and assessing the phenomena of marketing and sales professional activities, solving practical problems under conditions of uncertainty.</p>

Research skills	<p>2. To identify complex marketing and sales problems, recognize, select relevant and critically assess marketing theories, empirical research findings and worldwide practices in different business contexts.</p> <p>3. To initiate, plan and conduct independent scientific and (or) applied marketing and sales research by developing research methodology, collecting, systemizing, analysing data, and information critically assessing and interpreting research results.</p> <p>4. To propose scientific research based innovative, complex marketing and sales solutions assessing their outcomes, importance, and consequences on a global, local and (or) organizational level.</p>
Special abilities	<p>5. To analyse complexly and critically assess behaviour, marketing and sales strategies, activities, and results of various market participants, applying scientific research results.</p> <p>6. To plan complexly marketing and sales activities setting and achieving strategic, tactical and operational goals.</p> <p>7. To create marketing and sales strategies, design customer centric solutions, solve complex practical marketing and sales tasks properly and reasonably in a new and unknown environment.</p>
Social abilities	<p>8. To work efficiently in a team and lead it, take responsibility, share knowledge, and cooperate solving problems.</p> <p>9. To communicate with stakeholders smoothly, properly using professional language orally and in written, presenting research results and practical ideas, constructively discussing, defending opinion, consulting and (or) performing expert evaluation.</p>
Personal abilities	<p>10. To demonstrate skills of critical, systematic, and strategic thinking independently making decisions, understanding moral and social responsibility for one's activities and its ethic consequences.</p> <p>11. To demonstrate abilities of independent learning and continuous professional development.</p>

The learning outcomes of the study programmes are substantiated on academic requirements because the updated learning outcomes cover general knowledge and abilities required for a marketing, sales, or advertising specialists.

The list of learning outcomes of the study programmes shall not be viewed as the final or fixed. Learning outcomes are reviewed and updated in accordance with changes and challenges of economic environment, employers' needs, and students' interests. According to VMU Regulations on Studies, the learning outcomes of the study programmes have to be reviewed at least once in three years: "The Study Programme Committee, together with the department responsible for the implementation of the programme, carries out programme self-assessment evaluating the study programme aim, learning outcomes, composition, staff, material resources, study process and study programme management. The conclusions of self-assessment are presented to the Faculty Council"²³. It is also indicated that means for study programmes renewal can be initiated by students (using study quality assessment tools), academic subdivisions of the university, the Faculty Council, the FEM Academic Council, the Dean's Office, and social partners (see 7.1 for details).

²³ https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Study_Regulations_2019.pdf in EN

In VMU learning outcomes are the basis for the scope of the courses, and the allocation of ECTS depends on the nature and complexity of learning outcomes. When learning outcomes are more complex, a higher number of students working hours is planned in the course, and more credits are assigned for such a course (i. e. 6 ECTS) comparing to the one that covers learning outcome of a lower complexity (i. e. 4 ECTS). Student workload encompasses a standard, usual number of hours necessary to complete the activities that have been planned in the course. Student workload includes their time in classes, internship placements, making individual or group assignments, preparation for assessment, etc. 1 ECTS corresponds to 26.67 hours of student work time. Depending on the credits, the workload hours are divided: 4 ECTS – 45 contact hours and 61 of individual work (106 hours in total), and 6 ECTS – 60 contact hours (45 academic hours of lectures and 15 academic hours of seminars dedicated to student discussions, presentations, group work, etc.) and 100 of individual work (160 hours in total). 15 ECTS of Final Bachelor Thesis consist of 400 academic hours, and 30 ECTS of Final Master Thesis - of 400 academic hours.

The calculation of student workload and ECTS allocation is systematically revised. The renewal process of the programmes, its aim and intended learning outcomes includes directly and indirectly all the stakeholders and follows the procedure that is documented at University-level and analysed in 7.1. Each semester students are asked to express their opinions, including the amount of work that was dedicated to each course. Professors responsible for the course in question are also consulted by SPC of the study programme. In some other cases the scope of certain courses is set by national regulations – the examples could be the amount of credits given to the Final Thesis: Bachelor's - 15 ECTS and Master's – 30 ECTS.

1.4. Evaluation of compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes.

The links between study programmes learning outcomes and course learning outcomes are presented in matrixes in Annex 3. Each learning outcome of a study programme is achieved by studying several courses, with an individual course usually having links with more than one learning outcome of the programmes. Tables provided in the Annex 3 show the complexity of each study programme's learning outcome through their implementation with a help of a number of courses; study programmes learning outcomes are interrelated and supplement each other, as each course is linked to a few study programme learning outcomes. Depending on the complexity of the course (demonstrated by the number of ECTS credits and the course place in the study plan) and its aim, every course of the study programme is connected with multiple learning outcomes of the study programme. As a rule, the learning outcomes of majority of the courses cover the theoretical knowledge acquisition and application, special and research as well as personal and social skills and abilities of the study programme. The proposed number of courses, their volume and content are sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes of all graduate and undergraduate study programmes.

All course descriptions are prepared according to the uniform VMU requirements - Description of Procedure for Study Course Attestation²⁴. All courses should be renewed and confirmed by SPC at least every three years. The latest attestation of all the courses in study programmes took place in Autumn, 2019.

The existing close linkage among study and teaching methods, the forms of study implementation and the learning outcomes in the programmes that was discussed above shows the study and teaching methods are reasonable and substantiated. The achievement of learning

²⁴ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VMU-Procedure-for-Course-Attestation_Nov20-2019_edition.pdf in EN

outcomes also depends on students' involvement into studies and their motivation. Aiming this, the teachers in all study programmes constantly applies innovations in teaching methods in their classes. One of the big waves of innovations in VMU is shift towards the distant learning or the mixed mode. The teachers are motivated to transfer some of the students' activities online by changing the nature of tasks formulated for the students. It also enables the assessment for learning to be implemented. Also, tasks and problems can be closer to the professional life as well as the way of their implementation. Many of the teachers in undergraduate and graduate study programmes in the field of Marketing use Problem-Based Learning techniques based on full case studies or just some episodes of the method. Teachers in some courses use simulations and majority of them invite professionals into classes to give examples from the real life and to provide with up to date and relevant tasks. Learning outcomes of the study programmes are also achieved by applying various modern and active teaching techniques, which are oriented to practical problems, situations, cases. These methods are selected properly, considering specific course learning outcomes. Expected study results are also achieved through consultations. All teachers devote scheduled and extra time to the individual student consultations (which is 20 academic hours per semester for full time employed teachers). During these consultations each of the students, personally or in group, has the opportunity to get responses to their concerns, discuss individual and group work topics, to get advice on their written works and other important issues.

Numerous study methods are selected in different forms of study courses. For example, the lecture often uses the following study methods: narration, interpretation, illustration, asking questions and answers, watching videos, summarizing information, discussion, etc. The study methods used in the seminars are the analysis of problematic examples and questions, the performance and summary of tasks, counselling, case studies, discussions, debates, project preparation and presentation in groups, etc. Study methods used in the exercises are interpretation and solution of tasks, etc. Practical study methods are formulation, interpretation, performance of practical tasks; professional activity analysis; study of literature; problem solving; consulting; debate; discussions; verbal self-reflection; preparation and presentation of reports, etc.

Methods of learning achievement assessment used by teachers are written assessment (during the midterm and examination); assessment of the written or oral presentation of self-study tasks, assessment of the independent group work preparation in progress and the final oral presentation in seminars and other contact time forms.

Assessment methods are linked to study method and leads to achievement of learning outcomes of the courses and study programmes as well. For instance, written assessment helps to assess, whether the student has understood the studied material, theoretical concepts and frameworks are understood, problems are recognized, their impact is analysed and methods in practical problematic situations applied. The assessment of the oral and written presentation of the seminar tasks shows the students' analytical and special abilities developed in the course to analyse situations and offer creative solutions relevant to the situation. Assessment of the progress of group or individual preparation of independent work allows the student to receive feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement and to improve the paper through counselling and discussions, looking for creative solutions. The preparation of group works helps to achieve social group learning outcomes, as well as public presentation and discussion of papers allows to achieve personal learning outcomes, and other students listening to the presentations turn into case study, discussion, debate, problem solving study methods practicing, etc.

All courses are evaluated by using accumulative grade which is typically comprised of final exam (30-50%), mid-term exam (15-30%), seminars (10-30%) and homework assignment (10-30%). Thus, students are motivated to engage into practical activities (i. e. case studies, simulations, companies visits, projects, etc.) and to accomplish their individual or group independent tasks better as its value in the accumulative grade is significant, and student's final grade doesn't depend only on one or two assessments where they could expect high final grade without engaging in practical activities. This helps to accomplish aims of the study programmes in Marketing field to prepare marketing specialists and managers capable independently or in team to make relevant and creative decisions and execute marketing activities in the companies in rapidly changing and uncertain environment. The components and their values in the accumulative grade can be different depending on course specifics (i. e. Term Papers or Final Thesis, where the prepared paper and its defence are assessed). No matter the course, the students are informed about the evaluation system in lectures (should be discussed in detail during the first lecture) and e-learning platform Moodle in advance.

Links between study programme outcomes, course outcomes and criteria of learning achievement evaluation are particularly analysed at each course level and presented in detail as a component of each course description in all study programmes of Marketing field, discussed and approved by SPCs.

Information presented in current course descriptions gives detailed data, such as: course volume in ECTS credits; links between study programme learning outcomes, course learning outcomes and minimal criteria of learning achievement evaluation; link between course learning outcomes and its content; list of study (teaching and learning) methods; distribution of workload for students (contact hours with teacher and independent work); structure of accumulative grade and value of its constituent parts, as well as the main literature sources.

1.5. Evaluation of the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures consistent development of competences of students

The consistency of the field study programme content in the undergraduate study programme Marketing is as follows. According to the VMU Regulations on Studies, *the first two years* in undergraduate studies are mainly devoted for courses of Artes Liberales and students are obliged to pass all the university-level courses during that period. Another criterion deciding the consistency of the field study programme content is the prerequisites for entering the course. The analysis of links between learning outcomes and courses in study programme, presented in Annex 3, according to the factor of course place in the programme, and the study plan (see Annex 1) shows that it is well designed and the student taking up a particular course already has the necessary prerequisites for entering this course. So, during the first year of studies the students are introduced to different areas in the study field, most of the fundamentals in Marketing and Management, Consumer Behaviour, Organizational Communication and they also have study courses in economics-related fields, namely Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, also Mathematics.

During the second year of studies besides university-level and Faculty-level Artes Liberales courses students continue on learning the courses in Marketing study field (Marketing Communications, New Product Development and Pricing, Retail marketing, Advertising and Public Relations, Finance in Marketing). Students are taught Fundamentals of Finance, Managerial Decision Making, Financial Accounting and Reporting and they also have to write a Term Paper I, where they are asked to analyse scientific literature, theoretical innovations of real marketing problem and provide findings.

The second half of studies in the undergraduate study programme Marketing is aimed to study specific courses in marketing, courses related to law and management and other interdisciplinary courses. As students already have the sufficient basic knowledge in the study field, they are taught to go deeper into some contemporary problems in marketing, to apply their knowledge when studying marketing related issues, to combine interdisciplinary knowledge and to apply it for interpretation of data and problem solving.

During the third year of studies students are taught Social and Marketing Research and they also have to write Term Paper II. In the Term Paper they are have to prove that they are able to select and ground the methods of analysis, to use them in collecting the data about a problematic situation, to analyse the results and present conclusions. Also, students have Educational practice where they can apply their knowledge for marketing decision making during simulated reality which is very close to the real ones in business companies and to practice their future professional activities.

During the fourth year of studies students have Qualification Practice which is aimed to provide a possibility for the students to apply their knowledge and skills in real environment working in selected organization. This practice is placed at the end of the studies because of several of reasons. First, students already have almost all the knowledge and skills the programme is aimed to provide. They really are almost professionals in the labour market, and they can practice in more important positions in organizations. Second, this is one of the ways for students and SPC to control on the achievement of learning outcomes of the programme. The feedback from the mentors is very valuable not only for personal development of the students but also for the improvement of the programme. Third, this provides a possibility for the students to link their Final Bachelor Thesis with practical problems of specific organizations. Fourth, it is a very common practice in undergraduate study programs in most of the universities that both Qualification Practice and Thesis are organized at the last year of studies. It should allow better inclusion of business into study process as well. Final Bachelor Thesis is a written document in which the main statements and results of an individual investigation and solutions of a specific marketing problems are presented and defended following the formal procedure, when it is evaluated by defence committee.

The consistency of study program Marketing and International Commerce is as follows (see Annex 1). Compulsory courses of the programme are dedicated for deepening knowledge, skills, and abilities in field of marketing and international commerce; optional courses are dedicated to extending students' knowledge and abilities in different areas of management.

In the first semester Marketing field courses as Strategic Marketing, Digital Marketing strategy, Entrepreneurial Marketing, Neuromarketing are taught. The logic of such sequence follows that students get fundamental marketing knowledge necessary to understand marketing role in the company and main marketing concepts such value-based marketing, content marketing, branding, small company marketing and consumer neuroscience. In the same semester the course of Scientific Research Methodology provides with methods and tools for conducting research. This course was including in the programme according to experts' recommendation.

In the second semester Marketing field courses such as Corporate Reputation Management and Relationship Marketing are taught, as well as courses related to the international commerce: International Business and Value Chain Management. During the same semester students independently work on Term Paper I and present results of independent scientific research on contemporary marketing and/or international commerce problems.

In the third semester students have compulsory course International Marketing, and three optional courses, which students can select from the three groups of optional courses. In Term Paper II students further expand their scientific activities and present results of their empirical research. In both Term Paper I and Term Paper II students can make independent decisions on topics and advisor of their scientific research. Both Term Papers are presented both in written and orally for the evaluation of defence committee. The aim of the defence procedure is not just to evaluate student's Term Paper, but as well to provide feedback upon the research done, to provide recommendations for future topic development. Based on the concept of graduate studies at FEM, the third semester is also dedicated to mobility window / double degree studies.

The fourth semester dedicated to Final Master Thesis. Final Master Thesis – is a written document in which the main statements and results of an individual investigation of a specific marketing and international commerce problems are presented. The aim of the thesis is to reveal the results of an independent theoretical and empirical research carried out during the final stage of studies. While preparing the thesis, students demonstrate that are able to apply all the knowledge obtained during the study process, show personal skills in using analytical methods of analysis, make conclusions and prepare new solutions for a certain marketing and international commerce problems in constantly changing environment of marketing and in broader contexts. The requirements, preparation and defence procedure of the thesis are regulated by the order of VMU Vice-Rector for Studies and the Methodological Guidelines on the Master's Thesis Preparation, confirmed by the SPC. Final Master Thesis is presented in the public defence with the presence of the qualification committee.

In the study programme Advertising Management, courses are divided into 3 groups: (1) more focused on knowledge, skills and abilities in advertising, (2) more focused on advertising relative research skills and (3) providing broader and interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and abilities. Courses, focused on developing knowledge, skills and abilities in advertising are following: Advertising Theory, Advertising Business, Advertising Communication Strategies, Advertising Ethics and Social Responsibility, Creative Strategies, Innovative Advertising Decisions, Advertising Campaign and Project Management and Media Planning and Analysis. Courses, focused on advertising relative research skills are following: Scientific Research Methodology, Term Paper I, Term Paper II and Final Master Thesis. Courses, focused on providing broader and interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and abilities are following: Theories of Advertising Psychology and three optional courses. Nine out of twelve courses are compulsory, the three remaining courses are optional. Also, the majority of courses encompass both verbal and written communication, presentation, negotiation skills. The balance among singled out groups is implemented throughout four semesters and is explained below (see Annex 1).

The first semester is dedicated to provide proper basis to conduct scientific research (course Scientific research methodology) and to gain understanding of advertising, its positioning among other related fields and activities, as well as understanding the impact on society at large. The latter issues are reflected throughout the following courses: Advertising Theory, Advertising Business, Advertising Communication Strategies, and Theories of Advertising Psychology. This also ensure the proper bases to understand customers, apply customer centric approach, communicate, and deliver value for organizations, individuals, and society at large.

In the second semester students deepen their research skills when having a Term Paper I, which is focused on theoretical analysis of the chosen phenomenon. This approach, when students have a course relative to scientific research each semester, makes it possible to choose a possible topic for Final Master Theses quite early and work on this topic consistently for three

semesters conducting variety of research studies. This allows the student to accumulate deep and comprehensive knowledge, to check the applicability of the obtained results by presenting them to the public during the defence of term papers and at the conferences. Both Term Papers are presented in both written and orally for a defence committee. Also, students are provided with courses dedicated to gain and empower their special abilities to act effectively in the field of advertising, as well as nurture creativity and innovations. The further courses are following: Creative Strategies, Innovative Advertising Decisions, and Advertising Campaign and Project Management. One more courses, Advertising Ethics and Social Responsibility, is dedicated to understand and follow the legal and professional requirements when creating and delivering value for organizations, individuals and society at large in an ethical and responsible manner.

In the third semester students further develop their research skills when conducting an empirical research to accomplish a Term paper II. One course is dedicated to Media Planning and Analysis. In this way, the student moves smoothly from general to deep understanding of advertising and relative fields gaining the ability to create and propose substantiated ready-to-apply decisions and be able to anticipate the impact of these decisions. Three other courses taught in the third semester are optional. This makes possible not only to gain broad interdisciplinary knowledge but also provides flexibility to take an advantage of mobility programs offered at the FEM and VMU.

In the fourth semester students prepare and defend Final Master Thesis. The aim, process, and requirements of the Final Master Thesis in the study programme are the same as for the other graduate study programmes in marketing (for more details see description of graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce above).

In the study programme of Marketing and Sales, courses are divided into 3 groups: (1) courses mainly focused on marketing knowledge, skills, and abilities, (2) courses mainly focused on sales knowledge, skills and abilities and (3) courses matching both areas. All the courses of the study programme are compulsory; there are no optional courses (as discussed above). The courses, focused on developing marketing knowledge, skills and abilities are Buyer Behaviour, Strategic Marketing, Integrated Marketing Communication; the ones focused on sales knowledge, skills and abilities - Distribution Channel Management, Sales Strategies, and those focused on both areas - Relationship and Experience Management, Effective Communication, Digital Business, International Marketing. The balance between Marketing and Sales courses and the consistency of the field study programme content is explained below (see Annex 1).

The graduate study programme Marketing and Sales is organized in cycles, i.e. at one time students have only one course (except when writing Term Paper during the second semester).

In the first semester marketing courses as Buyer Behaviour, Strategic Marketing, and Integrated Marketing Communication are taught. The logic of such sequence follows that at the beginning students get the fundamental and empirical research-based marketing knowledge necessary to understand customers, to apply customer-centric approach, to create, communicate and deliver value for customers. These courses provide the same background to everyone, considering wide range of fields from which students are drawn. Next students move to deepening their knowledge, skills and abilities necessary working in both marketing and sales through Relationship and Experience management, Effective communication with stakeholders, encompassing both verbal and written communication, presentation, negotiation skills.

In the second semester students have Digital Business, inevitable in nowadays environment, go deeper into sales context through Distribution Channel Management and Sales

Strategies courses. The last course is International Marketing, which summarizes all in the global environment. During the second semester students prepare Term Paper, where the main focus is on the empirical applied research. In Term Paper students present results of independent practical research on contemporary marketing and/or sales situation interpreting the data obtained, provide the recommendations based on findings. Term Paper topics and advisor students can choose on their own. The Term Paper is presented both in written and orally for the defence committee. The aim of the defence procedure is not just to evaluate student's Term Paper, but as well to provide feedback upon the research done, to provide recommendations for future topic development.

In the third semester students prepare and defend the Final Master Thesis. The aim, process, and requirements of the Final Master Thesis in the study programme are the same as for the other graduate study programmes in marketing (for more details see description of graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce above).

1.6. Evaluation of opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes

VMU provides students with possibilities to study according to an individual study schedule in order to meet specific learning needs. The schedule is designed on the basis of the implemented study programme and individual study plans. An individual study schedule determines the distribution of the taken courses at a certain time, the number and time of consultations, the form and order of assessment, the beginning and end dates of the examination session. Studies according to the individual study schedule are regulated by the Description of the Procedure for Providing the Individual Study Schedule²⁵. In later semesters students have a wide choice of optional specialty courses.

In the undergraduate studies VMU also provides students with opportunities to take Individual studies when creating their own individual study plans following *Artes Liberales* principles in order to acquire additional knowledge and skills necessary to prepare for further academic and professional activities. Individual studies are regulated by Order on Organization of Individual studies²⁶ and VMU Study Regulations²⁷. Individual studies may be chosen from the second semester, but not later than the sixth study semester. Only the students who are motivated and prepared are selected for Individual studies.

Academia cum laude is a unique system of individual studies that allows motivated undergraduate students to go beyond their studies, delve into a personal study topic, work with world-renowned university professors - top scientists, researchers or recognized artists valued in their field, organized on the principle of *Artes Liberales*²⁸.

Individual learning needs are also assured by the possibility to take freely optional Minor studies that are one of the features of *Artes Liberales* studies in VMU. Minor studies are organized in accordance with VMU Description of Procedure for Organization of Minor Studies²⁹. Minor study programmes consist of courses taught in the first-cycle or integrated study programmes of a particular study field. A student who has chosen minor use credits allocated for university *Artes Liberales* group B study courses credits for these studies. Upon

²⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/vdu-individualaus-studiju-grafiko-teikimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT.

²⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/order-on-individual-studies-organization.pdf> in EN.

²⁷ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Study_Regulations_2019.pdf in EN.

²⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/academia-cum-laude/> in LT.

²⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Description-of-procedure-for-organisation-of-minor-studies-2017-06-07.pdf> in EN.

completion of minor studies, the student is issued a certificate testifying the completion of a minor study programme.

Moreover, the University is intercultural and multilingual, that is why students have opportunities to choose different foreign languages. More than 30 different language are available at the University.

Group A is comprised of the courses that are obligatory for all students at the university. Students have to study them during the first two years (the total coverage of the courses is 12–24 credits). In addition, in the first four semesters all VMU students have to acquire the knowledge of B2 level of English³⁰ and the basics of computer literacy³¹. Therefore, 12 credits of group A are allotted for the English language, but the learning volume depends on the student initial level of the language. VMU Regulations on Studies³² indicates opportunities for students with the required language and computer literacy level not to take up these courses and thus study two more foreign languages within the limits of the allowed credit number (VMU students have a choice of 30 foreign languages³³). Hereby, they have a chance to acquire competitive advantage over the students at other Lithuanian universities.

Group B consists of introductory courses to various branches of science and study areas. There are five sub-groups of these courses: Social Sciences; Humanities; Arts; Physical, Biomedical and Technological Sciences. Students have to choose and complete four courses (no less than 16 ECTS), or one from each sub-group except for the one belonging to the field of the chosen major (e.g., students studying in the Marketing study programme do not choose courses from the sub-group of Social Sciences). The VMU Senate determines courses according to the information received from each of the field academic committees³⁴. Group A and B part of the undergraduate study programme are not included into self-evaluation as SPC of Marketing study programme, the Department of Undergraduate Studies, and FEM have no control on these courses. Their principles and requirements are set at university level: the corresponding VMU faculties and departments are responsible for their implementation. The principles of organization and the structure of university-level *Artes Liberales* courses are presented in VMU Regulations of Studies.

In the graduate study programmes students are given possibility to individualise their studies by freely choosing topic of their scientific research (in Term Papers and Final Master Thesis); moreover, in many courses they are also are provided with possibility to choose topics of group or individual tasks and written assignments.

³⁰ Considering the results of the English language test taken at the time of signing of study agreement and secondary school English language results, the level of the student's English language studies is determined. Students who get into levels B1 or B2 study English as an A group subject (for up to two semesters). Other first year students study levels A1 and A2 in the first two semesters as a D group subject. Those who complete level A2 continue in levels B1 and B2 as group A subjects. The diagnostic English language test taken at the time of signing the agreement does not have to be taken if: (*) candidates have passed the state English language examination with 80% or more; (*) candidates have submitted respective results of standardised English language tests.

³¹ First year bachelor students have to take the test of Informatics before the beginning of the first semester. The results of this test show if a student will have to take up a D group subject – Informatics in the first or second semester. Those who successfully complete the studies of this subject and pass the examination (the total grade has to be not less than 8) can acquire the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) acknowledged in 148 countries. The test in Informatics does not have to be taken and the D group subject „Informatics“ does not have to be studied if: (*) candidates have passed the state examination in Informatics; (*) candidates have ECD Licence.

³² See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Study_Regulations_2019.pdf in EN.

³³ See <http://uki.vdu.lt/courses/> in EN.

³⁴ Each sub-group within the broader group of B group subjects is supervised by the Sub-Group Committee. The aims of the Committee are varied and range from the analysis and assessment of course proposals to be taught in the B group to proposing of visions of how to advance respective field of studies at VMU.

In 2018 Graduate studies department of FEM implemented structural changes in study syllabus of all full-time programmes (with state financing). All study field (mandatory) courses of Marketing and International Commerce and Advertising Management programmes were moved mainly to the first study year, while optional courses were concentrated in the third semester. This allows students to have a mobility window in the third semester (for Erasmus exchange or double degree studies). Alternatively, students opting to stay in VMU are given a possibility to experience *Artes Liberales* studies in graduate programmes – the optional courses are grouped into 3 groups (Personal skills and abilities, Managements skills and abilities and Sustainable development) with a possibility to choose from at least two courses in Lithuanian and two in English along with the students from the other FEM graduate study programmes. Topics of optional courses are ranging from personal carrier management, mobbing, personal finance management, project management to sharing economy, corporate governance and social responsibility, sustainable real estate development, etc.

After multiple deliberations in SPC, the Academic Council and the Dean's Office at FEM, the decision was made not to offer optional courses in Marketing and Sales study programme. This was done, mainly aiming to properly achieve both marketing and sales oriented learning outcomes in 1,5 year and 90 ECTS volumed study programme customised for segment of working students.

1.7. Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements

Preparation and defence of final theses is regulated by VMU Study Regulations and General Order on the Final Theses Preparation and Defence³⁵, describing the general requirements for final theses preparation and defence of first and second study cycle, integrated and professional studies. Special requirements for preparation, formatting, and presentation for defence of final theses are set by faculties and SPCs. In accordance with a specific study programme, they set the requirements for final theses, their preparation, defence, and special evaluation criteria.

Students can defend their final theses after completing the study programme courses. Final theses are defended at the end of the last semester. If the thesis is evaluated negatively, the student may re-defend the final thesis no earlier than after six months after the first defence.

The Final Bachelor Thesis of the Marketing study programme reveals the student's ability to understand and analyse marketing phenomena and processes and to creatively apply theoretical marketing knowledge and practical skills in solving marketing problems; based on independent applied research, the ability to analyse and interpret their results, the ability to reasonably formulate research findings and recommendations.

Final Master Thesis in graduate study programmes of Marketing and International Commerce, Marketing and Sales, and Advertising Management are based on the analysis, synthesis and critical evaluation of research papers relevant to the topic of the chosen field of marketing; the student's independent research, the ability to analyse and interpret their results, to formulate research conclusions and recommendations.

Final thesis of both undergraduate and graduate study programmes is related with all learning outcomes of the particular study programme (see Annex 3). Students have to demonstrate the abilities to discuss the selected marketing problem theoretically (links to knowledge and application-based learning outcomes of the study programmes). They have to

³⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GENERAL-ORDER-ON-THE-PREPARATION-AND-DEFENCE-OF-THE-FINAL-THESES.pdf>, in EN.

choose the appropriate scientific research methods of data collection, its summarization and assessment and to apply them for the empirical analysis of the marketing phenomena, also they are able to assess the tendencies and peculiarities of modern business environment, as well as different business contexts and their impact for marketing problems and solutions (links to the research skills based learning outcomes of the study programmes). Students should be able to adjust to apply research-based knowledge of marketing areas, critically evaluate marketing results in the context of organizational strategy, apply research results, planning marketing activities, anticipate strategic goals in both local and global companies in new and unfamiliar environments, creating innovative value propositions for the market (links to special abilities related learning outcomes of the study programmes). Students also must orally present and defend their thesis. Doing this they demonstrate their ability to communicate in professional language, to discuss with the audience on marketing issues. Besides, the final thesis has to have a clear and logical structure and be written in a scientific language, ideas have to be presented logically, clearly and accurately, following the science field terminology requirements.

When preparing the final thesis, students are provided with methodological requirements in specialized Moodle thesis course pages and timetable of submission of interim parts of the thesis in Moodle. Student must take responsibility for planning his/her time and workload, for meeting the deadlines. In most of the cases student is also responsible for choosing the topic of final thesis (they can choose the topic ordered by social partners; see examples in Annex 2).

During last years, the process of final thesis preparation and defence in FEM was provided with much more helpful material, guidelines, and time management means. Special Requirements for Preparation and Evaluation of FMT specifically for each study programme are prepared by SPC members, and, with other relevant and helpful documents, are available for the students on study programmes thesis Moodle pages. The students also receive guidance from their advisors, they can be consulted in scheduled hours every week in contact, on distance or by e-mails. Helpfulness of advisors is measured in feedback system, but also advisors are asked to notify their students as early as possible if they see that the thesis fails to match the study programme. They conduct reviewing of each part of the thesis, discussing comments and ways to improve the paper, organize trial defences for students allowing them to train for the defence and critically evaluate their progress.

The content of the Final Thesis corresponds to the content of the studies (see examples in Annex 2). Students often choose the topics of the final theses according to the topics of the courses they have listened to or related to the previously written term papers. Attractively presented modern views in the field by teachers or the experienced problems in working practice or orders from social partners determine certain choices of the final thesis topics.

The Qualification Committee for the Public Defence of Final Theses, consisting of competent specialists of the Marketing study field (4 scientists and 1 social partner-practitioner from other institution) is approved by the Rector's Order upon proposal of the Faculty Dean. In the interests of transparency and objectivity, the procedure of defence is highly formalized in VMU and FEM documents and is available for students in Moodle or VMU website³⁶.

All Final Master Theses and, starting 2020, also Final Bachelor Theses are checked for plagiarism according to the Decision of VMU Senate No. 4-20 of 25 June 2015 Provisions on the Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works³⁷. Heads of Undergraduate and Graduate studies are responsible for organizing plagiarism check, which is performed using plagiarism detection software officially approved at VMU. Results of plagiarism check are documented at

³⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GENERAL-ORDER-ON-THE-PREPARATION-AND-DEFENCE-OF-THE-FINAL-THESES.pdf>, in EN

³⁷ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Plagiato-prevencijos-nuostatai_VDU_2015-06-25.pdf in LT

FEM Plagiarism Prevention Commission protocol, which identifies of the amount of coincidence in each student’s Final Theses; results of commission’s discussion about those theses exceeding maximum acceptable amount of coincidence; and conclusions, which Final Theses are plagiarism and are not recommended for the public defence.

In graduate study programmes the Faculty Dean, upon proposal of the Head of the Graduate studies, approves the Attestation Commission for Master Final Theses, consisting of three teachers, which has to review and assess the completed final theses. The main function of the Attestation Commission for Master Final Theses is to assess whether all obligatory requirements for structure, contents, volume, and formatting have been fulfilled and to indicate which drawbacks have to be corrected. Attestation Commission does not provide feedback on the quality of FMT content. After this assessment, the student may correct only the drawbacks indicated by the Commission until the specified date. Results of Attestation Commission’s evaluation are documented in a compliance report, which is presented to the student and to the Public Defence Committee.

Starting 2017, students, who successfully complete all the requirements of the programme and defend their Final Thesis, are awarded Bachelor’s or Master’s degree in Business Management, because of the Descriptor of Study Fields and Groups of Fields³⁸.

Graduates of the first cycle studies in the field of marketing are awarded a bachelor's degree in Business Management corresponding to the sixth levels of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the first cycle of the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

Graduates of the second cycle studies in the field of marketing are awarded a master's degree in Business Management corresponding to the seventh levels of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework and the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning and the second cycle of the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Study aims, outcomes and content</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Marketing study programme		
1.	Based on the experience of delivering the Study Programme as well as feedback from students and stakeholders the curriculum should be reviewed continuously and adjusted as appropriate to ensure that the programme learning outcomes are being achieved while at the same time providing a more sustained focus on marketing specialism to give competitive advantage to young graduates in the marketplace.	Over the last five years the content and study plan of the programme had been reviewed and reorganized to ensure that the study results are achieved and more focused on marketing specialization and labour market needs. In 2019, in response to students’ comments about the content of programme and aiming to make the programme more competitive, programme name was changed to “Marketing” and study plan of the programme was updated. The study programme was supplemented with courses: Trade Marketing, Advertising and Public Relations, Creative Methods in Marketing, Marketing Analytics, Marketing Project Management, Competitiveness and Innovation, Finance in Marketing. Optional courses of Sales Management, Business-to-Business Marketing, Visual Communication in Marketing were made mandatory.

³⁸ See <https://www.skvc.lt/default/en/quality-assurance/study-program-descriptions> in EN

<p>2. The Expert Group suggests to further develop the curriculum design of the Study Programme by integrating corporate finance into it as such knowledge and skills are needed for young specialists to understand how company budget influences the scope of marketing management and implementing marketing strategy.</p>	<p>Study programme was strengthened with mandatory and optional courses: Basics of finance; Finances in Marketing; Financial accounting and reporting, Managerial Accounting.</p>
<p>Marketing and International Commerce study programme</p>	
<p>1. The Expert Team would strongly recommend changing the title of the Programme, in order to substitute the term “commerce” with subsequent changes in Programme aims and curriculum composition. If the direction of the Programme towards international commercial activities would be maintained, the subjects in international trade (including electronic) and sales management would be very much recommended.</p>	<p>It was decided not to change the title of the programme. Decision was made after discussion with members of SPC, alumni, social partners, and FEM members. The decision was based on that program with that name well known in Lithuania and it became as a brand. It’s allowed to attract sufficient number of students. To strengthen international commerce aspect of the programme, some courses directly oriented to international commerce were taught in the programme. In other programme’s courses the internationalization aspects are also emphasized.</p>
<p>2. Programme curriculum should be amended by a subject that allows students acquiring methodological skills of academic research. This would enable them to develop stronger methodological basis in the final theses and acquire better skills of scientific research in general.</p>	<p>Research Methodology Course was included in the programme since 2015.</p>
<p>3. The curriculum structure may be developed by adding additional compulsory subjects (as it is recommended above); and by replacing several rather irrelevant electives (especially – offered in the first semester) with the subjects that could be jointly delivered to at least two related graduate programmes. Students of Marketing and International Commerce Programme could have an option to take some electives from the Programme Advertising Management, and vice versa. This would allow achieving savings in teaching resources and create realistic possibilities for Master students to individually make choices of elective modules. Unfortunately, none of the current subjects substantially cover issues of digital marketing and/or online sales, thus the subjects of this type have to be</p>	<p>Third semester intended for study optional courses. Students have opportunity to choose 3 courses from 11 courses. Students also can choose courses from Advertising management programme.</p>

<p>amended to the schedule. Simultaneously, it should be considered providing students with software that is required for this purpose (SalesForce, Google Analytics, etc.).</p>	
Advertising Management study programme	
<p>1. The programme team should include learning outcomes relating to the need for students to demonstrate the ability to carry out an independent piece of scientific research and present the findings in a thesis, and to demonstrate creativity skills.</p>	<p>The recommendation was taken into account. SPC had reviewed the programme learning outcomes and included those relating to the Knowledge and application, Research skills and Special abilities, as well as Social and Personal abilities correspondingly relative to creativity. Also, a newly introduced course of Scientific research methodology coupled with Term Paper I and Term Paper II ensures ability to carry out an independent piece of scientific research, present results during the defence procedure and leads to smooth preparation on FMT. All student are also highly encouraged to participate in students' scientific conference organised by FEM each spring.</p>
<p>2. The programme team should introduce formal support for Research Methods to enable students to complete Theses of a scientific nature including the use of advanced analytical methods.</p>	<p>The recommendation was taken into account. SPC had included in the programme a course of Scientific research methodology that aims to provide students with methodological knowledge and practical skills required to conduct a scientific research applying properly chosen analytical methods.</p>
<p>3. Instead of squeezing the whole Thesis process into semester 4, the programme team should require students to select a Thesis topic early in the programme and no later than semester 2 to allow students time to examine relevant literature before formulating their research question, and time for their thoughts to mature and to carry out empirical research as required.</p>	<p>The recommendation was taken into account. SPC had included two new courses (in the second and third semesters) in the programme to ensure students to be properly prepare for the final thesis.</p>
<p>4. The programme team should review the content of the programme with a view to include courses or elements of courses more specifically relating to Advertising [e.g. Brand Management] and including the latest developments in digital and social media marketing and advertising.</p>	<p>The content of the programme had been reviewed and changed were implemented. New courses and some elements to the existing courses more specifically relating to Advertising (i.e. Advertising communication strategies) were introduced including the latest developments in digital and social media marketing and advertising (i.e. Innovative advertising decisions).</p>
<p>5. The programme team should review the sequencing of courses to ensure that pre-requisites do not preclude students from freely selecting options</p>	<p>Course structure had been reshaped placing mandatory courses into the first study year and electives into the third semester (changes implemented on the entire Graduate studies level).</p>

Marketing and Sales study programme	
1. Document fully how programme learning outcomes (e.g. Outcome 2, Outcome 3 and Outcome 4) are realised and achieved in the programme design, structure and detailed content and justify the overall balance between Marketing and Sales, Theory and Practice in the programme as delivered.	<p>Details how programme learning outcomes were achieved were presented in 2014-2017 Progress Report³⁹.</p> <p>Learning outcomes have been revised and reformulated in 2020. Specification of how reformulated programme learning outcomes are achieved, as well as the balance between Marketing and Sales, Theory and Practice is explained in chapter 1.</p>
2. The programme structure and overall credit weight must be re-evaluated in the light of the 'blocked' nature of the delivery, the wide range of sources from which students are drawn and the prevalence of supplementary bridging studies. In total these factors may require a four semester 120 credit programme design to achieve all of the learning outcomes.	<p>The programme structure and credit weight distribution were revised among the courses (as explained above in chapter 1). Staying with 90 ECTS led to the decision not to extend the study duration, which is considered as competitive advantage.</p> <p>If there is a need to unify students' level of knowledge taking into account wide range of sources from which they are drawn, students can choose additional studies organized by university. Additional studies include first-cycle study courses that have not been studied by those intending to enter second-cycle study programs. The need for additional studies is evaluated for each student before mandate commission based on students diplomas. Student with bachelor's degree in business, economics, marketing, management, and related study fields are accepted without additional studies. Students with bachelor's degree of other field have to choose additional studies of 30 ECTS. Students with professional bachelor's degree in business, economics, marketing, management and related study fields have to choose additional studies of 60 ECTS. Thus, the whole duration of the studies can last from 1,5 to 2,5 year depending on candidates.</p>
3. The programme should be redesigned to achieve proper sequencing of prerequisites with a re-examination of mandatory and elective subjects (Negotiation, Logistics) and the possible introduction of modules in areas such as Sales Management, Sales Research, Market Research and Scientific Research Methods is recommended.	<p>Following recommendations, Sales strategies became mandatory course in 2015.</p> <p>In order to ensure study quality in a given duration, optional courses were eliminated. All the courses are mandatory now. The programme was fully redesigned in 2019. The changes, consistency of study programme are presented in chapter 1. Scientific Research course, as recommended was not included into the program because of study programme profile – practical orientation. Nevertheless, students get acquainted with scientific research methods during Term Paper and Master Thesis. Market research topics are covered through different courses.</p>

³⁹ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/VDU_Marketingas_ir_pardavimai_pask_veikla.pdf in LT

**Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of
Study aims, outcomes and content**

Strengths

- Each FEM study programme in Marketing field has a clear and distinct identity, which is translated into aim and learning outcomes of each program.
- The portfolio of study programmes in Marketing field at FEM fully corresponds to the market needs, covering different focuses in Marketing field and both first and second cycles of the studies system.
- The aims, learning outcomes and content of study programmes in Marketing field include both fundamental and empirical research based latest knowledge and are regularly updated by SPCs, thus directly reflect the growth-focused priorities of Lithuania's and EU of today's social, political, economic and technological development and needs in the labour market.
- Marketing study programmes curriculum design and content, as well as teaching and learning methods enable the achievement of the study programmes aims and learning outcomes.
- Learning outcomes of all Marketing study field programmes had been renewed to cover all categories in line with the Bologna Qualifications Framework (knowledge and its application, research skills, special, social, and personal abilities) and are balanced among each other.
- The student-centred model of *Artes Liberales* applied to the studies in Marketing field at VMU FEM gives a wide range of opportunities for students to personalise their studies according to their personal objectives in a system which allows preparing creative personalities, successfully developing their careers.

Areas for improvement

- Learning outcomes of study programmes in Marketing field might need to be reviewed after Descriptor of the study field of Marketing will be approved. The initial activities have already been carried out during the last review of the study programmes in Marketing field.

2. Links between science and study activities

2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the science (applied science, art) activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research (art) related to the field of study

FEM at VMU has *one of the most established traditions in marketing research among the Lithuanian universities*. Marketing research and studies have always been an important distinctive institutional characteristic of FEM when compared with other major universities in Lithuania (e.g. some having greater institutional tradition in economics, others – in technology and engineering-related management research). It is partly due to the fact that after the restoration of state independence, VMU was re-established as the country's only comprehensive university whose research and study curriculum was based on *Artes Liberales* principles. The culture of *Artes Liberales* contributed to the emergence of more dynamic and interdisciplinary fields that reflected the needs of the market economy and society. Marketing was one of those disciplines that profited directly from the philosophy of *Artes Liberales* and helped FEM become *a hub of marketing research and studies in Lithuania*. Marketing study programmes fall under the more general research field of Management, in which FEM VMU received the score of *three* (in 2018), which is the highest score among the institutions involved in Lithuania's largest joint committee for doctoral studies in Management (VMU, MRU, SU, KU, and LUA until 2019 merger with VMU).

FEM in VMU is *home to some of the leading researchers and experts in the fields of marketing and marketing management in Lithuania*. To mention just a few examples:

- prof. habil. dr. P. Žukauskas, a former long-standing Dean of the faculty, is a member of General Assembly of EMA, author of numerous international scientific papers and monographs;
- prof. dr. L. Pilelienė is country's leading researcher and expert in the field of neuromarketing. She is also the Head of FEM VMU Marketing laboratory and leader of numerous marketing research projects;
- prof. dr. A. Bakanauskas is former Head of Marketing Department and a leading authority in consumer research and static advertising;
- assoc. prof. dr. M. Šontaitė-Petkevičienė is the Head of Lithuanian Marketing Association (LIMA) Kaunas;
- assoc. prof. dr. N. Klebanskaja is the research coordinator at the Baltic Management Institute, Lithuania's leading business school for executive education (FEM VMU as a founding member, EPASS accreditation), as well as a recognized marketing consultant;
- prof. dr. G. Jucevičius is a member of international expert bodies in fields of innovation and entrepreneurship (ISPIM, AOM) and regular expert of H2020 innovation projects with DG Research of European Commission, leader of numerous research projects related to marketing and strategy;
- assoc. prof. A. Pažėraitė is a member of numerous international H2020 research projects and is one the country's key experts having a unique combination of competences in marketing, energy sector and climate neutral society.
- assoc. prof. dr. O. Stripeikis is the Head of Centre for Enterprise Practices at VMU, member of University Industry Innovation Network.
- dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė is the most active young researcher in Lithuania in the field of neuromarketing and has regularly received the national awards as one of the most scientifically productive doctoral students (PhD defended in 2020) in Lithuania.

FEM and VMU is the *lead partner / coordinator of Lithuania's largest institutional consortium of doctoral studies in Management* (with Mykolas Romeris University, Klaipėda University, Šiauliai University, and until 2019 – Lithuanian University of Agriculture). This Joint Doctoral Committee is also responsible for the doctoral studies in the field of marketing (as sub-discipline of management studies). At the moment, FEM has 17 doctoral students in the general field of Management, of whom 9 conduct research in marketing. It is important to notice that the number and share of doctoral students in marketing has been rising during the past 5 years: 5 doctoral students out of 12 in 2015, 5 out of 13 in 2016, 7 out of 15 in 2017, 9 out of 16 in 2018 and 9 out of 17 in 2019. Besides, it is important to mention that FEM currently enrolls 4 international doctoral students whereas only five years ago, the research staff at FEM was fully Lithuanian. At least one international doctoral student has been joining marketing research team at FEM every year during the period 2016-2019. *Marketing department of FEM is an internationalization leader in terms of foreign doctoral students both at VMU and among other comparative departments in Lithuania.*

The marketing research group at FEM (that includes advanced researchers and Ph.D. students) conducts research on topics that reflect the most recent trends in marketing science, e.g.:

- “B2B marketing in social media and modelling its impact on product sales” (K. Rėklaitis, L. Pilelienė),
- “Artificial intelligence in customer value individualisation” (N. Babayev, A. Pažėraitė),

- “Personal privacy-based personal brand image formation in the music industry” (E. Gouitcheche, L. Pilelienė),
- “Modelling the innovative content marketing solutions” (R. Repovienė, A. Pažėraitė),
- “The evaluation of the digital customer engagement levels with machine-generated content in the conversational marketing” (Kh. Israfilzade, L. Pilelienė),
- “Integration of product placement methods in digital media” (E. Abromavičius),
- “Modelling of the influence of the elements of visual advertising of fast-moving consumer goods on consumer behaviour” (V. Grigaliūnaitė),
- “Consumer-perceived brand-value modelling” (V. Bičiūnaitė-Svobonienė, A. Bakanauskas),
- “Innovative marketing solutions for climate-neutral society” (A. Pažėraitė).

The new knowledge obtained by conducting the above mentioned research is constantly integrated into the study process by updating the current course and introducing the new ones (see 2.2. for details).

The research strategy of FEM is based on 3 I's: *Internationality, Interdisciplinarity* and *Impact*. These strategic principles also hold for the marketing-related research.

International mobility and expertise of marketing researchers. VMU as a whole is among Europe's Top-40 universities by the intensity of Erasmus exchange (data of the European Commission), while FEM VMU is the only business school in Lithuania to be part of Campus Europae network. It all contributes to greater international mobility of researchers and their exposure to newest expertise. In 2017-2019, marketing researchers regularly profited from the Erasmus mobility opportunities and taught at different European universities (e.g. University of Alicante (M. Šontaitė-Petkevičienė), Instituto Politecnico du Porto, University of Nicosia (L. Pilelienė), University of Foggia (A. Kyguolienė), West Pomeranian University of Technology (V. Grigaliūnaitė)). Besides, during the period marketing researchers were part of the international networks of professionals (AOM, EURAM, ISPIM, etc.) and participated in the top-level international conferences organized by these networks. They regularly performed the role of expert evaluators of the international research projects (e.g. Horizon2020, institutional research twinning calls by the European Commission). In the future, the international mobility will be further encouraged both through organizational and financial means (especially after the current constraints related to Covid-19 are released). There are sufficient financial preconditions for encouraging researchers' mobility not only through the annual participation in EU mobility schemes (e.g. Erasmus +), but also through the researchers' mobility funding calls organised 2-3 times per year by University.

Research synergies from international partnerships with Europe's leading business schools. FEM has probably the most international repertoire of graduate study programmes in Lithuania - all of them having a strong element of research. FEM VMU has institutional partnerships with Top-40 European business schools (Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Norwegian School of Economics and Business Administration (NHH), Paris HEC, Louvain School of Management (for executive MBA), Trento University and Aveiro University); many of these partnerships lead not only to the double-degree programmes, but also towards the research synergies. The key international partner for marketing is Louvain School of Management at Louvain Catholic University (LSM-LLN). The researchers from LSM-LLN not only come for teaching visits to FEM VMU, but also share their research expertise with students and staff, supervise student research projects. There are also joint publications happening from the cooperation of FEM VMU and their foreign partners (e.g. common monograph with Prof. Jean-Paul Larçon of Paris HEC in 2017). Such collaborations will continue in the future while building on and extending the existing networks. These initiatives also have financial support by FEM where funds are given to researchers for visiting the partner universities (often in combination with Erasmus+ funding). Such financial

support will be continued in the future. Besides, FEM has envisaged funds for joining the international CEEMAN network in the near future (more research-related synergies with regard to studies are presented in 2.2.)

Ever growing internationalization of marketing research and FEM scientific journals. During the period of 2017-2019, there has been an ever increasing focus on quality parameters in the publication strategy of FEM as a whole and marketing research in particular (i.e. away from the quantity of publications in less recognized scientific journals towards smaller number, but higher ranked publications). It is also reflected in the internationalization strategy of FEM scientific journals. The journal *“Management of Organizations”* has been one of the first scientific journals in the field of management (incl. marketing) in Lithuania. Since 2017, it is published by the international De Gruyter publishing house (in 2019 renamed SCIENDO) and went from bilingual (English/Lithuanian) to a fully English format. It accepts publications from authors from all around the world. The share of international authors has increased up to around 60 % over the past 3 years. In the future, there are plans to further increase the share of international researchers both at FEM and journal. The cooperation with De Gruyter / SCIENDO platform will be continued as it provides an excellent base for such internationalisation, entering the international networks and top-level journal databases. In 2020, the contract is being revised, the necessary financial measures have been envisaged by FEM.

Interdisciplinary research enabled by the unique Artes Liberales culture of VMU. Marketing research at FEM profits a lot from liberal, open and non-hierarchical culture of VMU. FEM is uniquely positioned to profit from synergies with other social sciences thanks to its location at VMU, which is regularly ranked as Lithuania’s number one/two in the field of social sciences. The social dimension is strongly represented in the research specialization of FEM and sets it apart from other business schools / faculties in Lithuania. The most innovative topics and publications of FEM researchers stem from the cross-disciplinary connections, e.g. neuromarketing, behavioural economics, trust, networks, and ecosystems. Just to give a few examples, the neuromarketing research conducted by prof. L. Pilelienė and dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė contains a strong dimension of psychology. Another example - FEM marketing researchers participated in Horizon2020 project on the establishment of Centre for Cultural and Creative Industries in interdisciplinary team of researchers from arts, culture, education science and ICT. There are quite close connections among the Faculty’s marketing researchers and researchers from other faculties (fields of public communication, arts, and creative industries). There are further organizational preconditions for such cross-disciplinary cooperation in the future as it is at the core of the new VMU research strategy that is now being adopted for 2021-2027. The financial resources for clusters are each year allocated on the University level. Besides, the researchers of different clusters can participate with their interdisciplinary projects at the funding competitions that are announced twice a year by the University.

Institutional framework supportive of interdisciplinary teams. Interdisciplinary collaboration is enabled by the institutional structure of research clusters. Marketing-related research is being conducted through the University cluster *„Research of marketing management in contemporary environment“* (one out of three research clusters coordinated by FEM and funded by VMU). It promotes the integration of different disciplinary perspectives in marketing research, such as: *neuromarketing, brand management, dimensions of value, organizational reputation and social responsibility, trends in customer behaviour and marketing communications*. The boundaries of research clusters are quite flexible. Researchers can participate in the activities of several clusters at the same time (depending on the research project). In the future, there are plans to further strengthen the interdisciplinary research linkages in joint publications and applications for the research projects (especially with the new

university research teams that became part of VMU after the merger with LUA and the ongoing internal consolidation).

Growing significance of applied research with practical impact. FEM is paying even more importance to the applied research that serves for solving real life problems and contributes to the experiential learning of students (more details in section 2.3.). FEM VMU is home to the University-level Centre for Enterprise Practices⁴⁰ (established in 2014), which enables the experiential learning of students through applied research and case analysis. The marketing researchers of FEM VMU are also acting as experts and consultants with direct practical impact on real-life business solutions. For example, dr. J. Kisieliauskas and dr. A. Kyguolienė are involved as research partners in the project application for the commercialization of intelligence solutions for music creators and broadcasters (with Shakespeare music Ltd). Besides, FEM VMU have long-lasting institutional relations with the largest national corporations (e.g. Volfas Engelman, Žalgiris, Lithuanian Energy, etc.), institutes of applied research (e.g. Lithuanian Energy Institute) or professional associations (e.g. Lithuanian Marketing Association) that result in various common projects with a societal/business impact. Marketing researchers also work together with national agencies, such as Invest in Lithuania or Enterprise Lithuania (project on Kaunas city branding) and associations, e.g. with Lithuanian Banking Association on the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles in banks. In the future, the dimension of applied research will be further strengthened through the reinforcement of linkages with the top level management stakeholders from BMI and Alumni network. In 2020, FEM VMU has signed the new contract with BMI for extending such cooperation and network activities. The financial resources for applied research are attracted from business partners and R&D project funding (e.g. “Inočekiai” programme coordinated by Ministry of Economics and Innovation).

Thus, to summarise briefly the information presented above, the institutional strategy for further strengthening research in Marketing rests on the following strategic directions:

- Encouraging the international mobility of researchers and international dissemination of their research findings (through institutional researchers’ funding calls organised 2-3 times per year, annual participation in the EU mobility schemes)
- Strengthening the international research partnerships (through institutional support and funding of memberships in leading professional associations)
- Increasing the internationalization of FEM scientific journal and research community (through institutional support / funding to the participation in leading academic networks (e.g. CEEMAN) and platforms (e.g. de Gruyter / Sciendo), attracting the international researchers)
- Reinforcing the cross-disciplinary synergies for strengthening the innovativeness and originality of Marketing research (through the support of VMU research clusters and funds allocated for the consolidation of research potential in management and economics within the University)
- Modernizing the Neuromarketing research laboratory at FEM VMU, equipping researchers with state-of-the-art technologies and competences (through the financial support of project funded by the European Social Fund that ensures investment of up to 300.000 EUR for the research needs of FEM VMU).

⁴⁰ See <https://www.verslopraktikos.lt/en/about/>

2.2. Evaluation of the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art and technology

The above-mentioned qualities of FEM research are directly or indirectly reflected in the contents of the study programmes and their courses. The research-related influences on the contents of study programmes are multifold.

From research projects. The study process derives direct benefits from the *research projects* undertaken by the FEM staff and related publications. Some examples:

- Prof. Lina Pilelienė and dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė have implemented the national research projects in the field of neuromarketing, the research findings were integrated into various courses, such as “Consumer behaviour”, “Entrepreneurial marketing”. A new research-based course “Neuromarketing” was also created.
- Prof. G. Jucevičius was leading two national research projects (both funded by Research Council of Lithuania) “Enabling the self-organization in contemporary innovation ecosystem” (SELFORG) and „Innovation strategies of organizations in the emerging economic-institutional environments“ (INNOSTRAT). The new knowledge acquired during these projects helped improve the course “Competitiveness and Innovation”.
- The H2020 project „Centre of Excellence for Cultural and Creative Innovations in Lithuania“ (INNOCULT) contributed to the improved VMU FEM competences in the marketing aspects of cultural and creative industries that were included into the content of different study modules.
- The project of applied research “Online Advertising Effectiveness Model“ (funded by MITA as part of National initiatives fostering the implementation of innovation) led to the creation of tool for assessing the effectiveness of internet advertising. It enriched “Advertising Management” study programme.
- Another project of applied research focusing on novel marketing areas „The impact of content marketing elements on the effectiveness of ads on search engines: Case of Google AdWords application for leisure services“ (by A. Pažėraitė, R. Repovienė) helped to assess the effects of content marketing on the advertisement in search engines. The research findings contributed to the emergence of new courses Innovative Advertising Decisions, Relationship and Experience Marketing and had strong value-added to the existing course Relationship Marketing. Assoc. prof. A. Pažėraitė and doctoral student N. Babayev started research on disruptive technologies and their impact on customer value creation. This development added value to the above-mentioned modules as well.
- Research project “Population Access to Housing and Measures to Increase the Availability of Housing” (No. P-REP-18-8, category - Research commissioned by the State) helped deepen knowledge of preparation of research methodology and conduct of research that touches sensitive issues of the society at large. Therefore, this research is used as a good example in the graduate course Scientific Research Methodology. The results of the research project also revealed the importance of a proper countryside advertising campaign, thus its findings also contributed to the course Advertising business.
- The newly started Horizon2020 Twinning project TWIN-PEAKS (Partners: Lithuanian Energy Institute, VMU, Technical University of Munich (Germany), Chalmers University of Technology (Sweden) and WIP Renewable Energies GmbH & Co. KG (Germany)) aims to raise the scientific excellence and definitely will enrich the expertise of scientific research methodology preparation and add to the teaching quality of the module Scientific Research Methodology. This module is delivered by the marketing group members assoc. prof. A. Pažėraitė and V. Grigaliūnaitė. They are both directly involved in the above-mentioned project where Aušra Pažėraitė is project leader from VMU.

The quality of marketing study programmes profits a lot from the long-standing FEM *institutional partnerships* with leading international business schools and their professionals who come to share their expertise. Synergies occur thanks to the interactions maintained through Baltic Management Institute, or BMI (FEM is academic founding partner of this Lithuania's leading business school of executive education) and through the double-degree graduate study programmes organized together with foreign partners. For example, prof. Pierre Semal of Louvain School of Management (UCL, Belgium) regularly delivers the course Value Chains in International Business and engages students into research projects within the course. Prof. Luigi Mittone a leading expert in behavioural studies in economic sciences from Trento University (Italy), delivers the course on behavioural economics to the graduate students from marketing (and economics), and engage them into the research project during the course. Meanwhile, Prof. Jean-Paul Larçon of Paris HEC (another co-founder of BMI together with FEM VMU) has engaged FEM researchers into the international research project and monograph on global value chains.

The *international mobility* of researchers also contributes to the improved study programmes. For example, Prof. G. Jucevičius had 12-month stay as a researcher and SCIEX Fellow at one of Europe's leading business schools, HEC University of Lausanne (Switzerland). He worked in a group of researchers led by Prof. Y. Pigneur and Dr. A. Osterwalder that was behind the development of the globally recognized Business Model Canvas tool. This experience led to the creation of new study modules related to business model design and innovation. FEM marketing researchers (M. Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, L. Pilelienė, V. Grigaliūnaitė) also had many international research stays at different universities as part of the Erasmus mobility programme.

As FEM profits from being located at the University of *Artes Liberales* with its distinctive profile in social sciences and humanities, it leads to the *new cross-disciplinary fields of research and studies*. One of such examples could be *Laboratory of Neuromarketing* that combines perspectives from marketing, psychology, neuroscience and uses advanced technical equipment (electroencephalograph, stationary and distance equipment for eye tracking, measuring skin galvanic reactions, etc; see 6.1. for details). These facilities are used in the study modules of Neuromarketing, Marketing Communications (for selecting the elements in advertising), New product development and pricing (for creating the packaging solutions), Consumer behaviour (for analysing the consumer behaviour in shopping areas). Another promising area with cross-disciplinary potential that emerged from the base of marketing research group is *eSport*. The ICT-based Magnus eSports⁴¹ facilities (see 6.1. for more details) have only been established at FEM only in 2019, but have received great interest from students both as the area of new dynamic platforms and fast growing business models. FEM is the main strategic partner of Lithuanian Basketball Federation for eSports development.

New developments in marketing concepts and their practical applications are also getting introduced into the Marketing study programmes through close cooperation with Lithuanian Marketing Association (LIMA). It provides a channel of getting high level experts and special guests into the undergraduate and graduate study programmes. BMI, co-founded by FEM, represents a great asset in terms of top-level marketing practitioners from the Lithuania's leading firms that can be invited both as speakers in classrooms and experts in research. Centre for Enterprise Practices serves as a platform of collaboration among the FEM researchers and students of all study levels. This is where they get introduced and get hands-on experience of the modern methods in marketing and business development, can test their ideas and work with companies by presenting their field research or testing the hypotheses.

⁴¹ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magnus-esport/> in LT.

2.3. Evaluation of conditions for students to get involved in scientific (applied science, art) activities consistent with their study cycle

FEM, as a part of classical comprehensive university, has designed its curriculum on the principle of unity of research and studies. This principle is particularly pronounced on the higher levels of studies (i.e. the later years of undergraduate studies and entire graduate studies, not to mention the doctoral studies).

In the undergraduate study programme Marketing, the students are getting acquainted with the key methods of social and market research during the course Social and marketing research (5th semester, 6 ECTS). At the end of 5th semester students also have the Educational Practice (4 ECTS), during which they are not only taught the modern concepts and tools, but can adapt them to the solutions of practical company cases. FEM VMU marketing researchers present them with concept and methods, while the representatives of different companies – with problems they are asked to solve. They were creating marketing communication plans for organizations like Kaunas Botanical Garden, Lithuanian Basketball League, NGO “Nemuno žiedas“, firms from the creative industries “Fėjos namai“ and “Curiosity“.

During their four-year studies, undergraduate students also have to write two Marketing Term Papers: Term Paper I (4 ECTS) takes place during the 4th semester and is based on theoretical analysis of the chose field, whereas Term Paper II (4 ECTS) takes place during the 6th semester and students are asked to present findings of empirical research (at this stage of the studies, they already are familiar with social and market research methods). At the end of the undergraduate studies they have to write Final Bachelor Thesis that contains parts of theoretical and empirical research. In thesis, students have to show good understanding of marketing concepts / phenomena and use them properly in the theoretical and empirical research.

All three graduate study programmes in Marketing are even more focused on equipping students with proper research skills. In 2017, the compulsory Scientific Research Methodology course has been introduced for all graduate students of marketing study programmes (another course was specifically designed for the graduate students in economics and finance due to different methodological challenges across the study programmes). The course is delivered by marketing researchers assoc. prof. A. Pažėraitė and dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė. During the methodology course students have to present their preliminary research design for the planned Final Master Thesis. They are also equipped with the necessary IT-based tools for analysing social statistics and taught fundamental operational skills (SPSS, Gretl, etc.)

Besides, students of all graduate programmes have to prepare two Term Papers (both 4 ECTS), during which they conduct theoretical and empirical research in the area of their interest (within the marketing discipline) and are guided by the preliminary supervisors of their Final Master Theses. At the end of the graduate studies, students have to prepare Final Master Thesis in which they have to provide solutions to a legitimate marketing problem based on theoretically and methodologically sound research. This focus on research-based solutions is the key difference from Final Bachelor Thesis.

During the period 2017-2019, the undergraduate, graduate and doctoral students from marketing programmes have been actively participating in the *Annual Conference of Students*⁴² organized at FEM (in 2020 was already the 23rd Annual Conference) with opportunity to be published in the conference proceedings. Every year there is a Marketing Section at the conference, which accounts for around quarter of all participants (other being respectively in the sections of Finance, Economics and Management). In 2017, Marketing Section had 11, in 2018 – 10, in 2019 – 11 presenters. Participants are the most active bachelor, master and doctoral

⁴² See <http://evf.vdu.lt/mokslas-ir-verslas/konferencijos/doktorantu-ir-magistrantu-konferencija-3/> in LT.

students who are accepted to the conference with reviewed papers that are later published in conference materials⁴³. The conference gives students with an opportunity to present their research findings from the term papers and final theses, to double check their validity and to prepare for the final defence (which usually takes place within 1 month after the conference). The undergraduate students are given extra motivation to participate at the conference as they receive an extra evaluation point for the future competition for entering a master study programme at FEM. Most of the conference papers and presentations are prepared in cooperation with the supervisors / marketing researchers of FEM, which also helps increase the students' research competence and, in certain cases, leads to joint publications in scientific journals (especially with the graduate students on their way to doctoral studies). Some of the best performing doctoral students of FEM (e.g. V. Grigaliūnaitė) have emerged from this process by building gradually their research competence up from the bachelor level.

Throughout their studies, undergraduate and graduate students have access to FEM *ICT infrastructure for research* as well as *Laboratory of Neuromarketing* with its advanced technical equipment. Students participate in marketing research both as researchers and as respondents – it provides them with possibility to get research experience, as well as to observe the mistakes that can happen during the surveys or experiments. Students are involved (both during classes and voluntarily) in preparing and testing the research instruments that are being used in faculty research (surveys, forms of experiments or observation protocols, experiment environments).

Both undergraduate and graduate students also have a possibility to get involved into solving practical problems through applied research with the Centre of Enterprise Practice of Vytautas Magnus University (located at FEM VMU). In 2018, its “Entrepreneurship Academy” became national winner and was ranked as top 3 project in Europe in “European Enterprise Promotion Awards 2018” (category “Investing into entrepreneurial skills”). It was selected as one of 51 best practice case studies for the university-business cooperation in Europe. Centre of Enterprise Practice connects students with more than 100 business companies, venture capitalists, social partners, and industry associations (e.g. Lithuanian Confederation of industrialists, Lithuanian Marketing Association, FESTO, Telia, LIDL, Viciunai Group). Each semester at least 15 students from marketing study programmes take part in the activities organized by Centre for Enterprise Practice.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Links between science and study activities</i>		
<i>No</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions taken by the HEI</i>
Marketing and International Commerce study programme		
5.	The Department of Marketing staff (especially - younger) could significantly benefit from participation in high-level international marketing conferences, organised by the leading professional bodies (EMAC, AMS, AMA, etc.). This would allow not only develop research partnership, but also foster their professional carriers.	Marketing researchers are the part of the international networks of professionals (AOM, EURAM, ISPIM, etc.) and participated in the top-level international conferences organized by these networks.

⁴³ All conference materials are available upon request.

Marketing and Sales study programme	
8. Research activity for students is currently unstructured and marginal outside of the formal requirements of the programme and not particularly strong within the formal programme. This is somewhat surprising in the context of FEM having a wide portfolio of Masters offerings and a Doctoral programme. It is clearly stated in the programme level learning outcomes that graduates of this programme will 'continue studies in management and administration doctoral programmes...' (Paragraph 15, section 1) and this is in fact accorded first place in the list of graduate destinations. The programme team must now provide a detailed plan of how this aim is to be encouraged and realised.	The priorities of this study program have been modified. As it is listed in 2014-2017 Progress Report, the option of doctoral studies after graduating is possible, but this is not a priority. Study program is orientated to strengthening knowledge, skills and abilities necessary working in practice, reflecting it in reformulated learning outcomes. Students gain research competencies writing Term Paper, Master Thesis, performing individual and group homework tasks. Students can and are encouraged to participate in scientific conferences organized by FEM or elsewhere presenting their practical research.

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Links between science (art) and study activities</i>
Strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognised marketing research team with clear institutional identity, growing international profile of the marketing research team. ➤ Close connections between Marketing related research and studies. ➤ Good potential for cross-disciplinary research in the novel areas of marketing, adequate level of technical facilities for state-of-the-art research in neuromarketing.
Areas for improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encouraging even more active participation of marketing researchers and students of undergraduate and graduate study programmes in Marketing field in the projects of applied research.

3. Student admission and support

3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process

The admission requirements and procedures differ between undergraduate and graduate studies in marketing field. Admission to undergraduate studies is administrated and organized by LAMA BPO – Association of Higher Education Institutions of Lithuania for Organization of Centralized Admission. It is also responsible for information dissemination and all admission procedures. The role of university is to cooperate and provide the information on the study programmes to LAMA BPO and to do all the documentation with admitted students. Additionally, the information about admission requirements is provided on University's⁴⁴ and Faculty's⁴⁵ websites, printed booklets, on study fairs, etc.

The admission criteria are unified to all the Universities and set by the order of Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports of Lithuania⁴⁶. There is admission score calculated based on the evaluation of national and school exams, and school grades. For the undergraduate study programmes in Marketing field the admission score is calculated = 0,4 *Mathematics* +

⁴⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/priemimas-i-studijas-vdu/> in LT.

⁴⁵ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/moksleiviams/> in LT.

⁴⁶ See <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/aaf74b408e0a11e7a3c4a5eb10f04386/asr> in LT.

0,2 History or Informational technologies or Geography or Foreign language + 0,2 Lithuanian language and literature + 0,2 any other subject.

Admission requirements to graduate study programmes in Marketing filed are set by the annually issued Order of the VMU Rector⁴⁷. The admission scores are calculated:

For Advertisement Management and Marketing and International Commerce: $K = 0.7 \times \text{weighted average of all courses in bachelor studies} + 0.3 \times \text{evaluation of final bachelor thesis}$

For Marketing and Sales: $K = 0.7 \times \text{weighted average of all courses in bachelor studies and additional studies} + 0.3 \times \text{evaluation of final bachelor thesis or final exam}$

Other admission requirements are also set by the same order of the Rector. The applicants to graduate studies in Marketing field should (1) have an university bachelor degree in any field of social sciences or informatics; or (2) have an university degree in any other field and graduated in minor studies in Marketing; or (3) have a professional bachelor degree and graduated in additional studies in Marketing field or have at least 1 year of working experience in Marketing field. Applicants to study programme Marketing and International Commerce that is taught in English should also have at least B2 level of English.

The admission procedure to graduate studies in Marketing field differs to Lithuanian and international students. International applications and admissions at VMU are centralized and carried out by the International Cooperation Department⁴⁸ for more detail description of the process). The admission to graduate studies in Lithuanian is organized employing a single online admissions system administrated by VMU Study department. Students shall fill in the online application. Candidates can prioritise their choices (up to 4 choices, including the title of study programme and form of financing) and simultaneously apply to more than one faculty. College graduates and graduates from other study fields are admitted under the conditions specified in the admission rules, creating conditions for studying additional courses or admitting to additional studies. The information about admission to graduate studies in Marketing field can be found on VMU website⁴⁹ and DreamApply⁵⁰. Tables 9 and 10 below present the results of admission to study programmes in Marketing field during 2017 - 2019.

Table 9. The number of applicants to undergraduate study programme Marketing

	Funding	Marketing		
		State	Non-state	Total
2017	1 st priority	38	17	55
	Other priorities	240	191	431
	<i>Total</i>	<i>278</i>	<i>208</i>	<i>483</i>
2018	1 st priority	38	12	50
	Other priorities	137	110	247
	<i>Total</i>	<i>175</i>	<i>122</i>	<i>297</i>
2019	1 st priority	40	11	51
	Other priorities	170	103	273
	<i>Total</i>	<i>210</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>324</i>
2020	1 st priority	55	12	67
	Other priorities	209	85	294
	<i>Total</i>	<i>264</i>	<i>97</i>	<i>361</i>

⁴⁷ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/magistru-taisykles-2020-m_su-nauja-programa.pdf in LT.

⁴⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/degree-studies/application-and-admission-procedure/> in EN.

⁴⁹ See https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/access_requirements/267/ in EN.

⁵⁰ See <https://vytautasmagnus.dreamapply.com/> in EN.

Table 10. The number of applicants to in graduate study programmes

Year	Funding	Marketing and International Commerce			Advertising Management			Marketing and Sales		
		State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total
2017	1 st priority	40	22	62	24	5	29	-	24	24
	Other priorities	44	12	56	59	17	76	-	0	0
	Total	84	34	118	83	22	105	-	36	24
2018	1 st priority	21	60	81	24	14	38	-	15	15
	Other priorities	43	34	77	47	35	82	-	1	1
	Total	64	94	158	71	49	120	-	16	16
2019	1 st priority	34	55	89	19	17	36	-	17	17
	Other priorities	32	33	65	50	50	100	-	2	2
	Total	66	88	174	69	67	136	-	19	19
2020	1 st priority	24	51	75	26	26	52	-	14	14
	Other priorities	45	61	106	22	83	105	-	1	1
	Total	69	112	181	48	109	157	-	15	15

The application (Table 9) and admission (Table 11) statistics indicates that the undergraduate study programme Marketing was popular during the period analysed. On average there was more than 10 applications. Though, the number of entrants remains stable. 2017 was an exception when besides the regular group of students additional one was formed to meet a specific one-time demand. There are no plans to continue this in the future. We see a stable number of entrances to undergraduate studies as a positive outcome because the total number of school graduates and applicants to universities was decreasing dramatically and the minimum admission requirements were constantly increasing in the country. As an outcome of good quality of study programme, its increasing popularity the stable number of students was admitted. The growth of number of state-funded students in 2020 in undergraduate studies is due to the changes in state funding policy in Lithuania.

Table 11. The number of students who signed study contracts in Marketing field

Level	Graduate									Undergraduate		
	Marketing and International Commerce			Advertising Management			Marketing and Sales			Marketing		
Funding	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total
2017	5	13	18	7	8	15	-	24	24	2	54	56
2018	10	19	29	10	5	15	-	16	16	7	19	26
2019	11	20	31	11	8	19	-	19	19	6	22	28
2020	9	23	32	10	14	24	-	15	15	24	8	32

Statistics on the applications and admissions of graduate programmes indicate that both full time programmes (Marketing and International Commerce and Advertising Management) were gaining popularity during the self-evaluation period. Marketing and International Commerce had reached the numbers where we were able to separate admissions into Lithuanian and English groups, which allowed growing numbers in both groups. The number of state funded students remained pretty stable as state financing is allocated to FEM by the results of scientific activities and then split equally among the full-time study programmes. Admissions to graduate study programme Marketing and Sales showed some fluctuations during the period, which triggered review of the aims and content of programme (as presented in sections 1.6. and 7.3.). This graduate programme is marketed as commercial programme; therefore, no state funded

students are allocated to it. Also, as admissions to graduate programme Marketing and Sales are executed separately (including timing and sales channels) all students mark it as a first priority. A few exceptions indicated in Table 10 represents cases where applicants to the other graduate study programmes in Marketing field indicated this programme as a possible alternative.

Analysing the structure of new entrants to studies in Marketing field at FEM (see Table 12) we can see that about 1/3 of entrants are in undergraduate study programme Marketing (the exception is 2017 when the additional group to meet one-time demand was formed). Out of graduate study programmes Marketing and International Commerce is a dominating programme, which attracts about a half of all entrants to graduate studies in Marketing field. That could be explained by the fact that this programme is taught in two languages and it also attracts foreign students. In 2020 graduate study programme Advertising Management performed an increase by 10 p.p. in the relative share among all study programmes, which could be explained by 20 % increased number of entrants in this programme.

Table 12. The relative shares on entrants to study programmes in Marketing field

		2017	2018	2019	2020
Undergraduate studies:	<i>Out of which:</i>	53%	31%	32%	31%
	Marketing	100%	100%	100%	100%
Graduate studies:	<i>Out of which:</i>	57%	69%	68%	69%
	Marketing and International Commerce	41%	49%	45%	46%
	Advertising Management	23%	24%	23%	33%
	Marketing and Sales	36%	27%	32%	21%

Analysing the entry scores to study programmes in Marketing field at FEM they are lower for non-state funded studies. That happens mainly because of the admission procedures: students with higher scores fill in all the state-funded places. The deviations happen because of different entry stages or students who aim for the second degree.

From the data presented in the Table 13 it is also clear that the variance of entry scores to all study programmes in Marketing field is very small. The biggest change is in minimum score of non-state funded entrants to undergraduate study programme Marketing. It was increasing over the period analysed and it is due to the changes in admission policies to undergraduate studies in entire country as it was mentioned earlier.

Table 13. Entry scores to study programmes in Marketing field

			Undergraduate	Graduate		
			Marketing	Marketing and International Commerce	Advertising Management	Marketing and Sales
2017	State funded	max	7,62	9,27	9,69	-
		min	7,22	8,83	8,77	-
		average	7,42	9,11	9,12	-
	Non-state funded	max	5,86	8,8	8,43	9,78
		min	3	7,14	6,49	6,3
		average	4,27	8,01	7,85	7,8
2018	State funded	max	7,8	9,56	9,78	-
		min	5,74	8,55	8,43	-
		average	6,58	9,07	8,63	-
	Non-state funded	max	6,2	8,48	8,86	9,2
		min	3,74	5,9	7,63	6,8
		average	4,71	7	8,05	8

			Undergraduate	Graduate		
			Marketing	Marketing and International Commerce	Advertising Management	Marketing and Sales
2019	State funded	max	8,7	9,55	9,58	-
		min	7,86	8,78	8,78	-
		average	8,15	9,13	9,13	-
	Non-state funded	max	7,32	8,55	8,67	9,4
		min	5,43	6,49	6,72	6,5
		average	6,13	7,8	8,11	7,7
2020	State funded	max	8,47	9,85	9,98	-
		min	6,93	8,47	8,74	-
		average	7,35	8,92	9,58	-
	Non-state funded	max	6,69	8,41	8,66	9,2
		min	5,47	7,13	6,88	6,6
		average	5,96	7,77	7,72	7,58

Analysis of average entry scores in graduate study programmes show that competition to state funded places had been increasing which allowed attracting candidates with very high entrance score. On the other hand, entrance score of non-state funded students is constantly on average 1-1,5 points lower than those of state-funded students, yet still sufficiently high to ensure good level studies.

3.2. Evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application

In 2017 the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania (LR) granted VMU the right to carry out academic recognition of education and qualifications related to higher education and acquired in the framework of education programmes of foreign states and international organizations. Recognition of foreign qualifications at VMU is done centrally in the International Cooperation Department in accordance with resolutions and regulations of LR, following information provided by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, as well as general or individual (in the absence of general) recommendations and in consultation with the responsible staff from the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. Every year the rules for admission of foreign citizens to VMU are updated and approved, and they outline the assessment of foreign qualifications, its application, documentation, and evaluation. Each year, VMU reports to the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education about the decisions that are made on academic recognition.

Recognition of partial learning outcomes is regulated by VMU Description of the Procedure for Recognition of Learning Outcomes⁵¹. This procedure is performed in a decentralized way at VMU, and it is organised by FEM or the initial assessment is done by the International Cooperation Department. The learning achievements of a person who has studied at another Lithuanian or foreign higher education institution are recognised by converting the acquired evaluation into ECTS according to pre-agreed equivalents, if there is no violation of the requirements of the contract or other document.

Recognition of partial studies can be carried out for current VMU students and newly enrolled. Current students participating in study exchange programmes agree on the study plan with VMU before leaving for a partner university. Learning outcomes acquired during part-time

⁵¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/VDU-studij%C5%B3-rezultat%C5%B3-%C4%AFskaitymo-tvarka-1.pdf> in LT

studies in accordance with the agreed study plan, should be recognised upon an academic certificate from the higher education institution where the student has been studying. If the student has been for a visit for several semesters, certificates must be obtained and credited after each semester. This ensures the recognition of partial studies after returning from another university.

Newly enrolled students, who have completed part of their studies at another university and apply for recognition, firstly are asked to submit their documents to the International Cooperation Department. The list of requested documents corresponds to the documents that newly enrolled students have to submit when entering VMU. Only an academic certificate or other document certifying study courses of another institution should be attached additionally. After evaluating the available documents, the level and other information of the institution where the partial education was obtained, the documents are transmitted to the faculty responsible person for recognising learning outcomes. The faculty assesses the correspondence of the study course content and its volume.

Principles and processes of recognition of competences acquired in non-formal and informal way are regulated by VMU Study Regulations⁵²; Description of the Procedure for Assessment and Recognition of Competences acquired through Non-Formal and Informal Education⁵³; VMU Description of Organization of Non-formal Adult Education⁵⁴. Individuals may apply for the assessment of competences acquired in work activities or voluntary work, internships, courses, seminars, projects, etc., while self-learning or at leisure time. Competences acquired by the candidate through non-formal and informal education can comply with the part of the appropriate study programme or separate courses. If during the assessment it is determined that student's informal and non-formal learning outcomes corresponds to the learning outcomes formulated in the study course of the study programme, the study course(-s) are recognised (by VMU Study Regulations).

During the period analysed there was no inquiries for recognition of foreign qualification in all study programmes in Marketing field despite the students who came back from their exchange period in foreign university. In such cases all the courses and grades obtained there were recognized as a part of student's study plan as it was agreed on his/her Learning Agreement. The same applies to double degree students in graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce - studies in partner university are recognized as a part of VMU studies based on the provisions of the double degree agreement.

The efficiency of recognition of partial studies can be proved by looking at the number of students who were transferred to undergraduate study programme Marketing from other universities, faculties, or study programmes (see Table 14).

Table 14. Number of transferred students to undergraduate study programme Marketing

	from other universities	from other faculties in VMU	from other programmes in FEM	Total
2017/18	3		2	5
2018/19	1	5	5	11
2019/20		3	1	4
Total	4	8	8	20

⁵² See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Study_Regulations_2019.pdf in EN

⁵³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Description-of-Procedure-non-formal-ENG.pdf> in EN

⁵⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Neformaliojo-svietimo-organizavimo-tvarkos-aprasas-2019-002.pdf> in LT

Because of unique *Artes Liberales* approach in VMU, students from other universities can be transferred to the 2nd year of undergraduate studies maximum. But the students from other faculties and study programmes in VMU could be transferred to any year depending on how their studies match the study plan of Marketing programme. There were no such cases in all undergraduate study programmes during the period analysed. That might be due to the shorter duration of studies. We observe students entering for their second graduate degree. And as graduate study programmes are more concentrated into particular area, there is usually no matching courses or partial studies that could be recognized.

3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

All VMU students are provided with possibilities to use Erasmus+ opportunities. The students in Marketing field can study for a semester or an academic year at one of 71 partner universities in the EU or EEA /candidate countries as well as go outside the EU to one of 57 partner institutions. About 15 of students from Marketing study field take the advantage of this opportunity per year. Students can also participate in Erasmus+ internship lasting from 2 to 12 months. Graduate students can also participate in this internship programme within 12 months after their graduation. About 6 students and graduates from Marketing field take the advantage of this opportunity per year.

Students are also encouraged to participate in academic exchange programmes. They can go for exchange with mobility grant or with scholarships from partner universities to one of 206 partner countries outside the EU/EEA for a semester or for academic year. About 1 student from Marketing field uses this opportunity per year. The same participation rate is in internship programme that lasts from 1 to 3 months with VMU mobility grant in companies/organizations outside the EU/ EEA.

Information about student mobility possibilities is announced by various channels: VMU International Cooperation Department and the Faculty international Coordinator provide students with information about studies and placement abroad, VMU Erasmus days are organised, Erasmus+ competitions are posted on VMU website⁵⁵, intranet (Outlook), social media, etc.

Undergraduate study programme Marketing is taught completely in Lithuanian so there is no possibility for foreign students to enrol in it full-time. Number of applicants to graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce remained relatively stable throughout the analysed period (Table 15). Some of the candidates were rejected after interviews because of the poor English, low motivation, and unsuitable prior education. Yet only 10-45% of all approved candidates had started studies. The main reasons why approved candidates did not show up for studies were related to rejection of visa (by Lithuanian Immigration Office) and their inability to finance studies.

Table 15. Full time international students in graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce

Year	Number of applications	Number of approved candidates	Number of entrants
2017/18	Not available	Not available	12
2018/19	27	21	5
2019/20	27	23	5
2020/21	25	23	12

⁵⁵ See www.vdu.lt

Data on Erasmus+ study exchange and Erasmus Internships (Table 16) proves that both undergraduate and graduate students use possibilities to study and work abroad.

Table 16. Number of outgoing students in Marketing field for partial studies or internship

	Undergraduate		Graduate				
	Marketing		Marketing and International Commerce			Advertising Management	
	Study in EU	Internship	Study in EU	Study outside EU	Internship	Study in EU	Internship
2017	4	3	7	1	3		
2018	3	2	8	1	4	1	
2019	4	2	8	1	4		1

Numbers are the highest in graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce due to a few reasons. Firstly, international students studying in this programme take advantage to study abroad and have even broader international experience. Erasmus scholarships are also used by double degree students to fund their stay in partner university. Numbers are significantly lower in study programme Advertising Management and equal to zero in study programme Marketing and Sales. This might be because students of these programmes choose to study in Lithuanian and Lithuania from very beginning and also because they are already employed during their studies. As study exchange scholarships were not increased for decades, the real value of it is relatively small to motivate students to give up their jobs and permanent income.

3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field

Academic student support covers several aspects: (1) easily accessible and timely information on: (a) the studies, including information, which is useful to the students choosing their study courses according to their individual study needs and preferences; (b) University's information (Rector's orders, rules, mobility opportunities, student support information, career possibilities, etc.) in order to keep in line with institutional issues and opportunities; (2) regular teachers' consultations to clarify topics of study courses or assignments, evaluate students' learning progress, provide and gather feedback both for students and teachers, etc. In 2018-2019 FEM introduced the extracurricular activities for students' personal development. It involves thematic movie nights with discussions followed; contact evenings with board games; e-sport evenings, so allowing students to get knowledge about new type of sport business and marketing opportunities.

Information on the studies is provided during various communication channels and means. All VMU students have free access to VMU intranet system "Outlook" and Moodle (virtual learning environment for publishing information on courses, methodical material, etc.) for communication, cooperation, and information exchange purposes. Besides, frequently used channels are the University website, University and Faculty Facebook, newsletters. The necessary information is provided in-time, allowing the students to plan their study schedules.

The Dean, vice-deans, Head for Undergraduate Studies and Head for Graduate Studies as well as heads of SPCs meet periodically the students and discuss current, important study and career opportunities related issues. The staff of FEM, the Dean's office is available daily for consulting students on various academic and study organization issues. Examination results are discussed with the students during specially appointed time; the students are informed about the time of the meeting during the examination.

According to the VMU Study Regulations, every teacher spends 20 academic hours per semester consulting students on their homework, individual or group assignments and other

course-related issues. Consulting is performed face-to-face during officially announced hours, as well as using different on-line means, such as Adobe Connect, Big Blue Button, Skype, e-mail, discussion forums, other communication environments and tools that are convenient for teachers and students.

Financial support for students is regulated by the Description of Procedures for Tax Exemption and Compensation⁵⁶; and the Description of Procedure for Compensation for Tuition Fees⁵⁷. Upon a reasoned request from a student, the University may postpone the payment of the tuition fee and / or the accommodation fee or allow this fee to be paid in a more extended period, for several times. In such cases, the student writes a reasoned request to the Rector, explaining the reasons why the University should allow the student to pay under specific conditions. For VMU students, attending scientific conferences, seminars or other events to represent the University, for collaborative or other purposes related to the University, VMU may reimburse the whole or part of the expenses in accordance with the Description of Procedures for Tax Exemption and Compensation.

Student social support is coordinated by VMU Student Affairs Department⁵⁸ that manage students' accommodation at the University dormitories, administrate student social and motivational scholarships, accommodation fees and release from tuition in specific cases. Accommodation service is provided for VMU students, and they have opportunities to settle in the University dormitories. For some students, based on their social status, the cost of accommodation is reduced. Social scholarships are provided for students regarding their social situation, motivational scholarships are provided regarding students' academic achievements. Moreover, VMU has established patronage scholarships to support student activities, the University has also set VMU honour scholarships, Rector's nominal scholarships, scholarships by various programmes, etc.

All students of FEM are given a possibility to apply for J. Smilgevičius scholarship⁵⁹ that was established by his relatives since 2002. This possibility is offered exceptionally only for students who have to show good academic achievements and/or be socially vulnerable. During recent three years 13 students in Marketing field (9 bachelor students and 3 master students) were awarded this scholarship.

VMU Student Representative Council⁶⁰ also takes care for student social support. It represents the interests of students and enhance their cultural and social activities.

Upon the need, students can receive free-of-charge counselling of a psychologist at VMU Psychology Clinics⁶¹ in individual meetings or online.

Students are supported in modelling their career plans. VMU Career Centre⁶² of Student Affairs Department regularly organize seminars and provide consultations on career planning issues. Regularly, at least once a year, face-to-face (online in 2020⁶³) meetings with VDU FEM Alumni⁶⁴ members are organized, where graduates introduce their work experience, relevance of acquired knowledge and skills. VMU FEM have cooperation agreements with different social

⁵⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Mokestini%C5%B3-lengvat%C5%B3-teikimo-ir-kompensacij%C5%B3-skyrimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

⁵⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/KK-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

⁵⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/departments-and-subdivisions/student-affairs-department/> in EN

⁵⁹ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/skelbiamas-konkursas-j-smilgeviciaus-stipendijai-gauti-3/> in LT

⁶⁰ See <https://vdusa.lt/en/about-us/> in EN

⁶¹ See <https://psichologijosklinika.vdu.lt/english/in> EN

⁶² See <http://karjera.vdu.lt/en/> in EN

⁶³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/vmu-alumni-day-2020/> in EN

⁶⁴ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/alumni/> in LT

partners, including commitments to inform about job positions. Announcements for open job positions are placed on FEM and Career Centre websites and in Facebook.

3.5. Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

Information about various activities related to the study process is delivered by different means to the students. Entrants to undergraduate studies receive the most important information in the special annual event “Introduction to Studies”⁶⁵ organized at University level. The introductory week includes faculty and staff presentations, foreign language options, opportunities to study abroad, Student Council and academic clubs’ presentations, information about the use of library resources, campus facilities, etc. During the event, students get to know the campus environment, faculty, and senior students. On the Faculty Day, first-year students are introduced with the chosen study programme in more detail. The results of the annual survey of the 1st year Marketing students show that these activities are very useful (on average about 4 points out of 5).

Over the last two years introductory information meeting with graduate students is organized on the first day of their studies. During these meetings general regulations of VMU and specific rules at FEM and particular study programme is discussed, information on double degrees and other possibilities of exchange (i.e. Erasmus+) is presented. Students also meet with heads of SPCs to receive information on the aim and learning outcomes of their study programme as well as to discuss their expectations regarding their studies.

In order to provide students with timely information about studies, they receive personalized e-mails. Students use a specially designed portal⁶⁶ where they can receive informational messages. VMU Student Affairs Department provides counselling, dealing with student issues related to accommodation, scholarships, benefits, career counselling, etc. VMU has a centralized Student Centre⁶⁷ to support them by direct contacts or calling, emailing, or contacting through social media. In Facebook social network special accounts for VMU students⁶⁸ and FEM students⁶⁹ have been created, which publishes relevant information for students. General information and news are also posted at VMU website. Surveys of students in Marketing field show that the usefulness of IT services is constantly increasing and in 2019 it was scored 4.65 (out of 5).

The most valuable support for students in Marketing field comes from FEM administration and teachers (according to the results of regular students surveys, described in section 7.4 of this report). The scores of evaluation of administration support is always close to maximum. And scores of evaluation of teaching staff support is on average 4 out of 5 and 3,5 out of 4. In general student evaluation of support is constantly increasing over the period discussed. So, it suggests the high efficiency of student support system. The results of the regular surveys are used to assess the sufficiency of student support during their studies.

⁶⁵ See <https://ivadas.vdu.lt/> in LT

⁶⁶ See <http://studentas.vdu.lt> in LT

⁶⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/contacts/vmu-student-centre/> in EN

⁶⁸ See <https://www.facebook.com/vytauto.didziojo.universitetas/> in EN

⁶⁹ See <https://www.facebook.com/VDUEVF> in LT

**Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to
Student admission and support**

No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Marketing study programme		
4.	The Faculty of Economics and Management and the Department of Marketing has to focus on strengthening the international aspects of the Study Programme by making efforts to increasing both students' and teachers' mobility.	There were several actions taken that increased the mobility of students and teaching staff: (1) The review of mobility agreements that showed low number of agreements that specifies Marketing field. There were additional agreements signed; (2) Most of the mobility agreements are in Business Management area which is very wide and includes Marketing, but students and teachers did not know that. So, the provision of information was improved by adding additional information. Also, the financing of student mobility in Marketing field improved because of better redistribution grants inside the university. So, at the end FEM gets more scholarships for study exchange and more students can use it.
Marketing and Sales study programme		
7.	It is stated that this study programme '... shows remarkable demand in the study market' but the Expert Team can find no evidence whatever for this statement other than the Annex Table which seems to indicate that all applicants were admitted. Comparative data which benchmarks this admission record against national data or indeed against other Masters Programme Admission Practices in FEM should be researched and form the basis of a focussed marketing campaign.	First of all, the appropriate comparison approach was chosen. As the study programme Marketing and Sales has a different scope than other graduate study programmes at FEM, the comparison of admission numbers is not that straight forward. There are no state-funded places here because of the programme's orientation to different market segment. So, the SPC decided to do the comparative assessment by looking at the number of non-state funded students in graduate study programmes in Marketing field. The results are presented in Table 11 and they show that the admission was successful that confirms the necessity of this study programme. The basis for focussed marketing campaign was formed on content and organizational features of the study programme: complex, oriented to practical knowledge, skills and abilities, combining decision making from strategical to operational level in the field of marketing and sales, deepened in sales, focused to customer-centricity, balanced for working people, organized by cycles, suitable for people with different education.

**Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of
Student admission and support**

Strengths

- A total annual number of entrants in the Marketing field study programmes has been stable and increasing over the self-evaluation period despite the decreasing number of students in general in Lithuania. Study programmes are attractive among Lithuanian and foreign students and the competition for the state-funded places is high.
- Increasing admission scores of non-state funded students in undergraduate studies and stable admission scores in graduate studies. That lowers the variance of knowledge of entrants.
- Clear and unified admission procedures to all study programmes in Marketing field (according to the study level) that makes the process very objective and guarantees fair admission based purely on competitive basis.

- Constant big competition for admission to all study programmes in Marketing field where the number of applicants to one place is more than 10 in undergraduate study programme and about 6.5 in graduate study programmes.
- Extracurricular activities offered for the students of Marketing study programmes show new possibilities for application of marketing knowledge, facilitate to the development of skills and competences in marketing, improve study environment and add to the development of the community.
- Relevant and efficient student support system that includes everyone – from teacher to the Dean – enabling to give a necessary support in the quickest way.

Areas for improvement

- To increase number of entrances to study programs in Marketing field, in both Lithuanian and English languages. The Faculty has bigger capacity for teaching without harming the quality of studies in all study programmes in Marketing field. For this study marketing campaigns are improved, additional personnel is employed, more efforts are put into understanding the potential students and finding the best ways to attract them.
- To improve the administrative processes of the admission to graduate study programme Marketing and Sales aiming to reduce human efforts that are needed to organize and administrate the procedures that could be automatized. For this the University's system might be used.

4. Studying, student performance and graduate employment

4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes

Formulation of learning outcomes in all study programmes emphasize students ability to apply the theoretical knowledge, special, research, social and personal skills and abilities, practical achievements, also trends and specifics of modern marketing, to the analysis and research of situations, problems, decisions. Students have also to be able to demonstrate skills for the independent analysis of various study programme related situations, decision making and implementation. For this reason, each course is designed with carefully thought of distribution of students' workload for the contact hours with teacher and independent work to carry out. Often the results of independent studying are presented during or at the end of the semester in the form of a written report or oral presentation. In most cases, relative value of independent activity in the accumulative score is significant; therefore, students are motivated to successfully accomplish them.

As presented in course descriptions usually in undergraduate studies (with exception of Term Papers, Internships and Final Thesis) 30-45 hours of the student contact time are allocated to lecture, 15-30 hours – to seminars (except for 4 ECTS courses) and the remaining time for independent studies. In graduate studies all courses consist of 6 ECTS, where lectures and case study analysis takes 30 hours, seminars – 15 hours, teamwork – 15 hours, and individual work (preparation for lectures, seminars, case-study analyses, independent studying of literature, an oral work presentation, mid-term and final exam) – 100 hrs.

One of the main tasks of teachers in the field of Marketing is to engage students in theoretical concepts and practical achievements in marketing, thus involving them into the study process, using the relevant teaching methods to increase students' active participation lectures and seminars in case studies, discussions, etc. In fact, teachers have to do this because if teacher fails to raise interest and engage students in a course of group A, B or optional course from group C, students do not choose this course (VMU students have a right to choose and change one course to another during the first two weeks of each semester in these groups), the required

number of students is not reached, and this course is replaced with the other in study plans of the next semester.

The majority of lectures and seminars are organized in Problem-Based Learning form. Students have to prepare before the meetings by studying the teacher's proposed literature and cases. During the lectures and seminars students are expected to participate actively in discussions with teacher and other students. They usually work in groups, thus have an opportunity to learn from other students and can apply their knowledge to real subject related situations. In this process teachers usually perform the role of moderators – they encourage and facilitate student discussions and, if necessary, pose argumentative questions that would give students the necessary direction.

Also, many of study courses involve presentations and/or tasks of industry experts in-house or during visits to the companies. Such seminars and tasks allow students to get acquainted with the latest achievements, to connect theoretical knowledge with market practices and learn how to apply them in practice. Purposeful participation of industry experts and further implementation of Problem-Based Learning and other practice oriented learning methods into study process are among the main areas of development of the aims of undergraduate and graduate studies in the field of Marketing to better facilitate achievement of learning outcomes of the programmes and to meet market expectations for graduates' knowledge, skills and abilities in the labour market (other teaching and learning methods used are analysed previously in section 1.4).

All courses have their own section on the Moodle platform online. It allows to organise teaching materials related to each course (syllabus, lecture slides, mandatory and optional readings, links to videos and articles, homework assignments, etc) in a way that it is readily available to the students. The platform provides additional possibility for the teachers to interact with their students through special tools that make it easy to collect homework, give feedback, facilitate discussions, etc. Some teachers also organise group activities, create creative assignments, such as quizzes, crosswords or other activities that allow students to check their knowledge and prepare for exams.

Students' performance assessment is performed in confluence with VMU Study Regulations and VMU Rector's orders regarding students' achievement assessment. Examinations and colloquiums are performed in written form, their assignments are the same or equal to all examinees. All students taking the course take a written test (a colloquium or an examination) at the same time. In case of absence during the interim assessment or examination due to a justifiable reason, the student can obtain permission from the Dean of the faculty to postpone the examination. Study achievements of students in undergraduate and graduate Marketing programmes are assessed using an accumulative grade system - during intermediate assessment (colloquium, homework, independent work) and in examination (or during defence of independently performed work). The final mark integrates the intermediate assessment and the examination (or defence of independently performed work (project)) marks. In undergraduate and graduate study programmes in Marketing the examination mark comprises 30-50% of the final mark and the intermediate assessments – the other 50-70% of the final mark. Composition of the final mark is specific to each course and is indicated in the course description. Assessment of every study course depends on the level of achieving the expected programme and course learning outcomes.

In compliance with the VMU Rector's order "On Retaking a Study Course Examination", students who failed the exam have a right to retake it again free of charge. One additional retake is also possible, but students must pay 20 euros for it. Having received a negative mark for the second time retaken examination a student has an academic debt which means s/he has to

repeat the study course (or its part if the interim assessments were positive) and pay for the course or its part the tuition fee based on the course credits according to the regulations of the contract with the university.

The students are encouraged to actively reflect on their study process. The students themselves design their own timetable of the general university courses (for undergraduate students), i.e. choose the priority and time of study courses. Both undergraduate and graduate students have an opportunity to study not only compulsory study courses but also optional courses, which enables them to further develop their special, personal, and social skills to better meet the needs of labour market. In graduate studies, as it is discussed in section 1.6. of this self-evaluation report, structure, and concept of optional had undergone major changes giving students better opportunities to develop certain skills and abilities and more courses to choose from. Also, undergraduate students are able to participate in Minor studies, to take Individual studies, Academia cum laude, have a right to choose to study various languages (see part 1 for details).

As it is deeply embedded in the University culture, The VMU Study Regulation gives students fairly enough of freedom, at the same time with the aim to raise responsible personalities for their career and decisions. In the frames of a course, students choose the topics of independent individual or group work, i. e. homework, the degree s/he involves in the discussions or case studies, can reach teachers and administration member via convenient for them communication means, discusses the time and form of interim assessments with teachers before scheduling, etc. The only compulsory part of assessment is taking an exam; students formally have a right to choose they are willing to take part in assessments of other parts of accumulative grade or not (most of the students still take part in all of them); students are not obliged to attend the lectures or seminars, all study material is available on Moodle course page, and in the most of courses busy with other activities students are able to plan their studies in their own pace in the frames of the main semester deadlines.

After graduation from undergraduate programme students can enter graduate programs in field of business administration and management in FEM and other faculties both in Lithuania and abroad (including our double degree programme). It is observed that the graduates of undergraduate study programme Marketing disperse to a variety of study programmes – Marketing and International Commerce, Advertising Management, Corporate Strategic Management, etc. Graduates of graduate study programmes have a possibility to continue their studies in doctoral programmes in the field of Management at national and international level. During self-evaluation period 4 graduates from Marketing and International Commerce programme entered joint doctoral program in the field of Management run by FEM (along with Mykolas Riomeris University, Šiauliai University).

4.2. Evaluation of conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs

Socially vulnerable groups (orphans, people with disabilities, students from large families and low-income families) and students with special needs are given the opportunity to study according to an individual study schedule. Studies according to the individual study schedule are regulated by VMU Description of the Procedure for Providing the Individual Study Schedule⁷⁰).

Socially vulnerable groups receive different discounts for tuition or dormitory fees, scholarships are provided for these students.

⁷⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/VDU-individualaus-studiju-grafiko-teikimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf>, in LT

Following the needs of students with disabilities, the University's buildings and equipment are constantly maintained and updated, students are allowed to park their cars near the buildings, access to buildings is maintained; the necessary equipment is established for the disabled in libraries, classrooms are set with suitable furniture, students can settle in specially adapted dormitory rooms, if necessary, with an accompanying person. FEM building, where most of the students have their lectures in, is fully adapted to the needs of students with disabilities. The study process is organized according to individual needs of students, individual counselling is provided when necessary, data on students with disabilities are integrated into database systems, thus facilitating the learning process for students with disabilities. Disability education campaigns are organized at the University.

During the self-assessment period there were no students with disabilities in undergraduate or graduate study programmes in Marketing field.

4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

The monitoring of student learning progress is regulated by VMU Study Regulations and the Description of Procedure for Student Learning Achievement Monitoring and Assistance⁷¹. Monitoring of learning achievements and delivery of assistance covers interrelated processes, which include the following: 1. An analysis of student enrolment in studies and learning situation in study courses. 2. An analysis of the reasons for the students' non-participation in interim and final examinations. 3. An analysis of intermediate and final evaluation of students. 4. Implementation of preventive measures to manage student failure and improvement of organisation of studies.

VMU departments perform monitoring of learning achievements regularly, and students themselves are invited to make self-monitoring of their progress in studies and follow the processes of studies: to register for studies, to amend their study plans, to observe evaluations of their own learning and make improvements, to mark the mastered topics in Moodle course pages, to get acquainted with results of surveys for quality improvements, etc.

In the undergraduate and graduate studies in the field of Marketing, monitoring of students' progress and achievements is split among teachers, administrators for graduate and undergraduate studies, Heads of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and Vice-dean for Studies in FEM. Administrators are constantly monitoring students' registration to study courses, review results of interim assignments, and collect information from teachers about students not participating in lectures and/or examinations. In cases of missed assignments or absence from lectures, the administrators contact students to enquire about the reasons and to offer some help and/or assistance. Teachers are asked to inform the undergraduate and graduate studies assistants about non-participating students (in lectures and/or absent from examinations) as well as about those who failed interim examination. Administrators of undergraduate and graduate studies discuss students' participation and achievement with Heads of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies and Vice-dean for Studies periodically.

At the beginning of each academic year (more often upon request) Dean, Vice-Dean of FEM, Heads of Undergraduate and Graduate studies and Head of SPC meet with students, explaining them aims of their programme, its learning outcomes and their links with market needs and job opportunities. FEM administrators are available daily for consulting students on various academic and study organization issues. According to the VMU Regulations on Studies,

⁷¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Student%C5%B3-studijavimo-pasiekim%C5%B3-steb%C4%97senos-ir-pagalbos-teikimo-tvarka-.pdf>, in LT

every teacher spends certain amount of hours (at least 20 hours for full time position) per semester consulting students on their homework, individual or group assignments and other study-related issues. When consulting, the feedback is given to the students face-to-face during officially announced (via the Intranet and bulletin-boards) hours, as well as using different on-line forms, such as Skype, e-mail, discussion forums, other communication environments that are convenient for students. The Moodle system reminds teachers about students' progress as well, the detailed information is available for them in Teacher Portal. Multiple times per semester FEM Deans office meetings and meetings of Heads of Undergraduate and Graduate studies with heads and other representatives of SPC, administrators for undergraduate and graduate studies are held to discuss study process, students' achievements and other quality related issues. During a traditional annual FEM day special time is dedicated to discussions with students and alumni about studies and career opportunities.

4.4. Evaluation of the feedback provided to students in the course of the studies to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

VMU Regulation on Studies and other university documents available to students in VMU webpage define the procedures of their achievement evaluation. Graduate and undergraduate students also receive information about the above-mentioned possibilities during the introductory week and in the beginning of each semester (information is presented orally and made available at Moodle page of study course).

Studies' achievement evaluation is pursued according to the VMU Regulation on Studies. VMU applies criteria-based study achievement assessment system using a 10-grade scale, clarified for both teachers and students in VMU Study Regulations. Students' study achievements are evaluated by using these forms and methods: midterm, exams, tests, homework and teamwork assignments, research projects, oral presentations and defence, and examination. Students can access the assessment criteria information for study courses at VMU website and in study course's Study Guide in Moodle. The Study guide is prepared according to recommendations of VMU Innovative Study Institute⁷² and covers the detailed structure of the study course's content, projected learning outcomes, assessment structure, assessment criteria, the dates and forms (face-to-face or distant) of each lecture, seminar and assessment, study literature and other requirements. During the first lecture of a semester, teachers present and discuss with students the Study Guide for each study course.

FEM performs monitoring of learning achievements regularly, and students themselves are invited to make self-monitoring of their progress in studies and follow the processes of studies, using Moodle means (i. e. Progress bar, Digital badges, etc.) as well.

During the semester, the teachers encourage students to use publicly announced consultation hours to discuss their performance, ask clarification questions, get suggestions how to study in a more efficient way, get detailed feedback about homework assignments, mid-term and final exams. The students and the teaching staff can further discuss whether the consultations and feedback were adequate and what could be improved during an extended meeting at the end of each semester.

After students have completed assignments at home, most teachers discuss homework in lectures. During lectures and seminars, works and presentations are commented on immediately. Some teachers provide feedback in Moodle environment, writing messages to each student about the pros and cons of his or her work. After the interim and final reports, the completed tasks are also discussed. For example, after the final exam, all lecturers allocate one hour of

⁷² See <http://studyonline.lt/en/about/> in EN

consultation time, where each student can discuss both their assessment answers and their overall achievement in the studied course. Students have the right to get acquainted with the details of the assessment. If the student does not agree with the assessment results, he has the right to address the Dean of the Faculty with appeal. There were no formal appeals in the undergraduate or graduate study programs in Marketing during the self-assessment period.

After the evaluation of midterms, other assignments and exam, results are presented in special IT platform <https://studentas.vdu.lt/> and discussed with students. Students have access to their personal accounts where they are able to monitor their results and react on the evaluation. Results of students' assessments are also periodically reviewed by administrators of undergraduate and graduate studies. If the student does not agree with the assessment results, he has the right to address the Dean of FEM with a request for the review of the grade in 3 days after the assessment results are presented. Students participation in the discussions on the achievements, questions asked, and feedback given, allow assuming, that such presentation of the assessment results is sufficient for the student to get enough information on their study achievements.

In the case of failure to pass an exam, a student has the right to retake it one time free of charge and one more time with an extra charge. If a student does not arrive to the exam without a justified reason, or in the case of dishonest behaviour during the examination, retake of the exam is not allowed. In case of repeating the course (after two failed retakes or dishonest behaviour), the student's positively evaluated achievements, upon the student's request, can be transferred to the final grade. If the student does not arrive to the examination because of a justifiable reason, the Dean of FEM can postpone the examination date prior to the beginning of the following semester. Postponing of the examination for a longer period of time is in disposition of the Vice-Rector for Studies.

4.5. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field

In order to ensure the quality of studies and provide career-planning service that meet the needs of the students, the University monitors the employment and career of VMU graduates. The main sources of information are: VMU alumni survey, statistics provided by the Employment Service and statistics provided by the Government Strategic Analysis Centre.

Each year VMU Career Centre performs an online survey for alumni, one year after their graduation. The focus of attention is their current work situation. Those graduates, who are not working, are asked if they have work experience and if they are looking for a job. All graduates (employed and unemployed) are requested to give their opinion on how much they are satisfied with their current career situation and what has been most useful while preparing for their career at the University. Alumni are also asked to evaluate VMU's contribution to their preparation for labour market. Summarized survey results are published in VMU website and on the Career Centre website⁷³.

On the basis of the cooperation agreement with the Employment Service, signed on the 6th of November in 2019, VMU will get statistical information about VMU graduates registered for a job search. Information will be provided twice per year, i. e. 12 months and 15 months after their graduation.

Surveys' results allow concluding that graduates of FEM Marketing field study programmes are required in and are properly prepared for labour market. Majority of undergraduate and graduate students easily find a study field related job just after graduation or start working during

⁷³ See <http://karjera.vdu.lt/apie-mus/apklausu-rezultatai/> in LT

their studies. According to EXIT survey (of students ending their studies), conducted in centralised way by VMU Career Centre in 2019, a number of employed students on average comprise 69 % of all FEM students, which is the highest score in VMU. Number of working students represent 63 % of undergraduate students and as high as 79 % - in graduate students. Among those non-working during their studies, 51 % undergraduate and 50% of graduate students indicated choosing not to work to be able to study full time and confirmed to be looking for a job soon after graduation. Results of the conducted survey affirmed that graduates are able to get job very quickly – 83% of graduate and 57% of undergraduate students get employed within 1 month and 17% and 43% respectively – within up to 2-3 months after graduation.

Compliance of the results achieved during the studies in FEM with the needs of the labour market is proved by the fact that employments of 77% of graduates are fully or partially related to the study programme. 83 % of graduates create value in private sector (representing the highest number in VMU) while only 14% get employed in public sector. Salaries of master graduates significantly exceed those of bachelors, which feeds the popularity of graduate studies among undergraduates of FEM and other faculties and schools.

Comparative data of surveys for 2017-2019 show that graduates of FEM Marketing field study programmes get employed easier and quicker than Lithuanian average. According to Government Strategic Analysis Centre (hereinafter - STRATA) in 2017 on average 63 % of undergraduate students got employment related to their qualification within 12 months after completing their studies, while in 2018 – this number represented 74%, so raised significantly; after graduate studies in 2017 – 73%, and in 2018 - 56%. Data from STRATA represent only those graduates with employment contracts excluding work abroad, individual activities, therefore, cannot reflect the real situation as marketing field is prone to develop a freelancer career in a global extent performed under individual activities or business certificates or created their own business, falling in one group with unemployed in STRATA data. Nevertheless, 54% of graduates of study programme Marketing after 12 months were having employment contract in 2017, and 72% - in 2018 respectively. To compare, the data of the analogous survey of VMU in both years plus 2019 show that the graduates of the undergraduate study programme Marketing were 100% employed. 85% of graduates of study programme Advertising Management after 12 months were having employment contract in 2017, and 67% - in 2018 respectively; 89% of graduates of study programme Marketing and Sales after 12 months were having employment contract in 2017, and 67% - in 2018 respectively, while VMU data shows 100% of employed students. STRATA data of study programme Marketing and International Commerce could be inaccurate because it cannot reflect employment of foreign students who left Lithuania and became involved in other countries, whereas VMU surveys' data shows 77% of employed students.

Employers' opinion about graduates of FEM Marketing field, taken from the data presented in the magazine "Rankings" in 2018, 2019 and 2020 rankings show an improvement in 5 p.p.

The most successful graduate career examples are presented at the FEM website⁷⁴, Facebook and in bulletin boards. Regularly, at least once a year, face-to-face meetings with FEM Alumni members are organized, where a lot of marketing field study programmes' graduates introduce their work experience, relevance of acquired knowledge and skills. VMU and FEM have cooperation agreements with different social partners, including commitments to inform about job positions. Besides, announcements for open job positions are placed on FEM and Career centre's websites, FEM staff is involved in individual search of job applicants upon the requests of employers.

⁷⁴ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/alumni/> in LT

Collaboration with VMU alumni takes place mainly through alumni clubs and individual departments of VMU. Graduates periodically get newsletters with current information. The University has an active VMU Alumni Club whose main aim is to unite VMU alumni and maintain close relations with the University. Every year members of the club attend VMU events organized to develop students' professional and employability skills as well as get acquainted with career opportunities. Alumni Club members also organize club meetings, various events (lectures, discussions, informal meetings, field trips, excursions to various companies employing university alumni, etc.), actively participate as consultants and experts in study programme committees, study quality assessment groups. Each year, with the help of the University, the club organizes Alumni Day in order to bring together VMU alumni.

4.6. Evaluation of the implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination

The principles of integrity are defined in the VMU Statute⁷⁵, the Code of Ethics of VMU⁷⁶, The Plagiarism Prevention Procedures of VMU⁷⁷, VMU Study Regulations.

Non-discrimination measures are regulated by the Code of Ethics of VMU following the principles of academic freedom and responsibility, honesty, ethical personal relationship, fostering equal rights and opportunities, respect for personal dignity and autonomy, etc.

VMU Provisions on Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works identifies types of plagiarism, methods of determining the plagiarism and consideration procedures, as well as recommendations for teachers and students on how to prevent plagiarism in students' written homeworks, Term Papers and Final Thesis.

In the case of dishonest student behaviour, observed during the final examination or other assessment, teachers discontinue the student's performance and inform about this the Dean of the Faculty and the Studies Department in written form. The final evaluation "0" (zero) is written in the learning outcome record book. The faculty Dean starts the investigation regarding students' unfair behaviour.

All students and teachers of undergraduate and graduate study programmes in Marketing are provided with access to specialised plagiarism detection software (through VMU library) to be able to check written papers before submission/evaluation. Information on plagiarism prevention rules is clearly presented in Moodle pages of Final Thesis and other study courses. All Final Thesis of undergraduate and graduate students are checked for plagiarism using iThenticate software before their public defence. In cases when plagiarism detection software shows more than 10 % of coincidences, each case is analysed individually, and final decision is made by FEM Plagiarism Prevention Commission (formed by the Order of the Dean of FEM). Both teachers and students have the right to appeal to the University's Academic Ethics Commission, which makes final decisions on academic integrity.

Cases of detected plagiarism are very rare, which may be explained by timely presentation of relevant information and professional counselling and supervision of FEM teachers. During the self-assessment period 2 students of graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce and 1 student from undergraduate study programme Marketing were not allowed to publicly defend their Final Thesis because of violations of VMU provision for plagiarism prevention in student written works (and noncompliance with schedule).

⁷⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/VMU-statute.pdf> in EN

⁷⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/The-code-of-ethics-of-VMU.pdf>, in EN

⁷⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Plagiarism-prevention-VMU.pdf> in EN

4.7. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies

Procedures for appeals and complaints of the study process are regulated by VMU Description of Procedure for Appeal Investigation⁷⁸, The Plagiarism Prevention Procedures of VMU, and VMU Study Regulations.

Students have the right to make appeals regarding the assessment of learning achievements or assessment procedures when they disagree with the teacher's assessment and / or identify the violation of assessment procedures. Students should have arguments when submitting their appeals. The appeal commission is assigned, and it analyses the information related to the appeal as well as makes the decision within 5 days of the appeal receipt.

During the self-assessment period no appeals regarding evaluation of exam or other assignments were submitted in either undergraduate or graduate study programmes in Marketing field. One student in study programme Marketing and International Commerce (who did not defend his Final Master Thesis) made an oral request to re-evaluate his Final Master Thesis. As Thesis are defended in public and evaluated by a Defence Committee, student is eligible to appeal regarding the defence procedure but not the evaluation. Therefore, the Head of SPC and later the Head of Graduate studies consulted the student on the situation and explained student's right to repeat the task. The student successfully defended his Final Master Thesis with the next cohort.

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of *Studying, student performance and graduate employment*

Strengths

- Majority of the Marketing study field students complete their studies and successfully integrate into labour market. High employability rate of graduates proves that professionals in Marketing are in demand in the labour market.
- The study process based on Student-centred learning approach to studies allows students to achieve study programme aim and intended learning outcomes by fitted for individualities flexible curriculum in *Artes Liberales* tradition, involvement and interactions in supportive and inspiring learning environment.
- Student performance assessment is clear and transparent. Developed academic integrity and plagiarism protection and prevention procedures are adequate and are properly used in practice.
- Student-centred feedback and monitoring system of students study progress keeps students involved in the study process, promotes students self-assessment, gives them direction for improvement of study results, and raises their responsibility for personal development.

Areas for improvement

- As the number of students in graduate programmes is increasing, number of optional courses could be further increased to better facilitate achievement of learning outcomes of the programmes and provide graduates with skills and abilities relevant to the market.
- Continue with development and implementation of Problem-Based Learning and other practice-oriented learning methods into undergraduate and graduate study courses to better facilitate achievement of learning outcomes of the programmes and to meet market expectations for graduates' knowledge, skills and abilities.

⁷⁸ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/apeliacijos_teikimo_nuostatai.pdf, in LT

5. Teaching staff

5.1. Evaluation of the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff within a field study programme(s) at the HEI in order to achieve the learning outcomes

There are 22 teachers teaching courses in Marketing field now at FEM. 18 (or 80%) of them are permanent according to the criteria provided (works at least 3 years and more than half a day at VMU). The data presented in the Table 17 shows the student to teacher ratio total in Marketing field, undergraduate and graduate studies separately and in each of the study program in the field. The ratio is higher in undergraduate studies compared with graduate studies because of two reasons: 1. There are more courses taught and teachers involved in the programme which are not in Marketing field because of undergraduate studies and are not included into this assessment. 2. The scope and aims of the programme as well as study methods applied allows to teach bigger groups of students in the same class in undergraduate studies compared with graduate studies. Student to teacher ratios presented in Table 17 is decreasing gradually during the period analysed. That is mainly caused by increasing number of teachers involved in courses from Marketing field.

Table 17. Student to teacher ratio in study programmes in Marketing field during 2017-2020

Study program	2017	2018		2019		2020
	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Spring
Marketing	27,5	31,4	22,2	25,0	13,4	21,8
Undergraduate studies	27,5	31,4	22,2	25,0	13,4	21,8
Marketing and Sales	10,3	13,7	8,8	8,8	4,7	8,3
Marketing and International Commerce	5,9	10,6	6,6	10,6	5,9	9,4
Advertising Management	3,6	6,3	3,6	4,2	5,4	5,4
Graduate studies	8,5	10,8	8,1	8,7	7,6	8,9
Total in the field	17,8	24,2	16,5	19,6	13,4	16,5

The teaching experience of academic staff in Marketing field ranks from 43 to 3 years with an average value of 12.5 years. This fact indicates about a balanced combination of age and experience of teaching staff. Most of the permanent teachers works in university full-time. Two of them have administrative positions in the Faculty and two have administrative positions in University (Marketing and Communication department). Only few of teachers have no practical experience at all. Most of them combines teaching and working in professional field. That is the way to ensure the latest knowledge and experiences from the real world to be transferred to classes. That enriches theoretical lectures, practical tasks, and so entire study programmes in University. This close relation between teaching and practice is especially important in Marketing field where innovations and new experiences are changing so fast.

Academic staff of the courses in Marketing field is also active in research as it was discussed in the section 2. Analysing the link between courses taught and the research interests of teachers, majority of them are concentrated in 1-2 areas and there is a sufficient correspondence between the courses taught and research interests. So, the composition of teaching staff of courses in Marketing field guarantees teachers gaining knowledge in research or practical experience.

All the teachers-practitioners in Marketing field could be grouped into two more groups. There are teachers who are not scientists and they do not perform research. At the moment there are 5 teachers-practitioners. 3 of them teach in undergraduate programme and 2 of them – in graduate programs. In the other group there are 6 teachers-practitioners. They are scientists working full-time or studying PhD in University. Besides, they also perform practical activities in business. Majority of them (5 out of 6) teaches in both undergraduate and graduate level

programmes, and 1 teach only for undergraduate. There are always more practitioners teaching for undergraduate students than for graduate students in Marketing. This could be explained by the fact that there are more field-courses in undergraduate studies than in graduate. And also, the requirements for teachers differ in the way that there should be more researchers in graduate programs.

Analysing the changes of the number of teachers-practitioners in courses in Marketing field, we can see an increasing trend. In 2017/18 there were 6 practitioners teaching courses in Marketing field, in 2018/19 – 8 teachers and in 2019/20 – 12 teachers. The changes in number are associated with the changes in curriculum of study programmes aiming for better study quality in terms of study methods, knowledge and skills provided.

During recent 3 years of investigation there were only few teacher replacements. Prof. P. Žukauskas retired in 2020 and he was replaced by assoc. prof. dr. V. Liesionis. Because of overload of assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažeraitė few of undergraduate courses were taken by R. Repovienė and dr. M. Račkauskas, L. Petrauskaitė, M. Šerpytis. Both cases represent the mechanism of teacher replacement and involvement of young teachers. As most of elder teachers are involved in teaching and supervising for PhD student too, their research interests are in-line with their PhD students'. The Faculty aims to involve all PhD students into teaching at least during their obligatory academic practice. So, when there is a need for teacher replacement, we usually have an internal candidate with previous practice and scholar interests.

The other reason of changes in academic staff and the way of young teacher involvement is changes in programme curriculum. Marketing is a very fast changing field where innovations happens very quickly and competences necessary for professional changes fast. To represent that the changes in curriculum are made with introduction of new courses. When doing this SPC analyses the feedback from students, alumni, discuss with social partners, as well as addresses to all the teaching staff asking to propose courses that would represent the newest trends in Marketing field practice and research. That is a good chance for new teachers, young researchers to join the existing academic staff.

The composition of the staff involved in teaching is regulated by The General Requirements for Delivery of Studies⁷⁹. Undergraduate study programme has only one requirement: “not less than 50 per cent of the courses of the first cycle university study courses in the study field should be delivered by scientist” (article 28).

For graduate studies there are two requirements for teaching staff: “not less than 80 percent of the courses of the first cycle university study courses in the study field should be delivered by scientists”, and “there should be not less than 20 % of professors in study field courses” (article 29).

Analysing the list of teachers provided in Annex 4, and the numbers presented in the Table 18, we see that the composition of teaching staff in Marketing field meets the official requirements.

Table 18. The composition of teaching staff in study programs in Marketing field

	Study programme	prof.	assoc. prof.	PhD	No degree	Scientists	Requirement
Undergraduate	Marketing	19%	31%	19%	31%	69%	50%
Graduate	Marketing and Sales	22%	56%	11%	11%	89%	80%
	Marketing and International Commerce	25%	50%	25%	0%	100%	80%
	Advertising Management	22%	33%	33%	11%	89%	80%

⁷⁹ See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/a4caf862ced511e6a476d5908abd2210> in LT

The majority of teachers in all study programmes have a position of associate professor. There are about 30% of teachers with no academic degree in undergraduate study programme. This share was constantly increasing during the period analysed as a result of involvement of more practitioners and PhD students. We see this resulting in better teaching quality, higher involvement, and satisfaction of students.

In FEM there is one study programme in Marketing field that is taught in English – Marketing and International Commerce. English language of all the teachers working there is not lower than B2. To ensure this VMU offers possibilities for all the teachers to study any foreign language they wish for free. Foreign language centre also offers special trainings for teachers and scholars that usually takes place in January when there are no regular lectures for students organized. Teachers of FEM attend them periodically. From Faculty perspective, to ensure good language skills of teachers in classes taught in English, we have different persons for Lithuanian and English class. For example, Digital Marketing and E-Business is taught by V. Liesionis in Lithuanian and by J. Kisieliauskas in English.

5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility

Each VMU teacher has opportunity to use Erasmus+ programme possibilities:

- To go for Erasmus+ teaching visits to VMU partnership universities in the EU as well as EEA/candidate countries (516 partner institutions) or outside the EU (99 partner institutions). About 200 VMU teachers accept teaching mobility possibilities in a year.

- To go for Erasmus+ training visits to any institution or organisation (including one-year higher education institutions) in the EU as well as EEA/candidate countries or to any partnership university outside the EU. About 180 VMU staff members participate in staff mobility for training in a year.

Besides teaching visit there are also possibilities for mobility in relation with research interests: research internships, participation in conferences, seminars, workshops. The Faculty has a long list of partner institutions which is reviewed and renewed each year. So teachers can use this network for their research interests too. There are university and state level funds where teachers can constantly apply for funding of their mobility needs. The travel, participation, accommodation costs can be covered entirely or partly.

The sufficiency of funds and the high quality of conditions for academic mobility can be proved by the fact of increasing level of international mobility of the academic staff of courses in Marketing field. The total number of visits abroad reached 26 in 2019 which makes 1,4 visits per one permanent teacher of courses in Marketing field. The international activities include the teaching and training visits with Erasmus+ program (52 agreements signed by FEM, VMU), international conferences, international project meetings or the global Faculty network events with partners (e.g. under European University Foundation Campus Europae or Eduniversal formats).

During the recent three years about 75% of the permanent teaching staff from courses in Marketing field was participating in various academic mobility actions. The 3 years average is 21,6 visits per year or about 50% of the teaching staff of courses in Marketing field in particular year. Mainly it was Erasmus+ exchange when the teachers also develop contacts with colleagues teaching the same courses and discuss teaching methods, literature resources, attendance in conferences and seminars for dissemination of research results, etc. All international activities help to improve the level of academic competence through the experiences and examples gained in other countries, adoption of new or improved teaching methods, personal contacts established that gains in continuous cooperation in academic and science fields.

FEM devotes particular attention to inviting teachers from universities of other countries. During 2017-2020, there were 37 international teaching visits to the Faculty. All the incoming exchange teachers are recorded at the Faculty level and so there is no possibility to calculate the incoming/outgoing ratio of the teachers in particular field.

5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff

At VMU, teacher professional development is organised under 8 groups of competences: higher education didactics competences, digital competences, research competences, management competences, foreign language competences, intercultural competences, course-related competences and personal competences (regulated by the Description of Procedure for Professional Development at VMU, 2018).

Teachers are invited to participate in training courses for professional development in above mentioned different groups of competences. Professional development includes teacher participation in the University-provided courses as well as ones organised by other Lithuanian institutions or international institutions. The University-provided possibilities for professional development are free of charge for VMU teachers. The training courses for competences of higher education didactics encompass such topics as active learning and student involvement into learning, learning achievement assessment and feedback for students, teaching and learning in distance studies, etc. Teachers also choose professional development possibilities outside the University regarding their teaching and research interests. If other institution-provided possibilities are cost-related, the University teachers can apply for support from their department, research clusters, Erasmus+ programme possibilities or use other potential opportunities.

The academic staff in Marketing field is very active in training. During recent 3 years there were 8.4 events of training and development of competencies per person. Most of them (total 94) were aimed to increase competencies in course field. Much of academic staff joined LiMA (Lithuanian Association of Marketing) and were attending practical conferences and seminars organized by them. This participation is also beneficial because of close cooperation with professional world and discussion of the questions and problems that business is facing. Also, development of personal competencies (total 30) and didactic competencies (total 16) were very important for the academic staff.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Teaching staff</i>		
<i>No</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions taken by the HEI</i>
Advertising Management study programme		
6.	The Faculty should consider recruiting at least one additional member of staff with specific knowledge and experience of teaching advertising related aspects, in particular how the latest technology developments affect the work place in this industry. The Faculty and University should also consider how current members of staff can be guided in their Staff Development [including research and publications] towards these aspects, and how the younger members of staff can be given more supervisory responsibilities in the future.	The recommendations were taken into account. Two additional members of staff with specific knowledge and experience of teaching advertising related aspects were recruited. Both have practical experience, supervise Term Papers, as well as are active researchers in the fields of their interests. There is also a non-academic staff dedicated to the programme, which helps to solve all practical issues, thus enabling the academic staff to focus on ensuring the quality of the content of the courses taught.

Marketing and International Commerce study programme	
4. Special attention should be made to the development of teaching staff that would be able to take at least some workload from the two key lecturers in the Department of Marketing, especially – in supervising Final Master Theses.	The teaching staff of the programme was supplemented with young teachers who defended PhD thesis. The number of teachers supervising Master thesis is well balanced.
Marketing and Sales study programme	
4. Expand and enhance the current teaching team as none of them cite 'sales', 'sales strategy' or 'sales management' among their diverse research interests.	The teaching staff was expanded. More information is provided below and in section 5.1.
5. Many of the teaching team have practical experience related to the Marketing subjects taught but the curriculum may in fact be severely constrained by the absence of specialists in sales subjects who offer such experience. Part-time Faculty seem to bring appropriate expertise of high quality in their specialist areas and more such staff are needed if the programme delivery is to achieve appropriate learning outcomes	During recent years there were actions taken to expand the teaching team in the study program so that more academic staff with practical experience in sales-related fields joined: Dr. J. Kisieliauskas, assoc. prof. dr. K. Zikienė, assoc. prof. dr. A. Kyguolienė, assoc. prof. dr. M. Šontaitė-Petkevičienė, lect. I. Vasiliauskas. The information about their competencies is provided in Annex 4.

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Teaching staff</i>	
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The number of teaching staff in Marketing field is sufficient for qualitative provision of studies in both undergraduate and graduate level. ➤ The teaching staff of courses in Marketing field is well structured. Their competencies in courses taught are linked with their research fields and/or practical experience in business. A number of young teachers who are energetic and able to implement new ideas had been attracted to the study programmes in Marketing field, there are also enough of experienced teachers, who can transfer experience and contribute with scientific insights. ➤ Teaching staff of study programmes in Marketing field has competencies and/or is quickly able to develop them (1) to teach courses in English so that entire study programme could be delivered in foreign language; (2) to quickly and efficiently move to on-line teaching in a very short time without serious losses of study quality. ➤ Increasing involvement of teaching staff in the country's business events, trainings, seminars brings knowledge of innovations, experiences, acquaintances not only with academics, but also with practitioners. 	
Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The teaching staff in Marketing field have increased their professional visibility in national level a lot. But higher professional and scientific visibility of their expertise regionally and internationally would be a great benefit to Marketing field at FEM. 	

6. Learning facilities and resources

6.1. Evaluation of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process

Vytautas Magnus University is aiming to create the best possible studying conditions for all students and academic staff⁸⁰. General study courses are mainly delivered in the central buildings of the University which are located closely to each other, which assures convenience for students to change study rooms during breaks. Special courses are mainly delivered in the Faculty building where the administrative staff and teachers of special courses are working, and this allows administrative and teaching staff members to become more accessible for students. This closeness provides important organizational and technical advantages, e. g. better communication possibilities with technical, administrative units and libraries. Still, faculties have a right to use rooms in different buildings according to demand and convenience for students and staff.

There are 222 classrooms at the University which can be used for the study process according to teaching and learning needs. The size of the rooms varies from 5 up to 150 working places for students. Larger groups of students are able to have study courses in VMU Grand Hall possessing 725 seats. The schedule for lectures is designed taking into account the number of students in the course and the number of working places in the classroom. This allows assigning rooms of an optimal size to deliver study courses.

Consulting rooms, classrooms, laboratories have been renovated in recent years and fulfil the sanitary, health, work safety, temperature regime and other requirements. In recent years, the building of FEM has been renovated too, creating more cosy and attractive spaces for students to work in teams, have a rest during breaks, take a snack, have a time together gaming, seeing films, etc. For example, Magnus eSports space⁸¹ was established for students and professionals – social partners (Schools Basketball League, “Žalgiris” eSport team, etc.), where they could integrate eSports business practices to marketing studies, when eSport event is planned in advance. FEM constantly organized events and meetings offering an environment for building colleagues’ network (till the pandemic).

All the buildings are adjusted for disabled people: elevators and lifts for wheelchairs of disabled people with mobility disabilities have been installed. Students with disabilities have access to parking near the University buildings; the entrance to the buildings is constantly maintained and renovated, libraries have equipment for the disabled to create working places for them, classrooms are with the necessary furniture. Students with disabilities have the opportunity to stay in dormitory rooms adapted for them, if necessary, with an accompanying person. The study process is organized according to the individual needs of students; disability education campaigns are organised; data on students with disabilities are integrated into the databases, thus allowing to facilitate the entire study process for students with disabilities.

Studies are provided in the rooms with the necessary equipment, rooms are computerised and have fast internet connection as well as multimedia projecting equipment, audio and video equipment. If needed, additional technical equipment can be supplied to properly organise specific study courses and enable appropriate application of different study methods to assure quality of student learning achievements. Each building has separate technical service, engaged in supply with necessary equipment for teachers and helping to use it. 46 computer rooms have been equipped for the study process, and the size of computer classes varies from 5 to 31 working places. The administrative staff of FEM produces copies of materials, necessary for lectures and

⁸⁰ See video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTtfSRozWKY&feature=youtu.be> in EN

⁸¹ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magnus-esport/> in LT

supply stationery for the department. Self-services of printing and scanning are also available for students and staff.

Students and teachers are provided by a virtual learning environment and collaboration systems – Outlook, Moodle and Adobe Connect (Microsoft Teams and BigBlueButton were started to use in the period of the pandemic in 2020 as well). These tools allow teachers to choose different forms of organization of study courses, to organize practical activities in various ways (classroom, distant or semi-distant), to share teaching and learning instruments, to provide distant learning even in full range of studies as it happened in spring and autumn semesters in 2020. This period showed a high level of readiness to provide distant studies in FEM as students evaluated in a special survey. All the functions necessary for Problem-Based Learning and teamwork have been realised in Moodle, Adobe Connect and Outlook: communication within the University, storage and dissemination of information, shared calendars, contact databases, link lists, user directory, authentication of other systems, authorized access to databases, synchronization with mobile devices, Internet e-mail, Websites, remote lecturing and teamworking, e.g. via breakout rooms in Adobe Connect.

Important VMU IT tools for presenting study information are the *Student Portal* and the *Teacher Portal*. The main principles of the Student Portal: centralized (based on integrated services) provision of information on the study process to students ensuring privacy of individual student's data and grades. The portals operate in a bilingual mode – In Lithuanian and English. Teacher Portal is an analogue to the Student Portal, and its main functionalities include monitoring of registration in study courses, electronic student achievement records, review of teaching quality assessment results. IThenticate software is used by teachers for antiplagiarism purposes, especially for screening Thesis and other students' paperwork.

Laboratory of Neuromarketing in FEM is supplied with specific equipment and software licenses for marketing field purposes: Tobii glasses and screen-based eye tracker with Tobii Studio software (to analyse the arrangement of goods on the shelves, the design of packaging, evaluating websites' designs and visual advertisements, etc.), Shimmer galvanic skin response (GSR) hardware and software (to indicate human excitement associated with consumer behaviour, Face Reader (Noldus) (to analyse the emotional consumer responses to stimulus), Emotiv EPOC EEG (to register brain bioelectrical activity applied to measure advertising effectiveness), Millisecond Inquisit Lab Test Laboratory software (for psychological testing of consumers), 11 stationary and 22 tablet computers, Addinsoft XLSTAT, Smart PLS, MathWorks, Bloomberg and Eviews licenses.

In marketing field courses teachers use various software and tools depending on their needs. For instance, Mage software for business marketing activities' simulation games in Educational internship, graphic editing programs as Adobe Photoshop for developing visuals, websites development platforms as Wix bei Weebly, user experience analysis programs as UXperia, web analytics tools Google analytics, Google trends, Google Keyword planner, Facebook analytics, advertisement creation platforms Facebook Business manager, Google Ads, etc. In pandemic period from Autumn 2020 the access to Adobe Creative, SPSS and other cloud software through remote computer classes was provided for marketing studies. Both students and teachers have remote access to all computer classes, which means that they can connect remotely to the computers there and all the programs installed on them. Hence, a wide range of modern and constantly renewed software and equipment are available to staff and students for research and study purposes in the field.

The University Library is an attractive information environment for studies and research, ensuring effective services for members of the University community, providing access to information resources necessary for studies, science, and professional qualification.

A modern physical infrastructure of Library departments has been created in faculties and academies allowing to provide conditions for effective response to the research and study needs of academic units⁸². Members of the University community can visit all departments of the Library and use its all services, regardless of which faculty or academy they study or work in. Library services are provided to more than 12 thousand users who are served in 8 library departments. The library has created a total of 770 working places for them, visitors can work with 237 Library computers, 329 places are created to connect with personal computers. VMU libraries also provide access to individual and group work rooms, workplaces for visitors with disabilities, discussion spaces and recreation areas. Opening hours for individual / group work can be booked in advance via the library website⁸³.

The library has self-taking / returning devices (RFID), which allow users to borrow / return publications themselves and extend the deadlines for returning publications. It is also possible to return borrowed documents at any time of the day due to a self-return device being installed on the wall of the Library building at K. Donelaičio St. 52.

All departments of the Library are equipped with 10 workplaces for users with special needs. The Library has special equipment: software JAWS 14 for Windows, Win Taker Voice 1.6, Super Nova Magnifier, electronic Braille device ESYS 40, tactile printer, stationary magnifier TOPAZ XL XD 24, keyboards for the visually impaired, alternative computer mice, height-adjustable tables, ergonomic chairs.

One of the most important tasks of the Library is to accumulate document collections and organize access to traditional and electronic information resources. The dominant type of information sources is electronic information resources, which is clearly revealed by the constantly growing indicators of their demand and usage. VMU community members can use purchased, licensed and library-created electronic information resources at any time of the day. The newest and most relevant information required for studies and research is available to members of VMU in subscribed databases⁸⁴, VMU Research Management System (CRIS)⁸⁵ and VMU virtual library⁸⁶.

The university community has access to almost 624 thousand electronic resources (357 e-books, 31 thousand e-journals, 236 thousand conference presentations, audio recordings, study theses, and other documents). The community also uses 58 databases that can be accessed on the University premises and from remote computers (via EZproxy).

The library recommends and provides access for the students to databases relevant to Marketing field as Academic Search Complete, Business Source Complete, Cambridge Journals Online, eBooks of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Press, eBooks on EBSCOhost, eBooks on ScienceDirect, Emerald Management eJournals Collection, JSTOR, MasterFILE Premier, OECD iLibrary, Oxford Journals Online, Passport (Euromonitor International), SAGE Journals Online, ScienceDirect, SpringerLink, Taylor & Francis, Web of Science and Wiley Online Library, other licensed and trial databases by the University library; their list is constantly updated and supplemented. The website of the library indicates lists of the licensed databases according to the different study and research fields. Access to the licensed and trial databases is restricted only to members of VMU community.

The aim of the Library is to create user-friendly conditions for access to information resources. The most necessary printed documents are freely available to users and stored

⁸² See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/about/structure/departments/> in EN

⁸³ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-studies/facilities-and-study-spaces/booking-a-workspace/> in EN

⁸⁴ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/databases> in EN

⁸⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/cris/?&locale=en> in EN

⁸⁶ See https://vb.vdu.lt/primo-explore/search?vid=VDU&lang=en_US in EN

according to research fields, the search for publications is facilitated by information notes and various virtual aids. All information about the available collections and access to them is available on the library website⁸⁷, electronic catalogues, in the virtual library, in VMU CRIS. The detailed review of library resources in marketing field (more than 26,000 of traditional documents, as well as more than 43,000 e-resources, 27 databases, etc.) is presented in Annex 5.

VMU CRIS is an open science infrastructure that has been in use since 2019. With its help, the University's study and research production is accumulated and its dissemination in the world is ensured. The interactive cross-links among scientific publications, their authors, departments, and ongoing projects help the user to fully get acquainted with the scientific production and activities of the University. Currently, VMU CRIS stores about 9 thousand full-text documents (books and articles of scientific journals published by the University, students' final theses) and over 60 thousand records of scientific publications with external interactive links to full-text documents. The archives of 33 electronic University scientific journals have been prepared in the VMU CRIS repository.

A lot of teachers use e-textbooks accessible for students and encourage them to search for scientific articles in databases. E-textbooks and recent scientific articles (in digital form) are all available in VMU library. The teachers also use for studies their publications - monographs, textbooks, study books in Lithuanian. Some examples: "Methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of printed advertising: a scientific study" by L.Pilelienė, V.Grigaliūnaitė, and A.Bakanauskas; "Electronic marketing" by A.Bakanauskas and V.Liesionis, "Integrated marketing communications" by A.Bakanauskas, "Pricing: theory and practice" by A.Bakanauskas and V.Darškuvienė, "Consumer behaviour" by A.Bakanauskas, "Consumer loyalty: formation and management" by K.Zikienė, "Consumer loyalty: theoretical and practical aspects" by A.Bakanauskas and L.Pilelienė, etc⁸⁸.

6.2. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies

Every year, VMU upgrades computers and purchases multimedia equipment according to the resource development plans submitted by the faculties and academies, which they prepare according to the study needs. About 20% of computers are renewed annually. For instance, 7 stationary (for classrooms) and mobile (for events, fairs, etc.) projectors, and 20 stationary computers are ordered in Maintenance and Investment Department to renew this year.

Executing the project "Extensive university development in the context of university network transformation"(09.3.1-ESFA-V-738-02-0001), specific equipment and software licenses for Marketing field purposes, are bought and now are in the supplying stage, planning to continue to supplement material resources with project funds, when application is available.

All computers are connected to a common network and have an Internet connection, VMU servers and computer network security systems are constantly updated.

VMU uses a centralized system for monitoring and updating hardware and software, and only legal software is used in computer classrooms and other computerized workplaces. Every six months, the software is audited and updated or supplemented. The commercial software used in the study process is used with educational licenses available to students free of charge.

When planning the renewal of information resources relevant to studies, the necessary documents for study programmes are coordinated with the Library by the teachers responsible for study programmes and courses. Also, the analysis of the flow of study scientific publications

⁸⁷ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/>

⁸⁸ See <http://ebooks.vdu.lt/bookshelf/ekonomika-ir-vadyba/> in LT

is performed and recommended for acquisition by teachers and responsible Library employees – faculty curators (subject librarians). Faculty curators maintain constant contacts with the councils of faculties, inviting teachers to participate in the development of information resource collections, offering to purchase new printed and electronic documents relevant to studies.

An interactive document ordering service is installed on the Library website⁸⁹. Requests are based on the reasons for the need of the quantity, form and storage space of resources required for studies or research. Teachers receive feedback on the availability of the requested resources, deadlines, storage location and access conditions.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Learning facilities and resources</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Marketing and Sales study programme		
6.	The resources to support student and staff research and Thesis work should be enhanced with appropriate use of specialist sales and marketing software, library and virtual library resources and the VLE. This may involve implementing mandatory use of the VLE and appropriate staff training.	From 2015 Moodle platform is used as a mandatory VLE in VMU. Adobe Connect, BigBlueButton, Microsoft Teams are used in accordance. Range of trainings was provided for VMU staff and still are available, as well as daily consultations and assistance on every programs' features by highly qualified specialists in Innovative Studies Institute, VMU. 6 of 11 courses are certified at II Moodle level proving the quality of provision of information (the rest are planned to be certified during 2020-2021 academic year). In Moodle pages of Term Paper and Final Master Thesis all information, concerning virtual library usage, including recommended databases, which can be reached through virtual library, recommended literature for conducting research, short video lectures how to make research recorded by assoc. prof. A. Pažeraitė, external sources how to make research are provided. As well the support writing research or Thesis is provided giving all necessary information (requirements, deadlines, citation requirements, communication with supervisors, uploads of parts of papers and final papers with reminders) in one place - through mentioned Moodle pages. A wide range of specific hardware and software have been started to use, necessary and sufficient for marketing field science and studies purposes, in Marketing field during last years (see for more details in 6.1 and 6.2).

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Learning facilities and resources</i>	
Strengths	
➤	There is a sufficient number of high quality, newly renovated classrooms and study areas for the students in Marketing study field, where each classroom is equipped with technical devices, such as multimedia projector and computer, fast Internet access is ensured.
➤	Learning facilities are fully adapted to on-line teaching, responding to changing circumstances. The technical and administrative assistance is readily available.
➤	VMU library facilities are of the most modern in Lithuania. To provide students and teaching staff with the newest textbooks and professional literature for the study programmes in Marketing field, VMU library regularly updates electronic and printed resources; number and constitution of licensed electronic databases are relevant to Marketing study field and provide students and teaching staff with full-text scientific articles and books online.

⁸⁹ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-research/purchase-request/> in EN

Areas for improvement

- FEM should keep surveying students and staff on their needs and constantly improving study areas for their convenience, looking after trends and for opportunities (projects, sponsorship, collaboration with firms, etc.) to acquire specific modern equipment, e-devices, and software, particularly useful for studies in Marketing field.

7. Study quality management and publicity

7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies

Compared with previous practices, described in a self-assessment report in 2013, the internal quality assurance in Marketing field, in FEM and VMU overall, was significantly enriched, improved, and institutionalized. The system of internal quality assurance was created, and activities now are more formalized, preserving still informal sincere and open-minded communication forms among students, alumni and staff (even with heads of departments, in equal level), what corresponds prevailing unique organizational culture of FEM in VMU's *Artes Liberales* tradition.

Studies are managed by the participation of the following parties, each having a particular role in the system: Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), The Senate of VMU, VMU Study Quality Unit, The Study Programme Committee (hereinafter SPC), the Academic Council of FEM, the Faculty Council, the Dean of the Faculty and the Heads of the Departments (of Undergraduate and Graduate Studies).

SKVC⁹⁰ participates in creating and improving the legal environment of studies in Lithuania and implements the national policy of external quality assurance in higher education. SKVC seeks to form an approach to higher education as a public good, from which both society and individuals benefit, by promoting conscious and responsible choices, providing objective information about education systems and their quality.

The Senate of VMU⁹¹ ratifies study programmes, manages studies, approves internal university study regulations and other documents that regulate academic affairs, discusses, and approves resolutions on studies issues, approves internal system of the studies quality, and controls its implementation, etc.

VMU Study Quality Unit⁹² Is responsible for preparation and implementation of strategies for study quality assurance, development of internal quality assurance system of studies, initiation of training on assessment and improvement of studies, consultations on study quality issues.

The SPC is the main coordinating body in the programmes management and update process. The SPC's main responsibilities include coordination of the Programme's implementation regarding the curriculum related questions and assurance of the Programme quality. The SPC performs internal Programme quality assessment and renewal, it is responsible for preparation and implementation of the Programme quality improvement plans. The SPC assures correspondence of the Programme learning outcomes to labour market and society needs, it keeps contacts with stakeholders and assures their involvement into the Programme. The SPC makes decisions by common agreement, and they are documented as meeting minutes.

The SPC's decisions are discussed in the Faculty Academic Council and then approved by the Faculty Council. Besides the approval of the curriculum related questions, the Head of

⁹⁰ See <https://www.skvc.lt/default/en/> in EN

⁹¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/senate/> in EN

⁹² See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/departments-and-subdivisions/studies-department/> in EN.

department supervises the Programme implementation regarding the functions of studies administration, namely, administration of study schedule and facilities, dissemination of information on studies, recording of teachers' workload, student registration, documentation of studies, etc.

The SPC of each programme is composed of 7 members: the Head, 3 teachers, social partner, graduate, and student⁹³. Responsibilities among the SPC members are shared as follows:

- The Head of SPC is in charge of coordination of programme quality assurance and effective SPC work, organises annual Programme assessment and preparation of quality improvement plans as well as monitors implementation of these plans.
- Teachers belonging to the SPC are responsible for revision of the Programme learning outcomes and curriculum design so that to keep to the newest research, subject-related, didactic requirements, and trends. They disseminate good examples of international experience, carry out Programme self-assessment, give suggestions for the Programme improvement and follow decisions on improvement.
- The social partners' representative and graduate participate in the revision of the Programme learning outcomes in line with labour market needs and give recommendations for renewal.
- The student representative gives suggestions for the Programme renewal based on own and other students' proposals and participates in implementation of these renewals.

When making the decisions regarding the update of the Programme, the SPC and the Heads of Departments collaborate with the Studies Department and its Study Quality Unit, Vice-Rector for Studies, Department of Student Affairs, Library and other related University units. In addition, other efficient forms of activity are also used in solving specific organizational study content and study environment issues. For example, such forms include the formation of initiating groups for the solution of specific problems, joint activities with social partners, such as Alumni days, meetings, discussions, etc.

The teachers and students of the Programme (as well as all employees related to its implementation) are encouraged to give Programme update suggestions to SPC. Teachers present such suggestions during the meetings at the Academic Council and SPC. As a rule, meetings dealing with study quality, Study Programme and specific course renewal issues take place at the end of the semester (at least twice a year). Students can present suggestions in both the Faculty Council and SPC meetings through their representatives, also in conversations and regular meetings with the Heads of bachelor or master studies departments. Teachers are responsible for teaching quality, renewal of the course content and study materials, adoption of adequate teaching and learning methods and clear evaluation criteria⁹⁴. The teachers of the Study Programmes are being regularly consulted by the SPC on the Study Programme implementation and its improvement. Such procedure enables open participation of all Programme stakeholders and leads to successful upgrading of the Programme and its courses.

The Academic Council was founded in 2015 in FEM, established by the decision of the Faculty Council, to monitor the internal quality assurance of the faculty studies (programs),

⁹³ See SPC's members lists: <http://evf.vdu.lt/moksleiviams/bakalauro-studijos/>, <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magistranturos-studijos/marketingas-ir-pardavimai/>, <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magistranturos-studijos/marketingas-ir-tarptautine-komercija/>, <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magistranturos-studijos/reklamos-vadyba/> in LT.

⁹⁴ Teachers' annual activity reports produce a broad coverage of all types of teacher activities (academic and professional publishing activities, involvement in research and project development, associational and professional activities, international networking, etc.), distribution of teaching workload, students' learning achievements, drop-outs, information on mobility, students' final thesis, questionnaires on teaching quality evaluation; alumni contact data, etc. These reports are fulfilled on an annual basis and serve as means of financial incentives.

ensure the conformity of the study programs with the academic standards, the labour market, science community and society needs, internal human and material resources, to make recommendations due to the improvement of study programs and processes. The Academic Council is composed of the heads of the study program committees, the interdisciplinary team from departments in the different fields of science, Dean, and Vice-deans.

In 2015-2020 The Academic Council in FEM initiated and coordinated the processes of reviewing, updating and preparing the study programs of the faculty, which included making decisions on forming a row of cross-faculty courses, for example, the inclusion of research methodology courses in studies, particularly in graduates' study programs, in order to develop students' research skills and to create the preconditions for the emergence of higher quality of researches in students' diploma and term papers. In the interdisciplinary interaction among different scientists and lecturers in teamwork mode and according to *Artes Liberales* principles, a greater number of optional courses, especially taught in English, was generated and developed. The Academic Council initiates and coordinates SPCs in all faculty courses certification every three years following VMU Order of Study Course Certification (2019). The assessment is performed according to the following criteria: correspondence between the course and Programme learning outcomes, match between the study content and learning outcomes, consistency of the curriculum, adaptability of the newest research results and study methods in the study process, level and quality of literature sources and other material resources, staff qualification and competence. At the same time, the content of particular courses is constantly reviewed and certified, for distant or semi-distant studies in Moodle as well, in order to reflect the latest theories and contemporary achievements. After the last certification in 2019, the teachers updated and improved the course descriptions, the structure of the cumulative score in many courses increased the number of practical classes, case studies, and other forms of Problem-Based Learning (PBL) based activities.

The Faculty Council is responsible for the quality assurance of the whole study field, and it discusses the issues of the study field and makes decisions on the improvement keeping in mind the whole portfolio of study programmes in the study field. For instance, the Faculty Council approves the renewals of study programmes, results of study programmes' internal assessment and study programmes' quality improvement plans.

Decisions regarding the quality of studies and their management are based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015), national and VMU legal acts. The main VMU documents regulate the following issues⁹⁵:

- VMU Statute (2018) determines general principles of quality assurance of studies and research.
- VMU Study Regulations (2019, new edition) describe the process and responsibility distribution in study quality assurance.
- Description of Procedure for Study Quality Assurance at VMU (2019, new edition) defines in more detail quality assurance processes when developing, implementing and improving studies.
- Description of Procedure of Feedback for Improvement of Quality of Studies at VMU (2019, new edition) regulates gathering information from different stakeholders and data application for evaluation and improvement of studies.
- Description of Procedure for Study Course Attestation at VMU (2019, new edition) determines assessment of study courses in accordance with programme aims, learning

⁹⁵ The above mentioned documents are made public on the VMU website: <http://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/important-documents> in EN, as well as <http://www.vdu.lt/lt/apie-vdu-kaune/svarbiausi-vdu-dokumentai/senato-dokumentai/> in LT

outcomes and study process needs. This description requires the assessment of courses to be performed every 3 years.

7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of stakeholders (students and other stakeholders) in internal quality assurance

Significant information for decision-making and quality assurance come from the results of periodic electronic surveys aimed at gathering information from different stakeholders:

- The survey of teaching and learning evaluation of all study courses is conducted at the end of each semester. The students are asked about teaching regarding a list of criteria (organisation of teaching, methods for student active participation, clarity of the course delivery, content illustration by examples, clarity of evaluation criteria, feedback on completed assignments, information delivery in VLE, behaviour compliance with ethical requirements). Students are also inquired about their own involvement in learning, and they are requested about completed tasks, class attendance and general self-evaluation of their own work.
- The survey of first-year bachelor students regarding the reasons for the choice of studies and their expectations as well as opinions about studies is conducted at the beginning of the second semester of studies.
- The survey of the graduates of studies (EXIT) about the studies, final theses, and the preparation for the labour market are conducted at the end of the studies.
- The survey of alumni on their adaptation in the labour market and career is conducted 12 months after graduation.
- The surveys of employers are conducted to evaluate the preparation for work by alumni and the students who have completed internships as well as alumni adaptation in the labour market.
- The survey of teachers is conducted at the end of an academic year to identify their opinion and suggestion about the teaching, professional development, students' involvement into the studies and working conditions for teaching.
- Additional surveys are also performed under demand to find out specific information about studies. For example, a year ago the survey was conducted on how students are satisfied with the physical environment of their studies in the faculty building and what they would like to improve, half a year ago - how well students were prepared for distant learning in technical meaning; these days a survey on how traditional and distant lectures are assessed by students is started.
- Specialised surveys of particular study programmes' students to get feedback on study programme quality, content, consistency, delivered competence from particular teachers, organization in process, and overall opinion in grades are performed yearly (the results can be shown on request).

The survey results as well as other information about studies is the basis for annual analysis of studies performed by the SPC to identify strengths and weaknesses of studies. The main issues under annual analysis are as follows: compatibility between the Programme and newest research trends, correspondence between the Programme and labour market needs, demand of the Programme, suitability and sufficiency of the programme resources, teachers' competence, students' progress, students' and teachers' mobility as well as other issues. The results of the analysis are discussed in the Faculty Academic Council, Faculty Council, with the Heads of the Departments and the Dean of the Faculty, they are also presented during the meetings with students. After discussion of the issues and possibilities in the Faculty Academic Council, SPC creates the Programme improvement plan and implements it in order to develop the identified

areas for the improvement. SPC discusses the progress of quality improvement in its meetings at least twice a year to monitor the improvement actions.

Stakeholders of studies are involved in quality assurance through the following actions:

- Teachers are invited to present their comments and suggestions regarding improvement in the SPC meetings, in Faculty Academic Council, Faculty Council, for the Heads of the Departments and the Dean of the Faculty or via surveys.
- Students give their assessments of studies through the student representative in the SPC, via student surveys and in common in FEM direct open discussions with teachers.
- Social partners' representatives in the SPC suggest their remarks regarding the Programme correspondence to labour market requirements, relevance of student practical skills, etc. Information from social partners is also collected via surveys, during Career Days at the University and in special discussions, for example discussing student practice and research project issues, joint project possibilities, etc.
- Alumni suggestions are identified via surveys and during meetings organised by the Faculty Alumni association where the Programme alumni are active participants.
- The suggestions of stakeholders are discussed in the SPC meetings, and decisions are taken to use them for quality improvement.

There is an aim to ensure constant updating of study programs in Marketing field, therefore the constant contact with graduates and their employers is maintained, as well as cooperation agreements with companies, industry, business and other associations on student internships and other activities, that increase the opportunities for graduates to integrate into the labour market. For example, in 2019 the active cooperation with 86 companies in various activities was actively developed and collaboration opportunities with 10 potential business partners were further developed. Following a review of these companies, a database of selected FEM social partners was created, comprising a total of 155 companies. The main companies with which the above activities are communicated are such as Euroleague, FESTO, Wolf Engelman, Fazer Lithuania, Neodenta, Pienas LT, Akademinė kredito unija, Tamro, Axis Industries, etc.

Involvement of social partners in the internal quality assurance of studies in Marketing field is inseparable from their engagement in various forms of cooperation in studies, research, and their publicity activities. Alumni members and business representatives are actively involved in the activities of the Faculty Council and SPCs study process organizational and quality improvement, organization of student internships, organization of social events (open days, graduate days, etc.), subcontracted research, training services, etc. The business representatives are always involved in the defence of bachelor's and master's theses committees. The cooperation with companies and their representatives during Educational internships, where students solve business-relevant tasks during this internship, take place. For example, in 2019 companies and the tasks they presented were the publicity of the escape room RŪSYS (creation of various social network content, strategic ideas and suggestions), "C&D STYLE", "St. Valentine's gifts!" communication and sales promotion in stores, 2066 Digital agency communication plan on Facebook and Instagram platforms, etc. In courses, students perform a variety of practical tasks that are meaningful, and students are motivated to perform tasks and thus practice. For example, in the course of Advertising Business the case analysis of Kaunas Arena was ordered - preparation of proposals for the improvement of Maisto Bankas advertising; in course of Innovative advertising solutions - improvement of the advertising campaign of the Multi-gyn Women's Basketball League; in Entrepreneurial marketing - JSC Bambino Spa low budget marketing solutions; etc. Students visit companies of social partners; dozens of invited guests introduce students to the realities of marketing activities every semester. In FEM it is an agreement among the lecturers that in each course at least once a semester a business

representative visits students or students visit their company. There are several examples of events that took place in 2019: MiniBoss Business project manager S.Kromalcas lectured on the topic "Advertising benefits to society and impact on children", Žalgiris e-sports business developer talked to students about e-sports project communication, e-commerce consultant V.Vorobjovas told about "E-commerce for dummies", What About sales manager A.Pilypaitis discussed "Google advertising: Adwords vs SEO ", etc. Quarantine in March-May of 2020 caused transferring of this practice to the distant mode, but to the same extent remained. For instance, A. Alksandravičiūtė-Švažienė, Head of the LSMU Public Communication Service and Business Consultant ("Risks and Crisis Communication: the Challenge of COVID- 19"), in the lecture "Business-to-business marketing"- J. Kaknevičius, the founder of the advertising agency "We are marketing" ("Can B2B marketing be interesting?"), and so on.

In networking with the social partners during such meetings, Marketing field staff representatives seek to engage in discussion and pursue the views of the social partners on the relevance of certain marketing topics, modern solutions to specific problems, opportunities and trends, prospects for study improvement, the level of student readiness to enter the labour market, and so on. By engaging, the social partners declare the mutual benefits of the dissemination of new ideas, self-realization, and the recruitment of human resources.

Cooperation with schoolchildren also takes place: lectures and consultations in Junior Achievement student training companies, lecturers participate in Junior Achievement fairs / competitions as members of the commission; students are introduced to the VMUFem eSport Area, tournaments are held here; during the joint initiative of FEM lecturers and VMU Marketing and Communication Department, lessons were taught every week for 9th and 10th grade classes of Kaunas Jablonskis Gymnasium, thus promoting VMU EVF and the studies offered here, etc.⁹⁶

7.3. Evaluation of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes

Information about studies is gathered, analysed, and evaluated in order to assure regular self-assessment and improvement. Annual analysis of studies allows us to identify shortcomings in time and take necessary actions for improvement. Teaching and learning quality assessment at the end of each course gives possibilities for teachers to monitor their teaching and respond to students' suggestions when delivering the course next time, and this assessment invites students to think over their own learning and consider possibilities for improvement.

Quality assessment measures have been chosen to assure effective results. A procedure of Annual Programme Analysis involves the issues that should be assessed each year while a more comprehensive analysis of the programme is done for external evaluation in more detail to cover various issues of studies. All the internal surveys comprise the issues of primary significance so that not to overload respondents with questions of minor importance. Besides, all the surveys include open questions asking to give comments in boxes for free-text remarks, and these subject-specific recommendations lead to improvement.

The results of teaching quality assessment are used for teaching quality improvement and teacher professional development. All teachers have online access to the survey results and get acquainted with the feedback for their study courses. The survey results are also obtained by the Head of SPC, and the main trends of the teaching quality are discussed in the SPC meetings, decisions are made about what improvements in teaching should be taken.

⁹⁶ Detailed information is presented in The Annual Reports of FEM, as well as in The Personal Annual Reports of Teachers' Scientific and Didactic Activities.

Results of internal assessment (surveys, stakeholder discussions, statistical data, etc.) are applied to improve quality of studies. For example, after first pandemic stage in some courses students reacted in surveys that their individual workload increased, therefore from autumn semester more involving to group work seminar activities via video-conferencing platform take place instead of written assignments after each topic prevailing in spring semester.

Access to surveys' data is open to all VMU employees in Outlook folders, the Study Quality Centre periodically suggests new data for review, and the SPC and lecturers are encouraged to take an interest in them.

The results of each student survey are presented and discussed at the Vytautas Magnus University Rectorate, with the participation of FEM representatives, then in the Faculty Council, in the extended Academic Council meetings, and finally in the SPCs, which proposes, discusses and approves programmes improvement decisions. Representatives of FEM also participate in the group A courses certification committee, which constantly considers alternatives and updates the list of courses taught in group A, submits proposals for their improvement. For example, considering the comments from students, the number of credits for general courses in Marketing study programme has been reduced. Naturally, these problems are largely solved for students after completing the co-university program and switching to specialized courses taught almost exclusively of FEM members and in one building of FEM, though, the administration are persistently looking for opportunities to improve these conditions in regular meetings with members of the Rectorate.

The Evaluation Reports on study programmes in Marketing field were received in 2013-2014 that provided the expert recommendations on programmes' improvement. Shortly after the evaluation, SPC started examining the potential alternative directions of programmes development and conducted the changes. In 2015 the Progress Reports were announced⁹⁷. Later examples of programmes management and updates follow.

Study programme *Marketing Management* in recent years, the competitive environment, experience in implementing the programme, feedback from students and graduates from EXIT surveys, and in order to increase the competitiveness and attractiveness of the study programme in March, 2020 the title of the study programme was changed from "Marketing Management" to "Marketing", and many courses related Management fields were changed into courses specific for Marketing field.

The next example is in the study programme of *Marketing and International Commerce*, where following the aim of the programme and considering changing environment and students' proposals, some courses were eliminated from the from the programme, some new course were introduced to the programme.

Another example of the study programme development is of the study programme of *Marketing and Sales*. In order to increase competitiveness and attractiveness of the study program, taking into account short duration of study programme, the form of study programme is organized (studying by cycles) and profile of typical student of this study programme (significant part of them are already working in business organizations) changes of courses, ECTS and sequence of the courses were done in 2019. Proposals for changes were based not just on mentioned above, but as well on detail analysis of (1) student's feedback from surveys, (2) other graduate study programmes in a field of Marketing both in and outside of Lithuania, (3) requirements provided for marketing and sales positions in job advertisements, (4) supply and

⁹⁷ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/VDU_Marketingo_vadyba_pask_veikla.pdf, https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/VDU_Marketingas_ir_tarpt_komercija_pask_veikla.pdf, https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/VDU_Reklamos_vadyba_pask_veikla.pdf, https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/VDU_Marketingas_ir_pardavimai_pask_veikla.pdf, in LT.

demand of courses in private training sector. The aim of the changes was to provide complex knowledge, skills and abilities in Marketing and Sales, to focus on practice with deepened focus on sales and customer centricity.

All decisions regarding studies (including issues on assessment and improvement) are publicized for stakeholders by different channels. The Head of SPC publicizes information for the teachers, social partners, and other stakeholders. The Student representative in the SPC publicizes the decisions to other students of the study programme.

When surveys are organised, in 3 months the summarized results of the feedback data analysis are presented to social stakeholders who have provided feedback as well as other representatives of the University's social stakeholders. The results are published on VMU website, emailed to students and teachers, stored in Outlook folders, delivered in social media, and shared by other channels.

Study programmes' in Marketing field aim and intended learning outcomes are announced and periodically updated in:

- „AIKOS“ – open information, consulting and guidance system, established by the Ministry of Education⁹⁸;
- VMU website⁹⁹;
- Faculty of Economics and Management website¹⁰⁰;
- On Facebook¹⁰¹.

Study Programmes' aim and intended learning outcomes are regularly presented to high school students, teachers and parents during the annual events, such as: "Study Fair", "University Open Doors", "University Day of Schoolchildren", "Days of Faculty of Economics and Management" events, visits to the Lithuanian secondary schools organized by VMU Study Marketing Office. SPC members and teachers have introductory meetings with the students presenting the aim of the programme, intended learning outcomes as well as professional and employment opportunities. In addition, the latest information can always be found in the edition "Admission to Lithuanian University Degree-Granting Institutions", and the annual publication "Studies@VMU/20...". VMU also applies non-traditional forms to inform future students about its ideals and programmes – one of those is a project called "VMU – More Than a Specialty"¹⁰².

7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the Centre or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI

Feedback from first-year, EXIT students and graduates is obtained through annually organized and conducted surveys at VMU. Additional surveys in FEM are conducted on demand, for instance, in a survey conducted in the spring semester 2020 during the pandemic Covid-19, 43% of students rated their general condition as indefinite, 37%- as good or very good, other – poor. It tended to be rated as average. Nevertheless, 74% of the respondents assessed FEM readiness to the new distant studies as very good or good. According to the survey, students were also positive about the process of organizing studies. Its quality was rated as good or very

⁹⁸ See <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/Puslapiai/Pradinis.aspx> in LT and EN.

⁹⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/179/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/240/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/11/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/180/> in LT and <https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/show/267/> in EN. Most of Marketing field study programmes are taught in the Lithuanian language, thus public information about the program and courses is available mostly in Lithuanian, with exclusion of Marketing and International Commerce. However, a number of courses are also taught in the English language – these courses are listed on the VMU website <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/courses/> in EN.

¹⁰⁰ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/moksleiviams/bakalauro-studijos/>; <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magistranturos-studijos/> in LT and <http://evf.vdu.lt/en/studies/> in EN.

¹⁰¹ See <https://www.facebook.com/vytauto.didziojo.universitetas/> and <https://www.facebook.com/VDUEVF> in LT.

¹⁰² More information is available: <https://www.vdu.lt/people/more-than-a-specialty/> in EN.

good by 56% of respondents, 24% rated it as average. For this moment surveys on students opinion about studies in FEM overall and form of lectures to choose (distant or in auditorium) in the period of Covid-19 pandemic are in the process.

VMU Study Quality Centre conducts an annual undergraduate students survey, showing that studies meet expectations for 85% of FEM students, 92% of newcomers are happy to be consulted by teachers if necessary, 85% think that administrative staff provide appropriate assistance. This confirms the very good opinion of students about the quality of studies.

In the analysis of areas for improvement the remarks on the access and scheduling of common for every student of VMU courses from group A and B, duration and frequency of language lectures, difficulties to quickly move from building to building in the brakes between A and B group lecture, complaints about the absence of a canteen and lack of parking spaces, inconvenience of the student portal, etc., what is not in jurisdiction of FEM.

According to EXIT survey (of ending studies students), conducted by VMU Career Centre in 2019, a number of working students represent 63% of undergraduate students and as high as 79% - in ending studies students group. Among those non-working during their studies, 51% undergraduate and 50% of graduate students indicated choosing not to work to be able to study full time and confirmed to be looking for a job soon after graduation. Majority of respondents confirmed their determination to connect their future with the chosen study field and to build on the competencies acquired during studies. 83% of undergraduate and 81% of graduate students assured to seek full or partial employment related to the completed degree programme.

Other data of surveys in 2018-2020 are available to analyse according to the different study programmes in Marketing field, so here the contribution to graduates' preparation for labour market appeared being high or very high in undergraduate study programme Marketing - 64% (improved by 21 p.p. in the period of 2018-2020), in graduate study programme Marketing and International Commerce – 73% (improved by 21 p.p.), in graduate study programme Advertising Management – 88% (improved by 71 p.p.), and in graduate study programme Marketing and Sales – 100 % of total students (improved by 33 p.p.). It can be noticed that in recent period all study programmes in Marketing field remarkably improved as a result of programmes management decisions implemented recently.

In preparing for the labour market graduates the most useful found knowledge and skills acquired during study sessions (lectures, seminars, etc.) and performing independent tasks as well as developed during practice. The surveys' results (in scale of 4 points) show, that the administrative staff provided the necessary assistance (for study programme Marketing – 3.73, Marketing and International Commerce – 3.62, Advertisement Management – 3.38, Marketing and Sales – 4); students were able to consult with teachers (3.73, 3.38, 3.50, and 3.75 respectively); opportunities for international mobility were provided (3.41, 3.67, 3.43, and 4); the equipment of auditoriums, laboratories and other study premises was adequate (3.41, 3.67, 3.43, and 4); the study load was right (3.30, 3.46, 3.25, and 3.75); the content of the study courses correspond to the purpose of the study programme (3, 3.15, 2.88, and 3.5); lectures, seminars, laboratory work and other study sessions met my study expectations (3, 2.92, 2.57, and 3); smooth cooperation with the Final Thesis advisor (3.67, 3.38, 3.14, and 3.63); the defence procedure was correct and followed (3.50, 3.62, 3.38, and 4); in summary, the quality of the study program is adequate (3.03, 3.23, 2.88, and 3.25, respectively).

Summarizing the named advantages of Marketing studies, the flexible schedule, a lot of freedom for the student, youthful staff and its involvement, communication and cooperation, respect for the student, a friendly study environment and the like were the most frequently mentioned strengths. Although, many students mentioned that nothing was missing, among the most common shortcomings identified in the studies are asking for fewer theories and more

practical tasks, work with specialized software, more detailed methodological requirements for the preparation of Final Thesis and their explanation. The identified study advantages are in line with the identity and the mission of the VMU and FEM, and each identified study disadvantage was taken very seriously by FEM staff: some courses were changed to more practical ones by inviting practitioners to teach, using the latest software (see section 6.1 for details), unified and reviewed requirements of the Final Thesis of Marketing field study programmes, more contact time is devoted to their explanation, defence procedures are more carefully considered and implemented.

This confirms the value of Marketing field study programmes at FEM for graduates and the high level of quality of these studies¹⁰³.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to Study quality management and publicity		
<i>No</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions taken by the HEI</i>
Marketing study programme		
3.	The implementation of the student survey needs to be improved with clear pathways for feedback leading to actions which could be recorded in an annual Quality Enhancement Plan. This would give continuous insight into issues such as student drop-out rate which may be emerging as a problem in year two of the Study Programme.	Continuous data for periodic analysis is available in FEM. Each year study quality improvement plans and actions have been developed at SPC meetings, and tactical decisions have been made in response to emerging challenges and problems. SPCs meetings take place at least twice a year or more frequently. The results of student surveys are used for constant improvement. Teachers' individual plans are prepared for an annual period. In 2015 the Faculty Council approved and entered into force the Employee Performance Appraisal Procedure. Systemic challenges are addressed through the activities of the Academic Council. For more details see 7.1.
Advertising Management study programme		
7.	The Faculty, Department and Study Programme team should consider how they can formalise their review process by instituting a formal schedule, agenda, minute keeping and establishing an annual action plan to be reported on at the next meeting. The role and representatives and social partners should also be formalised to assist with this process.	Description of Procedure for Study Quality Assurance and Description of Procedure of Feedback for Improvement of Quality of Studies at VMU formalise the quality assurance and constant improvement. In 2015 The Faculty Council approved and entered into force the Employee Performance Appraisal Procedure, the purpose of which is to describe the staff performance appraisal process and detail the principles of employee performance appraisal, set goals for the coming year, discuss employee and managerial expectations, employee development and career opportunities. Students nominate their representative to the SPC and this representative is included with the consent of the VMU Students' Council. All members of the SPC have equal rights and responsibilities in the SPC (submit proposals, take decisions by voting, etc.), their votes during voting are equal.

¹⁰³ A more comprehensive analysis of the survey data is available on VMU intranet: Outlook Public Folders → Career Monitoring.

Marketing and Sales study programme

<p>9. While there is evidence of a functioning Study Programme Committee structure there is a need to ensure full staff participation in the SPC, active and full student participation, a process for feedback to all stakeholder constituencies and an annual quality enhancement plan which acts on Study Programme Committee decisions and closes the loop by reporting on previous year decisions in a more formal and fully documented system.</p>	<p>Study Programme Committee (SPC) is fully acting organ. It is yearly enriched with a changing student representative. Other members, including graduates and social partners of SPC are changed only if necessary.</p> <p>The Head of SPC is a member of the Academic Council. The Academic Council participates in ensuring quality of study programmes.</p> <p>Meetings are held twice a year face-to-face or online depending on environmental factors participating all members of SPCs. Decisions of each SPC regular meeting are fully documented in written protocols. Students are informed with ongoing decisions orally and in written by e-mail, in Moodle. Teaching staff is informed with decisions in written by e-mails and during general meetings of FEM.</p>
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Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of *Study quality management and publicity*

Strengths

- The main procedures for quality assurance and Marketing study programmes' management are in place and functioning. The institutional and administrative infrastructure at VMU is supportive of the study process and contributes to its continuous improvement. Responsibilities for decision and monitoring of programmes' implementation are clearly defined and supported.
- All types of data on study programmes implementation and its assessment are being regularly collected; issues of study programmes management are regularly discussed at SPC of a particular study programme in Marketing field, the Dean Office, the Academic Council, and the Faculty Council meetings.
- The improvements made to the programmes reflect the inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders during internal and external evaluations. Advices from experts are taken into consideration, revision and implementation of the programmes is coordinated with social partners as well. FEM VMU has a dedicated Alumni network that includes specialists who are interested to be actively involved with the programmes' management.
- The internal quality assurance of the study programmes is based on principles of open dialogue, transparency, and inclusiveness, involving students and teachers contributing to the improvement of study programmes.

Areas for improvement

- Notwithstanding staff encouragement and guaranteed confidence, the number of students and alumni participating in state and VMU level surveys from Marketing field studies is too limited for statistical generalizations of surveys' data in some part, as potential respondents follow their free will to participate in surveys, round tables, etc. or not. Thus, FEM internal surveys were started to conduct and appear to be more inclusive and bring more relevant feedback for SPCs.
- Several study programmes are still under a slight transition phase after their major changes and the feedback from surveys and other sources will be evident only after several years. This might challenge the need for improvements in study programmes in the future.