

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY



VYTAUTAS
MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
M C M X X I I

Field of Study:
BUSINESS (L01)

First and second study cycle

SELF EVALUATION REPORT

December 2021

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)	Study programme location
1.	Business Administration	6121LX029	U (university studies)	Bachelor (first cycle)	Full time (4 academic years)	240	Bachelor of Business Management	Lithuanian English	High school degree	19/05/1997	-	S. Daukanto str. 28, Kaunas
2.	Logistics and Commerce	6121LX039	U (university studies)	Bachelor (first cycle)	Full time (3,5 academic years), part time (5 academic years)	210	Bachelor of Business Management	Lithuanian English	High school degree	15/06/2012		Universiteto str.10, Akademija, Kaunas distr.
3.	Business Logistics	6211LX055	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (1,5 academic years), part time (2 academic years)	90	Master of Business Management	Lithuanian English	Bachelor's degree	01/08/2014	-	Universiteto str.10, Akademija, Kaunas distr.
4.	Business and Entrepreneurship	6211LX049	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (1.5 academic years)	90	Master of Business Management	Lithuanian	Bachelor's degree	15/05/2015	-	S. Daukanto str. 28, Kaunas
5.	Sports Business Management	6211LX001	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (1.5 academic years)	90	Master of Business Management	English	Bachelor's degree	01/03/2017	-	S. Daukanto str. 28, Kaunas

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In line with the Methodology, there was Self Evaluation Group organized for all the study programmes in the field of Business. The group was formed by the Deans of the faculties on 20th of January 2021 and approved by the order of VMU Rector. The Head of FEM Academic Council, Heads, and members of the Study Programmes Committees (hereinafter – SPC,) as well as faculty administration, students and social partners have been invited as members of the Self Evaluation Group. The Self Evaluation Group had regular meetings (twice a month) from January 2021, where the progress in development of the report, the analysis of different areas of the study programmes in Business field implementation have been discussed till the submission of the report in December, 2021.

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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 doctoral (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 courses, ensures that the studies offered at VMU are comprehensive, they are not restricted to specialized, pre-defined courses. 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 14 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, Institute of Foreign Languages, Botanical Garden.

Business field studies are delivered in two faculties of VMU: The Faculty of Economics and Management and The Faculty of Bioeconomy Development.

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 programmes and research are organized by 4 departments in FEM: Undergraduate Studies, Graduate Studies, Scientific Research departments, and Graduate Study Centre. 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 programme which is organized at Baltic Management Institute (BMI) in Vilnius. FEM has undergraduate (bachelor),

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.

graduate (master) and postgraduate (doctoral) levels of studies. Currently there are five study fields at FEM – study field of Marketing, Business, Management, Economics, and Finance. At FEM these fields of study cover five study programmes on the first cycle (undergraduate or bachelor) of studies, nine second cycle (graduate or master) study programmes, and two third cycle (postgraduate or doctoral) fields. FEM had 858 students in all three cycles of studies, 47 academic staff personnel members and 7 other employees of non-academic staff, according to Report of FEM, 2020.

FEM has a unique faculty-level based decision-making organizational structure which is very helpful for tight cooperation and good coordination of study programmes 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, masters, 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, FEM Academic Council, including the heads of all SPCs, plays important role in the study programmes' management.

The organizational structure of the Agriculture Academy was subject to variation in the self evaluation period due to internal and external changes. On 13 January 2018, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania approved reorganization of Aleksandras Stulginskis University (ASU) and the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences (LEU) by merger with Vytautas Magnus University (VMU). Upon the merger of VMU, LEU, and ASU, the Education Academy and Agriculture Academy were established at the University. As a result of the changes, VMU has become the Lithuanian University covering the widest scope of science areas. The legal process of the merger of the three schools of higher education was completed on 1 January 2019, and the optimization of activities and organizational structures was set to be completed by the year 2022.

Improvement of the management structure of VMU Agriculture Academy was related to certain changes in the external and internal environment. The rationale behind the changes was to optimize and reorganize the administrative and academic units to assure the study quality, meet the students' needs, enhance the competitiveness of the research and educational domain, improve the organization of work, and assure the community-centred favourable conditions in order to implement the identified mission. The result of structural changes was the centralized activities at the Academy, including administration, marketing of studies, development of international activities and relations, strengthening of relations with the country's schools, social and business partners, coordination of research activities, thereby promoting the dissemination of knowledge accumulated by the community members and implementing the key strategic activity goals of the Agriculture Academy for the period 2021-2027. The administration team at the Agriculture Academy in charge of implementation of the above activities has been delegated to pursue the strategic goals and implement the measures identified in the Strategy of the Agriculture Academy by the year 2027 by cooperating with the academic and non-academic units. As of 1 September 2021, the former five faculties were replaced by the formed four faculties: Agronomy, Bioeconomy Development, Engineering, and Forest Sciences and Ecology. Bioeconomy development, one of the major breakthrough areas of the Agriculture Academy, has prompted the establishment of the Research Institute for Bioeconomy in its new structure. Non-academic units were also reorganized and currently comprise two units: the Business and Social

Partnership Centre and the Experimental Station.

The Faculty of Bioeconomy Development (hereinafter – the FBD)³ is one of the largest Faculties at the VMU Agriculture Academy. The FBD is the Lithuania's leader in research on bioeconomy development, sustainable regional and rural development and brings together the community of students, researchers, business, authorities, and general public for implementation of the mission of the Agriculture Academy and, in particular, that of the faculty.

The FBD delivers the studies of the first (undergraduate or bachelor), second (graduate or master), and third (postgraduate or doctoral) cycles. The first and second cycle study programmes currently delivered at FBD cover the following six study fields: Accounting, Economics, Finance, Management, Business, and Public Administration. As on 1 October 2021, the FBD had the total of 508 students, 48 members of the teaching staff, and 5 members of the non-academic staff for the three study cycles.

Five study programmes are delivered in the study field of Business at VMU: first cycle programmes of *Business Administration* and *Logistics and Commerce*; second cycle programmes of *Business Logistics*, *Business and Entrepreneurship* and *Sports Business Management*. Studies in Business field are provided since 1997. The study programmes are developed according to the environmental changes and labour market demand needs.

The first cycle study programme of *Business Administration* is implemented since the establishment of FEM and was registered on 19/05/1997 (Order No. 565). The study programme of *Business Administration* received a positive evaluation in 2005 (for 6 years) and 2013 (accredited by the Order No. SV4-155, 27/05/2013, of SKVC, for the 6-year period)⁴ when the self evaluation report was submitted to SKVC for international external evaluation.

The first cycle *Logistics and Commerce* programme at FBD has been delivered since 2012 upon registration of the study programme. The second cycle *Business Logistics* programme has been delivered since 2014. Successful execution of the study programmes has been determined by the favourable structural changes in the logistics industry and labour market. The first external evaluation of the first cycle study programme of *Logistics and Commerce* was conducted in the year 2015 (accredited by the Order No. SV6-9, 10/03/2016, of SKVC, for the 3-year period)⁵, the external evaluation of the second cycle study programme of *Business Logistics* was conducted in the year 2017 (accredited by the Order No. SV6-36, 14/09/2017, of SKVC, for the 6-year period)⁶. The conclusions and recommendations of the previous external evaluation of the study programmes of the field and how they were taken into account are presented at the end of each evaluation part and presented in more detail at section 7.3.

The second cycle study programme of *Business and Entrepreneurship* was introduced in 2015 (Order No. SV6-15). This study programme is intended to fulfil demand from business practitioners, seeking further improvement, lifelong learning, and retraining, developing entrepreneurial thinking, traits, and behaviours in order to creatively take advantage of opportunities in a dynamic business environment, leaders capable of systematically managing modern business organizations by integrating different functional areas of business.

³ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/faculties/faculty-of-bioeconomy-development/about-faculty/> in EN

⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/VersloAdmBak.pdf> in EN

⁵ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Logistika-ir-prekyba_Bak_Ekspertinio-vertinimo-i%C5%A1vados_2016.pdf in EN and LT

⁶ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Verslo-logistika_Mag_Ekspertinio-vertinimo-i%C5%A1vados_-2017.pdf in EN and LT

The second cycle study programme of *Sports Business Management* was developed in 2017 (Order No. SV6-7) and is delivered in cooperation with Euroleague Basketball Institute (hereinafter - EBI). The programme was started as a result of EBI initiative looking for reliable and solid academic partner to fill this niche in the study market, to help them to develop sports business professionals, now it is taught under a partnership by EBI and VMU FEM. It is international educational project, benefiting from an extensive global network of academicians, industry leaders, experts and social partners for contemporary sports business and world-class online learning opportunities.

Business and Entrepreneurship and *Sports Business Management* study programmes had not international external evaluation yet. Therefore, the recommendations of the previous external evaluation experts will not be provided at the end of each evaluation area, as they have not been provided.

The study programmes in Business field are carried out, at first, in close collaboration with all above-mentioned departments 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.

Discussions in SPCs and the other decision-making bodies allowed to differentiate first and second cycle studies study programmes. Cooperation between FEM and FBD researchers and lecturers takes place according to the need to consistently address the issues of study quality assurance. The self evaluation report of Business field studies was prepared in cooperation with the representatives of both faculties (see the Self Evaluation Group).

This is the first self evaluation of the Business field carried out according to the Methodology for Evaluation of Study approved by the Order No. V-149, 31/12/2019, of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter – SKVC) and includes the period 2019-2021.

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 Business field are well justified by the existing needs of the labour market, the economy, and the society as a whole.

The Methodology of Linking Subgroups of Occupations to Study and Training programmes of the Lithuanian Classification of Occupations⁷ states that better matching of labour supply and demand is one of the most important goals of the European Commission's Employment Package 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 Business field.

The Lithuanian Department of Statistics⁸ indicates that there were 87 143 business enterprises at the beginning of 2020. Based on continuing FDI flows and GDP growth tendencies (except pandemic period) the number of available working places shall keep growing⁹. The State Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”¹⁰ 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 business specialists, these numbers show that there is and will be a demand for business specialists in Lithuania. According to the Lithuanian Employment Service¹¹ data, graduates of Business field study programmes are continuously on the most popular professions’ list in the Lithuanian Employment Service with an average salary exceeding the state average.

According to the annual survey of employers conducted by the Lithuanian Employment Service and the opinions of the specialists and labour market experts of the Employment Service, the largest positive job creation balance is forecasted in the service sector for specialists and executives, including sales representatives, warehousing staff, wholesale and retail, land transport, warehousing, and communications activities. The Employment Opportunity Barometer for 2021¹² prepared by the Employment Service in the Lithuanian labour market and in ten counties of the country also shows the growing need for logistics and trade specialists. This shows that more and more jobs in Lithuania will be created for qualified specialists in warehousing, sales and transport management, and priority will be given to those specialists who have acquired this qualification. According to the market research and analysis report by individual business market segments, such as transport services, warehousing and distribution services, e-commerce logistics services, have a market growth trend, and this trend is projected to continue until 2024¹³. This shows that the need for specialists in transport, warehousing, trade, and e-commerce logistics will increase in the

⁷ See <https://e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/2a99ca9094de11e4bb3bb9baf4d4bfd1> in LT

⁸ See <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=46660eeb-aebf-4114-ada6-c8cde2649c05#/> in LT

⁹ See <https://tradingeconomics.com/lithuania/gdp-growth> in EN

¹⁰ See https://lrv.lt/uploads/main/documents/files/EN_version/Useful_information/lithuania2030.pdf in EN

¹¹ See <https://uzt.lt/darbo-rinka2/paklausios-profesijos/> in LT

¹² See <https://uzt.lt/darbo-rinka2/isdarbinimo-galimybiu-barometras/> in LT

¹³ See <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20190809005188/en/Global-E-commerce-Logistics-Market-Analysis-Report-2019-with-Sales-for-the-Years-2017-2019-2022---ResearchAndMarkets.com> in EN

European Union (hereinafter - EU), as well as in other countries. According to Eurostat, businesses trading in EU have unrestricted access to almost 500 million consumer market. The active participation of the Lithuanian business sector in EU domestic and international markets and the development of logistics and trade activities create new jobs in the supply and trade chain.

Information provided in AIKOS¹⁴ shows that the number of study programmes of Business field is high in Lithuania, however, based on the results of the annual graduate surveys EXIT 2019-2021, it did not influence employment opportunities of first and second cycles students in Business field¹⁵. The need for study programmes' graduates could also be validated by the data provided in the Lithuanian Department of Statistics¹⁶, which indicates intended graduates placements in sales management (15,146 job advertisements per year), warehouse management (8577 job advertisements), transport/logistics management (7205 job advertisements), leading/management (4000 job advertisements), purchase/supply management (2357 job advertisements), human resource management (2276 job advertisements), as well as marketing/advertising specialist (2,360 job advertisements) were among the most popular professions on demand in Lithuania.

Since Lithuania is a member of 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 business management professionals shall remain increasing faster than market average with an estimated growth of on average 5% to 10% during 2018-2028¹⁷.

The compliance of Business field study programmes with the needs of society and the labour market can be justified from several perspectives. First of all, there is a need in Lithuania for executives and specialists with leadership competencies. According to the annual report "Human Capital in Lithuania" prepared by the Centre for Monitoring and Analysis of Science and Studies (MOSTA), until the 2022, 25 % of the need for highly qualified specialists will be at the executive level¹⁸. The shortage of qualified staff in business and management is already evident for specialists of labour market and CEOs of the Lithuanian companies¹⁹. Recently a very rapid growth of start-ups has been observed in Lithuania^{20 21}. The great potential of the Lithuanian economy and untapped opportunities can be seen in this area.

Secondly, the university study programme should prepare for professional activities, as well as provide the education necessary to acquire the highest level of professional skills. Therefore, the relevance of the study programme to the needs of society and the labour market can best be justified by the learning outcomes of the programmes (more in Section 1.4.), which meet the expected most needed competencies and skills in the future labour

¹⁴ See <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/SitePages/Home.aspx?ss=e3525251-1754-404b-92d9-4bfbbed55b33b> in EN

¹⁵ Annual graduate surveys EXIT 2018-2020, are annually organized by VMU Studies Department

¹⁶ See <https://www.stat.gov.lt/services-portlet/pub-edition-file?id=33268> in LT

¹⁷ See <https://www.onetonline.org/find/quick?s=manager> in EN

¹⁸ See <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-valdymas/personalo-valdymas/2019/06/07/lietuvos-darbo-rinka-2022-aisiais-kokiu-zmoniu-reikes-labiausiai> in LT

¹⁹ See <https://www.kurstoti.lt/s/10332/ateities-profesijos-link-kur-juda-lietuvos-ir-ne-tik-darbo-rinka> in LT

²⁰ See <https://www.versli Lietuva.lt/naujienos/lietuvos-startuoliu-spurtas-tesiasi-per-metus-pritraukta-1665-mln-eur-investiciju/> in LT

²¹ See <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/verslas/ekonomika/darbo-rinka-kokiu-gebejimu-turinciu-specialistu-iesko-darbdaviai-922512> in LT

market provided by IFTF²², World Economic Forum²³, Forbes²⁴, and International Labour Organization²⁵.

According to the European Commission's "Entrepreneurship Action Plan 2020: Restoring Entrepreneurship in Europe"²⁶, "Europe needs more entrepreneurs to boost Europe's economy and employment rate again" (page 3). In addition, innovation and start-ups are told to be a key source of employment, creating more than 4 million new jobs, and fostering the acquisition of new skills and competences, i. e., growing level of entrepreneurship. One of the immediate actions mentioned in the plan is "entrepreneurship education and training to support economic growth and business creation" (page 5). The document emphasizes that investing in entrepreneurship education is sustainable and one of the most important investments. The European Commission's Action Plan states that "it is the entrepreneurial spirit that helps entrepreneurs turn business ideas into action and significantly increases their employability" (page 6). Thus, "Entrepreneurship is a key competence and action formed within the European system according to the Commission Communication on the Education Review"²⁷ (page 6), helping to bridge the gap between education and business - "universities should be more entrepreneurial" (page 7). Active and open partnership with business entities, involving students in real problem solving and business creation by the help of using inclusive teaching methods in *Business and Entrepreneurship* and other Business field study programmes, forms the ecosystem and culture of entrepreneurship skills development - formation, application, and renewal - promotes innovation, leadership, stakeholder involvement and contributes to the implementation of EU innovation policy.

The National Education Strategy for 2013-2022²⁸ approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania aims to turn Lithuanian education into a sustainable basis for an energetic and independent person who is responsibly shaping the future of himself, the state, and the world, and to develop study programmes open to creativity, exploration, and development at all levels of education. This is especially true with the first cycle study programmes integrating *Artes Liberales* in the field of Business: *Business Administration* and *Logistics and Commerce*.

Research by LinkedIn, the largest professional social network, conducted by "LinkedIn Economic Graph" in collaboration with researchers, emphasizes that entrepreneurship is one of the key drivers of economic growth in the future. One of the most important aspects is a labour force with the skills of entrepreneurship²⁹. Analysis of employment data performed by LinkedIn³⁰ reveals which professions in 2020 have grown the most and which will be in a high demand in the future. Among them business developers and sales professionals (the three most sought-after jobs in the field are sales consultants, sales operations assistants and strategy advisors), and such skills as project management, digital marketing, product

²² See https://www.iftf.org/uploads/media/SR-1382A_UPRI_future_work_skills_sm.pdf in EN

²³ See <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/> in EN

²⁴ See <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2019/03/22/seven-key-competencies-to-develop-future-leaders/?sh=48aea8877223> in EN

²⁵ See <https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-training-for-poverty-reduction/lang--en/index.htm> in EN

²⁶ See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LT/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0795&from=LT> in LT

²⁷ See December 18, 2006 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning in EN

²⁸ See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.463390> in LT

²⁹ See <https://economicgraph.linkedin.com/the-future-of-work/entrepreneurship> in EN

³⁰ See <https://news.linkedin.com/2021/january/jobs-on-the-rise-2021> in EN

management and data analysis with the help of IT and applications as the most necessary skills to develop are identified. For such positions in the labor market students are prepared in VMU Business study programmes, and the most necessary skills are provided by the study results of a number of courses taught in programmes such as Digital Marketing, Brand Management, Management Information Systems, etc. in the study programme *Business Administration*.

According to a recent study by Google and McKinsey & Co., more than 90 million European workers may need to develop the significant new skills and competencies they will need in their current jobs and professions, and by 2030, as many as 21 million people will no longer be able to work in their profession as their demand tends to decline.³¹ According to an AACSB study (2021), entrepreneurship is becoming an educational opportunity and a necessity, demonstrating a huge interest in studies in this field (66% growth in 2020, USA), as well as becoming an important catalyst for societal change through start-ups and business incubators (30% growth)³².

The OECD Learning Compass 2030³³, which analyses the vision, trends, and needs of the future education moving towards digital industry 4.0., states that critical and creative thinking, emotional intelligence, and lifelong learning competencies are becoming increasingly relevant and cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence in the processes of persuasion, negotiation, and social entrepreneurship. The document states that the necessary transformation in higher education from static preparation of students for the labour market to their preparation for independence, revealing personal potential, focusing on networking skills in the future, fostering citizenship values through flexible, dynamic, personalized study methods should take place. The OECD Learning Compass 2030 is based on a framework of values, knowledge, skills, and attitudes that informs students about change in the external environment of organizations and society and enables them to become active agents of change through transformative and experiential competencies.

The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of global collaboration and innovation in mobilization to solve complex problems. Supporting innovation by offering relevant study programmes, providing safe but practical environments for risk assessment will nurture a confident and innovative generation that generates and implements ideas³⁴.

Recent research³⁵ (2021) suggests that Covid-19 has become a challenge for business studies, providing a crucial mission to the development of entrepreneurial competencies while ensuring the competitiveness of any country or sector. This approach requires self-reliance in initiative and innovation, individual ability to change the environment according to the need for self-realization, and result-orientation. Business field studies become even more complex, incorporating courses that develop students' innovative and futuristic thinking and resilience, providing a basis for making strategic decisions using emerging opportunities and the latest technologies. Therefore, the study programmes in the field of Business aim for such learning outcomes as, for example, in the study programme "Logistics and Trade": "7. Apply and make managerial decisions for organization of management and business of logistics and commerce organizations in an innovative manner, establish logistics

³¹ See <https://blog.google/around-the-globe/google-europe/protecting-europes-workers-the-urgent-need-for-skills/> in EN

³² See <https://www.aacsb.edu/insights/2021/march/entrepreneurship-is-an-opportunity-for-education> in EN

³³ See https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/contact/OECD_Learning_Compass_2030_Concept_Note_Series.pdf in EN

³⁴ See <https://venturewell.org/big-ideas-2021/> in EN

³⁵ See <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7574783/> in EN

and commerce companies, plan, organize, coordinate and evaluate their operations, choose integrated technological, organizational, and methodological measures for management of the business environment, and able to develop the competitive and socially responsible business in the domestic and international markets". According to the study, the need to be able to navigate successfully in a changing and uncertain environment undoubtedly justifies the relevance and benefits of entrepreneurship education.

The Strata 2020³⁶ "Study on Human Capital in Lithuania" aims to provide information that is important for making personal decisions about employment or careers. It emphasizes that the level of job vacancies depends on the sector and for a long time, the greatest demand has persisted in higher-skilled sectors where there is a shortage of suitably qualified workers. Although Lithuania's 2030 Progress Strategy (LRS, 2012) identifies the development of young people's skills as a key factor in the country's prosperity and progress, directly leading to creative decisions and paving the way for innovation, it is acknowledged that it still lags behind the OECD average. The vertical qualification mismatch in the study field is rather insignificant: 71.08% of graduates work in highly qualified jobs. The largest share of those working in high-skilled jobs according to the distribution of professional qualifications is among the graduates of the fields of informatics, mathematics, health, education, and business and public management.

According to the Employment Service's 2020 data³⁷, a third of jobseekers are unqualified, and employers are mostly looking for skilled workers. Previous analysis of private job advertisements has shown that a large proportion of advertisements are for highly qualified professionals (STRATA, 2019). Thus, lack of qualifications and skills becomes a serious barrier to participation in the labour market. In addition, according to the employment service's future labour market forecasts, the changes in labour demand caused by the pandemic are expected, as well as changes in jobs, i.e., remote and hybrid work, virtual teams, intensive use of digital technologies for internal and external communication will require the ability to reorient to work, maintain business viability, employee motivation, involvement and training, and maintain organizational identity and develop organizational culture. Students are prepared for such tasks in the study courses as "Organizational Behavior" or "Business Communication" in the first cycle study programmes, "Organizational Design" or "Strategic Human Resource Management in Business" in the second cycle.

In 2018 the McKinsey Global Institute reviewed the labour market need for specific skills of employees and how they will change by 2030 in terms of automation, robotics, and the integration of artificial intelligence into the labour market. Research³⁸ has shown that the demand for skills such as information technology as well as social and emotional skills will increase, especially as demand for others, including physical skills, declines. These changes will require employees to continually deepen existing skills or acquire entirely new ones and the Business field study programmes develops social and personal abilities of future employees, as well as *Business Administration, Logistics and Commerce* and *Business Logistics* develops skills to use informational technologies in the field.

³⁶ See <https://strata.gov.lt/images/tyrimai/2020-metai/zmogiskojo-kapitalo-politika/20200511-zmogiskasis-kapitalas-Lietuvoje.pdf> in LT

³⁷ See <https://uzt.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Lietuvos-u%C5%BEimtumo-2020-m.-tendencijos-2021-02-19.pdf> in LT

³⁸ See <https://www.mckinsey.com/~media/McKinsey/Industries/Public%20and%20Social%20Sector/Our%20Insights/Skill%20Shift%20Automation%20and%20the%20future%20of%20the%20workforce/MGI-Skill-Shift-Automation-and-future-of-the-workforce-May-2018.pdf> in EN

Forbes³⁹ predicts that successful employees in the changing environment of the future, will need the competencies, which are necessary to develop in Business field studies, such as ability to deal with ambiguity - to overcome their natural instinct for clarity and assurance, to feel comfortable with not knowing what to expect, to make informed decisions move forward with confidence, even in the absence of complete information - for this purpose, relevant learning outcomes in Business studies are formed, such as in the “Business and Entrepreneurship” programme: “5. Develop integrated innovative value propositions and business models, strategies and enabling them to implement organizational projects in a dynamic business environment in conditions of uncertainty”. Entrepreneurship and empathy are needed as well - thoroughly understanding circumstances and the challenges those circumstances generate, allowing you to see new opportunities, taking appropriate risk and delivering new value to the market, from problem solving, project implementation to start-ups, thus, students learn how to prepare Entrepreneurial Project.

The Degree Query Job Demand Survey⁴⁰ states that the need for Business field graduates is difficult to quantify from a traditional educational and career perspective. Entrepreneurship is linked to innovation and the academic knowledge is provided to students to create and develop businesses and organizations. The rationale for the need for entrepreneurship is based on competencies and qualities - leadership, idea generation, analytical thinking, problem solving and communication - which are severely lacking in most business sectors and job positions. Those are developed in a number of courses, for example, “Leadership”, “Entrepreneurship”, “Competitiveness and innovation”, “Organizational Communication”, “Managerial Decision Making”, etc. in *Business Administration* study programme.

According to the Official Statistics Portal⁴¹, the number of persons developing individual activities under business certificate in Lithuania is constantly growing. In 2019, there were 176.7 thousand individuals pursuing an individual activity under a certificate or patent. In 2010-2015, their number grew by about 15-23 percent. In 2016-2019, the growth was about 6-10 percent, over the year it increased by 4.7 percent, and in 10 years (since 2010) - 2.7 times. Individuals engaged in individual activities declared income of 2.2 billion euros in 2019, or 8.3 percent more than in the previous year. In 10 years, their income has increased 4.5 times. By economic activity, the majority of self-employed persons are in the wholesale and retail trade, construction, professional, scientific and technical activities sectors.

The OECD reports on Lithuania (2018⁴², 2020⁴³) “Inclusive Entrepreneurship Policies: Country Assessment Notes” reveal that the average number of people starting their business in Lithuania in 2013-2017 was among the highest in EU. Young people are particularly active in setting up new businesses (19.8%), with a percentage above EU average (7.3%). Promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment is an important policy goal in Lithuania. Lithuania's progress strategy "Lithuania 2030" aims to create a "smart" welfare economy by intensively applying scientific knowledge, promoting innovation-based entrepreneurship, and increasing the competitiveness of Lithuanian business. However, OECD 2020 report highlights that lack of entrepreneurial skills is a major barrier for many sections of the population: only a quarter

³⁹ See <https://www.forbes.com/sites/tracybrower/2021/02/14/the-future-of-work-will-demand-these-8-new-skills/?sh=2758f7c822e6> in EN

⁴⁰ See <https://www.degreequery.com/what-is-the-demand-for-a-degree-in-entrepreneurship/> in EN

⁴¹ See <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/verslas-lietuvoje-2020/fiziniai-asmensys> in EN

⁴² See <https://www.oecd.org/cfe/smes/LITHUANIA-IE-Country-Note-2018.pdf> in EN

⁴³ See https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european_semester_country-report-lithuania_en.pdf in EN

of women (24.7 % in 2014-2018) and 44.1 % of men believe they have the skills to start a business successfully. VMU Business study field study programmes help to develop students' abilities to create businesses in trade, logistics, sports, and other areas.

The Lithuanian Entrepreneurship Action Plan⁴⁴ for 2014–2020 approved by the Minister of Economy of the Republic of Lithuania defines actions for the consistent growth and promotion of entrepreneurship. The action plan sets out three objectives for raising the level of entrepreneurship in the country: 1) to create a coherent and continuous system of entrepreneurship education; (2) to create a favourable environment for business start-ups and development; and (3) to promote entrepreneurship by ensuring the availability of public services for business, distinguishing the entrepreneurship of target groups (youth, women) and start-ups, as well as social regional entrepreneurship and forming a positive public image of entrepreneurs. The Employment Enhancement Program 2014–2020, approved by the government, includes measures to develop an entrepreneurial mindset and supports business creation initiatives. Appropriate measures include facilitating the creation of new businesses and self-employment, advice on starting a business, better access to business services and financial resources for those starting and developing business services, and the integration of entrepreneurship into the national education system.

The Order on the Implementation Plan of the Youth Guarantee Initiative for 2014–2020, published by the Minister of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania, aims to strengthen the entrepreneurial mindset, and promote the independent work of young people. It is planned to create opportunities for higher education students to acquire as many practical skills and entrepreneurial competencies as possible.

Study programmes in Business 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 than future professions. Because of fast technological, social, economic changes the map of professions becomes very unclear in future labour market. *Artes Liberales* principle adapted in VMU helps to educate people who shall be able to find their places in labour market for decades. The learning outcomes of the study programmes in Business field (see 1.4.) concentrate on the competencies of business professionals, as well as on the future competencies, that are the most promising in the future, therefore, relevant for students in Business field⁴⁵.

The aim of the first cycle study programme *Business Administration* is to prepare a wide range of business management specialists who are able to critically, comprehensively and creatively assess and solve the challenges of managing various business organizations in a constantly changing Lithuanian and global business environment. Graduates of *Business Administration* study programme will be able to work in the departments of marketing, human resources, finance, etc. as management specialists in any private or public organization in trading, services or manufacturing sectors; to lead lower-level units in organizations; work in business service centres or provide business management consulting services in various fields as freelancers; start their own business. Graduates can also continue their studies in master's degree programmes in business and other fields of study.

⁴⁴ See <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/c35cf650ef2711e4927fda1d051299fb> in LT

⁴⁵ The Lithuanian profession classification data base presented: <http://www.profesijuklasifikatorius.lt/?q=en/medziosarasas>, and the list of professions given in „AIKOS“ (open information, consulting and guidance system, established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport) website: <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/StudyProgramm/Qualifications/SitePages/Home.aspx?ss=88cef72c-74e7-4edb-a80f-1b05913269dd> show that the programmes graduates can take up wide range of professions.

The aim of the first cycle study programme of *Logistics and Commerce* is to prepare the specialists in logistics and commerce holding extensive expertise and able to apply the theoretical knowledge in business and management to the decision-making related to management and business organization at the entities operating in logistics and commerce and able to develop of the competitive and socially responsible business in the domestic and international markets. Having completed the study programme of *Logistics and Commerce* and gained the qualification degree of Bachelor in Business Management, the graduates will be able to work as the coordinators of logistics, intermediaries, representatives, administrators at the logistics, supply management, transportation, warehousing, and transshipment companies of Lithuania, 3PL (third-party logistics), 4PL (third-party logistics) organizations, agricultural supply and logistics companies, and organizations coordinating these activities, companies operating in procurement of agricultural raw materials, processing and trade thereof, agricultural and logistic facilities, retail sector, and shipment networks, as well as develop own business in logistics and commerce. Upon successful completion, the graduates could continue the second cycle studies in the fields of business and management.

The aim of the second cycle study programme of *Business Logistics* is to prepare the specialists in business logistics able to creatively apply the findings of fundamental and applied research to innovative decision-making related to improvement and development of the bioeconomy sector and business logistics as well as the implementation thereof under the conditions of intensively changing business environment. The graduates of the *Business Logistics* programme will be able to develop own business or manage the logistics units at the business companies operating in the bioeconomy sector, head the companies or units thereof in the logistics or other sectors, work as consultants and specialists in logistics at the organizations of logistic companies and other business associations. The programme graduates will also be able to contribute to the development of the logistics service business on the national and international scale. The graduates have the possibility to continue further education in the PhD studies and gain the degree of Doctor of Social Sciences.

The aim of the second cycle study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* is to provide professionals of business and management with entrepreneurial mindset and skills for systemic management and development of modern organizations by integrating the state-of-the-art functional business knowledge and creative solutions to complex problems in dynamic business environment. Graduates of study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* will have an excellent combination of classical MBA-related competences (i.e., functional areas of business management) and skills in entrepreneurship (i.e., horizontal transferrable competences in business creation and growth) that can lead them to variety of professional positions. They can take management positions in companies of different size, profiles, and industries (i.e., playing the role of 'intrapreneurs') or develop own businesses, new ventures, and start-ups (i.e., become 'entrepreneurs'). They can also become consultants in business and management, work in NGOs, support organizations for business and innovations, as well as public institutions focused on enterprise policy formulation and implementation (e.g., SME or innovation support). Also, they gain access to further study in Ph.D. programmes in Social sciences.

The aim of the second cycle study programme *Sports Business Management* is to prepare sports business management professionals for a wide scope of positions in the sports organizations, ranging from management of professional clubs, businesses in sports-related industries to managing professional sports associations and other system-level bodies by

providing advanced knowledge, systemic understanding and skills to initiate, form and implement strategies and decisions in different and major areas of contemporary sports business and management: marketing, finance, media and communication, law, strategy and economics. The study programme *Sports Business Management* qualifies students for a wide scope of positions in the sports organizations, ranging from management of professional clubs, businesses in sports-related industries to managing professional sports associations and other system-level bodies (e.g. federations, sports leagues and competitions in private, governmental, and NGOs sectors), manage business companies in middle and higher level; take positions of management in sports federations and associations, in professional and nonprofessional sports clubs, in advertising and other project management; work as sporting goods and service sales manager; as business analyst in certain sports sectors; as business process analyst; as sports services manager / agent; as sports organizations representative of public relations; as sports journalist; as sports sponsorship; as consultant. The graduates have the possibility to continue further education in the PhD studies as well.

VMU offers two first cycle study programmes and three second cycle study programmes in Business study field, yet they all have their unique features and target somewhat different segments. The first cycle study programme *Business Administration* raise business management specialists of a wide profile to work in wide range of office management positions in different management areas, especially helpful for small and medium size companies to ensure flexibility operating in uncertain environment; nevertheless these specialists are able to further specialize their career studying in any other specific second cycle study programmes in Business study field, such as “Business and entrepreneurship”, and “Sports Business Management” for those who graduated with Sports Management specialization (see in details in sections 1.5. and 7.3) or to study further even in other study fields at VMU (i. e., several students a year continues studies in *Strategic Management of Organisations* study programme in Management study field or in *Marketing and International Commerce* in Marketing field, etc. at FEM). The first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* is distinct to prepare specialists for logistics companies, and graduates can further develop their specific competence while studying in the second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* to develop their career in logistics companies. Similarly, second cycle study programme of *Sports Business Management* seeks to prepare business management professionals in distinct sports business area, while second cycle study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* prepares business professionals and entrepreneurs able to start the new business or to develop existing one, they already work for. Those second cycle study programmes are positioned as practice oriented lifelong learning programmes for working people with study schedule and study methods adapted to their needs.

VMU community and members of all SPCs see the clear need for all of the Business field study programmes now and in the future. Such opinion is also supported by numbers of the entrants over the last few years (more details in section 3.1.).

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 strategy⁴⁶ for 2021–2027 was approved by VMU Senate and VMU Council on November 25, 2020. After re-election of VMU Rector in September 2020, VMU a new strategy was developed. 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,

⁴⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/VDU-strategic-plan-for-2021-2027.pdf> in EN

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 is based on 5 fields with more detailed groups of objectives: 1. Community in harmony and consolidation. 2. International research University. 3. Studies 360. 4. Integrity of self-governance and responsibility. 5. University impact on societal development.

While developing the programmes in Business field, their aims and learning outcomes were matched with the strategic plan of VMU. When new University's strategy was adopted, the programmes were reviewed, 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 aims 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.

The goals of the study programmes in the field of Business, aimed to prepare of business development and management professionals, providing a wide-ranging education together with special competencies in the field. They are in line with the strategic objective of VMU 3.4. "Create a learning ecosystem conducive to the development of personalities and talents", as well as the learning outcomes of the study programmes in the field of Business correspond to the strategic tasks. The following are some examples: the strategic task 2.4.3 "Develop entrepreneurial, open science knowledge and innovation together with regions and for regions in cooperation with a wide range of non-university stakeholders" fit the learning outcome of the study programme "Sports Business Management": "6. Formulate and implement business development strategies of sports organizations by adopting innovative business models and mobilising the important stakeholder groups", the strategic task 2.4.4. "Search for innovative forms of such cooperation and implementation initiatives" correlates with the learning outcome of the "Business Logistics" programme: "4. Analyse and critically assess the ideas on improvement of business logistics management, formulate the arguments and assumptions for implementation of the ideas, prepare and apply innovations in business logistics and management of the business logistics technologies necessary for improvement of the economic, social, and environmental performance", the strategic task 2.5.1 "Strengthen inter-institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation and networking, contacts with business associations and companies, non-governmental organizations, public sector institutions, schools" correlates with the learning outcome of the programme "Business Administration": "6. Effectively communicate and work in a team and partnership with stakeholders in various organizations, discuss relevant professional issues in an interdisciplinary environment, take the initiative and leadership in creating, initiating, and implementing business management change in organizations", the strategic task 5.4.2. "Share the knowledge and experience of the University community with various interest groups in the fields of innovation, science and research, thus contributing to the consideration and updating of important current and future issue" - learning outcome of "Business and Entrepreneurship" programme: "6. Communicate smoothly and effectively in groups or teams in different management levels, competencies, and cultures and in partnership with stakeholders in the internal and external environment of organizations, take the initiative and lead in developing business initiatives and implementing business development changes in organizations", and the strategic tasks 2.2.4. "Actively cooperate with Business Angels, open innovation platforms, venture capital funds in commercializing innovative products and technologies developed at the University" and 2.3.2. "Encourage

researchers and students to create and incubate start-ups” correlates with the learning outcome of the programme “Logistics and Commerce”: “7. Apply and make managerial decisions for organization of management and business of logistics and commerce organizations in an innovative manner, establish logistics and commerce companies, plan, organize, coordinate and evaluate their operations, choose integrated technological, organizational, and methodological measures for management of the business environment, and able to develop the competitive and socially responsible business in the domestic and international markets”. In this way, conducting of the study programmes in the field of Business actively contributes to the implementation of measures of the Strategic Action Plan 5.4.2.3 “Promote cooperation with business organizations by increasing the use of scientific potential, innovation and creation of innovative business, dissemination of scientific information”, 2.2.4.3. “Systematically organize seminars for Business Angels, open innovation platforms, and venture capital funds for the University community”.

It can be noted that the study programmes in the field of Business are taught in both Lithuanian (except *Sports Business Management* study programme) and English (except *Business and Entrepreneurship* study programme), therefore they attract many international students every year. This correlates with the measure of VMU Strategy “To develop the internationality of studies by conducting interdisciplinary international studies, increasing the number of foreign students and the international mobility of students and lecturers” (or with the second group of strategic goals “2. International University of Science”). It is worth mentioning that the master's study programmes usually include people who already have work experience or are currently employed, who wish to deepen and / or expand their competencies and to better prepare for a career. This is in line with the measure “Expanding the opportunities to acquire additional competencies needed to meet the challenges of the future society and establish oneself in the labour market” provided for in the VMU Strategy.

The study programmes of the analysed field respond to the above-mentioned strategic goals, objectives, and measures of VMU, promoting entrepreneurship of VMU students and researchers, helping students to form their careers, consulting on business establishment issues, creating an environment for innovative VMU researchers, students, business entities and the society, promotes cooperation between science and business.

The study programmes in Business field are also in line with VMU Statute approved by the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania on June 5th, 2018, Resolution No. XIII1229 fifth part “In order to meet cultural, educational, economic, and other needs of the society, the University shall prepare Bachelors, Masters, and Doctors of Science in various science and study fields, capable of independent intellectual and creative work and having a broad general university education.”, point 7.4. “Developing a society that is susceptible to education, science, art, and culture, able to effectively use science and compete in a high-level market for technologies, products, and services in a sustainable environment” (for more details, see 1.1.).

VMU vision - one of the strongest universities in the Baltic region, operating according to the principles of *Artes Liberales*, uniting the community for the creation of the future of Lithuania and Europe. The values supporting the University's strategic provisions - personality and academic freedom, democracy, openness, responsibility, creativity, community, coherence, academic excellence - are revealed, made meaningful and implemented in the concept, goals, study methods and learning outcomes of the Business field study programmes, fostering partnerships between value-creating young people and the business community, giving students the opportunity to acquire business management skills,

establishing contacts with representatives of the largest Lithuanian companies, solving real business problems.

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

Correspondence of the goals of the Business field study programmes, intended learning outcomes, programme structure, course content to the type of study, degree and academic and / or professional requirements, sufficiency of the programme scope to achieve the learning outcomes is based on the following legal acts and institutional documents:

- Republic of Lithuania Law on Higher Education and Research, 01/01/2017⁴⁷
- Order on Approval of Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies, 30/12/2016⁴⁸
- The Descriptor of Study Cycles, 16/11/2016⁴⁹
- On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure for the External Review of Higher Education Institutions, 19/06/2014⁵⁰
- Order on the Approval of the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, 17/07/2019⁵¹
- Procedure for the External Assessment and Accreditation of Study Programmes, 29/07/2011⁵²
- General Requirements of the First Degree and Integrated Study Programmes, 09/04/2010⁵³
- General Requirements for Master Degree Study Programmes, 03/06/2010⁵⁴
- VMU Statute, 05/06/2018⁵⁵
- VMU Study Regulations, 05 /05/2021⁵⁶
- VMU Strategic Plan FOR 2021 – 2027⁵⁷
- VMU Code of Ethics (09/04/2011)⁵⁸
- VMU Description of Procedure for Study Quality Assurance, 02/06/2021⁵⁹
- VMU Description of Procedure of Feedback for Improvement of Quality of Studies, 02/06/2021⁶⁰
- VMU Description of Procedure for Study Course Attestation, 20/11/2019⁶¹
- VMU Description of Internship Organization Procedures, 03/05/2017⁶²

⁴⁷ See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/81a7b822444a11e68f45bcf65e0a17ee> in LT

⁴⁸ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/347_45e562393bb4cc8f88e301800250f792.pdf in EN

⁴⁹ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/346_6b83703b532be84be32dd512a348eae6.pdf in EN

⁵⁰ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/272_6d4567c75a1b16a5b8839be3dcaf98fe.pdf in EN

⁵¹ See <https://www.skvc.lt/default/en/lawacts> in EN

⁵² See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.404519> in LT

⁵³ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/151_b40ce691ece49cbb74c2694f21b27b65.pdf in EN

⁵⁴ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/154_19d25854987dc9ee9d186d43abc64774.pdf in EN

⁵⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/VMU-STATUTE-EN-2018.pdf> in EN

⁵⁶ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Study_Regulations-2021-SEN-N-20.pdf in EN

⁵⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/VDU-strategic-plan-for-2021-2027.pdf> in EN

⁵⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/The-code-of-ethics-of-VMU.pdf> in EN

⁵⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/VDU-studij%C5%B3-rezultat%C5%B3-%C4%AFskaitymo-tvarka-1.pdf>

⁶⁰ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VMU-Procedure-for-Feedback-Organisation_June-02-2021-edition.pdf in EN

⁶¹ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VMU-Procedure-for-Course-Attestation_Nov20-2019_edition.pdf in EN

⁶² See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/DESCRIPTION-OF-INTERNSHIP-ORGANIZATION-PROCEDURES.pdf> in EN

- VMU General Order on The Preparation and Defence of The Final Theses, 14/05/2020 ⁶³
- VMU Description of Procedure for Assessment and Recognition of Competences Acquired Through Non-Formal and Informal Education, 27/09/2017 ⁶⁴
- VMU Regulations for Submission of Appeals Regarding Evaluation of Learning Outcomes and/or Assessment Procedure, 24/03/2021 ⁶⁵
- VMU Provisions on Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works, 25/06/2015 ⁶⁶
- VMU Description of Procedure for Organisation of Minor Studies, 03/05/2017 ⁶⁷
- VMU Description of The Interim Student Rotation Procedure, 26/10/2016 ⁶⁸
- VMU Order on Organization of Individual Studies, 09/03/2016 ⁶⁹
- VMU Description of The Procedure of Monitoring of Student Learning Achievements and Providing Assistance to Students, 04/11/2016 ⁷⁰
- Disability Policy of Vytautas Magnus University: “University of Inclusive Opportunities”, 23/06/2021 ⁷¹

The above-mentioned VMU documents are made public on the VMU website in Lithuanian⁷² and English⁷³.

The aims of the programmes and the intended learning outcomes are formed taking into account the above-mentioned legal acts, as well as they are in the process of development according to the Descriptor of Study Field of Business⁷⁴, approved during the self evaluation process (September 14, 2021), implementing the instruction to harmonize the study programmes with the Descriptor of Study Field of Business till September 1, 2022.

In the first cycle the volume of study programme *Business Administration* is 240 ECTS, duration is four years, eight semesters (15 weeks per each semester), as the programme is of broad profile, aiming to introduce student with the wide range of areas in business and assure wide profile of high education. The volume of undergraduate study programme *Logistics and Commerce* is 210 ECTS, duration is three and a half years in full-time studies, 7 semesters, and five years, 10 semesters, in part-time studies (15 weeks per each semester in both forms of studies). This programme is more specialized in businesses of logistics and commerce; therefore, it is available to achieve its aim and learning outcomes in shorter duration of the programme.

Study plans are presented in Annex 1. Study plans finds 50 ECTS credits allocated for VMU *Artes Liberales* courses in *Business administration* study programme and 42 ECTS – in *Logistics and Commerce* study programme. In *Business Administration* study programme 130

⁶³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/ENG-Baigiamuju-darbu-rengimo-ir-gynimo-aprasas-version-2020-05-14.pdf> in EN

⁶⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Description-of-Procedure-non-formal-ENG.pdf> in EN

⁶⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/REGULATIONS-FOR-SUBMISSION-OF-APPEALS-2021-03-24.pdf> in EN

⁶⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Plagiarism-prevention-VMU.pdf> in EN

⁶⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Description-of-procedure-for-organisation-of-minor-studies-2017-06-07.pdf> in EN

⁶⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/description-of-the-interim-student-rotation-procedure.pdf> in EN

⁶⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/ORDER-ON-INDIVIDUAL-STUDIES-ORGANIZATION.pdf> in EN

⁷⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DESCRIPTION-OF-THE-PROCEDURE-OF-MONITORING-OF-STUDENT-LEARNING-ACHIEVEMENTS-AND-PROVIDING-ASSISTANCE-TO-STUDENTS-AT-VYTAUTAS-MAGNUS-UNIVERSITY.pdf> in LT

⁷¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/VMU-disability-policy-University-of-inclusive-opportunities-2.pdf> in EN

⁷² See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/apie-vdu-kaune/svarbiausi-vdu-dokumentai/> in LT.

⁷³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/important-documents/> in EN.

⁷⁴ See <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/d8febf60155511ec9f09e7df20500045> in LT

ECTS are dedicated to the Business field courses (17 ECTS are allotted for internships and 15 ECTS - for the Final Bachelor Thesis), 110 ECTS - for other field courses (University, co-faculty and optional courses). In *Logistics and Commerce* study programme 162 ECTS are dedicated to the Business field courses (15 ECTS are allotted for internships and 15 ECTS - for the Final Bachelor Thesis), 48 ECTS for other field courses (University, co-faculty and optional courses).

The composition of the first cycle study programme *Business Administration* and *Logistics and Commerce* is in conformance with general requirements of studies as presented in Table 1:

Table 1. First cycle study programmes *Business Administration* and *Logistics and Commerce* conformity to general requirements for bachelor programmes

Criteria	Legal requirements	In <i>Business Administration</i> study programme	In <i>Logistics and Commerce</i> study programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240 ECTS	210 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	130 ECTS	162 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	110 ECTS	48 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	17 ECTS	15 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis	No less than 15 ECTS	15 ECTS	15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	32 %	33 %
Individual learning	No less than 30 % of learning	68 %	67 %

The study plans of the second cycle study programmes are presented in Annex 1 as well.

The volume of second cycle study programme of *Business Logistics* is 90 ECTS (see Table 2): 72 ECTS devoted for Business field courses (31 ECTS) (6 compulsory courses (31 ECTS), 1 scientific research work (5 ECTS), 1 Internship (6 ECTS), Final Master Thesis (30 ECTS)) and 18 ECTS - of another study field (2 courses (12 ECTS) and 1 optional course (6 ECTS) from 2 in choice). *Business Logistics* study programme is executed as full-time and part-time studies. The full-time and part-time studies are identical in terms of courses and credit volume and differ in terms of their duration and number of courses and credits assigned to each semester. The programme duration is three semesters (1.5 years) for full-time studies, and four semesters (2 years) for part-time studies.

The volume of second cycle study programme of *Business and Entrepreneurship* is 90 ECTS: 90 ECTS of Business field (10 mandatory courses, which amount to 60 ECTS (9 courses and 1 Term Paper), and 30 ECTS for Final Master Thesis).

The volume of second cycle study programme of *Sports Business Management* is 90 ECTS: 90 ECTS of Business field (8 mandatory courses, which amount to 60 ECTS (6 courses, Term Paper, and Internship), and 30 ECTS for Final Master Thesis).

After discussions in SPCs, the Academic Council at FEM and the Dean's Office, the decision was made not to offer optional courses in *Business and Entrepreneurship* and *Sports Business Management* second cycle study programmes, mainly aiming to properly achieve both business and entrepreneurship-oriented learning outcomes in 1,5 years long studies.

Table 2. Second cycle study programmes *Business Logistics, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Sports Business Management* conformity to general requirements for master programmes

Criteria	Legal requirements	In <i>Business Logistics</i> study programme	In <i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i> study programme	In <i>Sports Business Management</i> study programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	90 ECTS	90 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	72 ECTS	90 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	18 ECTS	0 ECTS	0 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10% of learning	21 %	23 %	23 %
Individual learning	No less than 50% of learning	79 %	77 %	77 %

The study programmes' aims and intended learning outcomes reflect the needs of the labour market and social-economic development and take into the account General Requirements for Studies, Description of Study Cycles, and the other Lithuanian and European normative documents⁷⁵. The learning outcomes of the first cycle study programmes of *Business administration* and *Logistics and commerce* correspond to the Level 6 and the learning outcomes of the second cycle study programmes of *Business Logistics, Business and Entrepreneurship, and Sports Business Management* correspond to the Level 7 of the European and national qualification framework. The study programmes' aims and learning outcomes assure that undergraduates in bachelor studies will acquire competences of the first cycle level, and graduates in master level programmes will acquire second cycle level, higher competences in comparison with the first cycle study programme graduates. At the same time, both first cycle 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. It corresponds to interdisciplinarity together with cross-cultural competency and social (emotional) intelligence, which are among the top 10 future competencies listed by the World Economic Forum⁷⁶.

⁷⁵ 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.

⁷⁶ See https://www.iftf.org/uploads/media/SR-1382A_UPRI_future_work_skills_sm.pdf in EN

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 business professional.

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 Study Regulations, 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". 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, SPC, the Faculty Council, the Dean's Office, and social partners (see 7.1 for details).

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. 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), 6 ECTS – 60 contact hours (depending on the nature of particular course, 30/45 academic hours of lectures and 15/30 academic hours of seminars dedicated to student discussions, presentations, group work, etc.) and 100 of individual work (160 hours in total), and 8 ECTS – 90 contact hours (45 academic hours of lectures and 45 academic hours of seminars dedicated to student discussions, presentations, group work, etc.) and 123 of individual work (213 hours in total). 15 ECTS of Final Bachelor Thesis consist of 400 academic hours (6 hours of contact and 394 of independent work), and 30 ECTS of Final Master Thesis - of 800 academic hours (14 hours of contact and 786 of independent work).

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 student work time involves study of literature, preparation for cases and seminars, solutions of homework and/or the other assignment.

The volume of both first and second cycle 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 study programmes of Business field is structured based on Lithuanian and VMU regulations (basically on VMU Study Regulations) and under the logics of *Artes Liberales* education.

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. In some other cases the scope of certain courses is set by national regulations – the examples could be the number 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.

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 Framework⁷⁷: 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 aims of the study programmes, its learning outcomes, study plans, and implementation follows the idea of educating core literacies, domain knowledge, competencies, mindset, and talents presented by European Political and Strategy Centre⁷⁸. The intended learning outcomes of study programmes in Business field are presented below.

To realize the aim of the first cycle study programme *Business Administration* the following learning outcomes were composed, and study courses were matched as presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Coherence of the field study programme *Business Administration* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the first cycle study programme <i>Business Administration</i>		
To prepare a wide range of business management specialists who are able to critically, comprehensively and creatively assess and solve the challenges of managing various business organizations in a constantly changing Lithuanian and global business environment.		
Description of learning outcomes of each study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the Programme	Study courses of the Programme
Knowledge and its application	1. Identify and explain the main theoretical approaches, concepts, and factors of the internal and external business environment in different business contexts in the fields of business management and science.	Microeconomics Essentials of Management Macroeconomics Theories of Economics and Management Professional Language Mathematics Organizational communication Introduction to Finance Managerial Decision Making Principles of Marketing Term paper No. 1 Organizational Behaviour International economics EU Financial System Economics of Integration

⁷⁷ See <http://ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks> in EN

⁷⁸ See http://ec.europa.eu/epsc/sites/epsc/files/strategic_note_issue_13.pdf in EN

	<p>2. Apply the principles, methods, and tools of traditional and modern theories in the field of marketing, finance, human resources, operations and other areas of business management, taking into account the modern business environment at the national and global levels.</p>	<p>Visual Communication in Marketing Fundamentals of Sports Business management Entrepreneurship Leadership Social and Marketing Research Small Business Management and Marketing Financial accounting and reporting Business Law Brand Management Management Information Systems Term Paper No. 2 Human Resource Management Managerial Economics Taxes and Taxation Business to Business Marketing Introduction to sports communication Basics of Sports Marketing Business Ethics and Social Responsibility Competitiveness and innovation Operations Management Strategic Management Bachelor's Thesis in Business Administration Performance Measurement Systems Digital Marketing Sports organizations management Basics of Sports Economics</p>
Research skills	<p>3. Choose and creatively apply appropriate methods to conduct scientific and applied research on business management problems and opportunities as well as business environment factors and trends, and to summarize, evaluate and interpret the research results, apply them to formulate business decisions and predict market trends.</p>	<p>Social and Marketing Research Management Information Systems Term Paper No. 2 Quality Management Systems Qualification Internship in Business Administration Strategic Management Bachelor's Thesis in Business Administration Performance Measurement Systems</p>
Special abilities	<p>4. Identify and critically evaluate the economic, social and ethical challenges of businesses, after analysing the factors of the changing business environment and their possible impact on business, also taking the business mission and strategic goals into account.</p>	<p>Managerial Decision Making Term paper No. 1 Introduction Internship Organizational Behaviour Entrepreneurship Social and Marketing Research Small Business Management and Marketing Business Law Brand Management Management Information Systems</p>

	5. Independently analyse various business administration situations, problems, and opportunities, offer them alternatives of possible solutions and to anticipate actions and challenges for their implementation.	Term Paper No. 2 Human Resource Management Managerial Economics Taxes and Taxation Business to Business Marketing Qualification Internship in Business Administration Strategic Management Bachelor's Thesis in Business Administration Performance Measurement Systems Digital Marketing Sports organizations management
Social abilities	6. Effectively communicate and work in a team and partnership with stakeholders in various organizations, discuss relevant professional issues in an interdisciplinary environment, take the initiative and leadership in creating, initiating, and implementing business management change in organizations.	Professional Language Organizational communication Managerial Decision Making Term paper No. 1 Introduction Internship Entrepreneurship Leadership Social and Marketing Research Brand Management Term Paper No. 2 Human Resource Management Business to Business Marketing Quality Management Systems Business Ethics and Social Responsibility Operations Management Qualification Internship in Business Administration Strategic Management Bachelor's Thesis in Business Administration Performance Measurement Systems Digital Marketing Sports organizations management
Personal abilities	7. Demonstrate the core values and principles necessary for a business professional to apply systematic approach, analytical, critical and creative thinking in performing various business administration activities, and responsibly make ethical, innovative and creative decisions in the field of business administration, taking responsibility for the decisions made and their impact on society and the environment, and to pursue continuous formal and non-formal learning.	Professional Language Organizational communication Term paper No. 1 Introduction Internship Entrepreneurship Leadership Social and Marketing Research Brand Management Term Paper No. 2 Human Resource Management Business Ethics and Social Responsibility Operations Management Qualification Internship in Business Administration Strategic Management Bachelor's Thesis in Business Administration Sports organizations management

To pursue the aim of the first cycle study programme of *Logistics and Commerce*, the learning outcomes have been formulated and the study courses delivered in order to achieve the aims have been assigned to them as provided in Table 4:

Table 4. Coherence of the field study programme *Logistics and Commerce* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the first cycle study programme <i>Logistics and Commerce</i>		
To prepare the specialists in logistics and commerce holding extensive expertise and able to apply the theoretical knowledge in business and management to the decision-making related to management and business organization at the entities operating in logistics and commerce and able to develop of the competitive and socially responsible business in the domestic and international markets.		
Description of the learning outcomes of the study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the programmes	Study courses of the programme
Knowledge and its application	1. Expand the expertise to be able to determine the issues of human historicity, secularity, and individual's societal context, geopolitical circumstances of development of the mindset, and the processes of individualizations under the conditions of globalization.	Group A and Group B study courses; for more details see the links below: https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/destomi-dalykai/a-grupes-dalykai/ https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/destomi-dalykai/b-grupes-dalykai/
	2. Explain the essence of entrepreneurship, learn and compare the specifics of logistics and commerce activities related to business organizations and the possible effect thereof on the environment, business decisions, and general public.	Business Communication Business Law Business Development Entrepreneurship Education
	3. Explain the economic, social, technological business resources and processes, issues and the importance of their decisions in planning, forecasting, and assessing the management of the logistics and commerce organizations, process and results of business organization, and is able to use the basic theoretical arguments or theories for substantiation of the managerial decisions in logistics and commerce operations, thereby developing the competitive and socially responsible business in the domestic and international markets.	Bachelor's thesis Bioeconomy Logistics Business Administration Fundamentals of Finances Accounting Commercial Contracts Logistics and Commercial Project Management Logistical Equipment and Technology Macroeconomics Microeconomics Warehousing and Inventory Management

		Consumer Behaviour Business Communication Business Law Human Resource Management Logistics Management Trade Management and e-Commerce International Trade Transport Systems
	4. Name and apply the modern business management theories and concepts, the factors of the logistics and commerce activities related to business, the methods for assessment of the effect and research thereof enabling them to learn the environment of commerce and logistic organizations and business as well as the processes taking place within the environment and the applicability of other methods in development of the competitive and socially responsible business in the domestic and international markets.	Business Law Basic of Business and Public Management Quality Management Logistics and commerce term paper Mathematics Logistics and Commerce Market Research Trade Marketing Business Planning and Evaluation
	5. Identify the key business categories and phenomena defined by them, key business and management principles, methods, and strategies, and the diversity of business organization forms as well as the factors affecting the choice thereof, the financial and other resource accounting and management methods as well as the applicability thereof.	Fundamentals of Finance Accounting Business Communication Language of Specialty
Research abilities	6. Collect and analyse the data necessary for addressing important issues in logistics and commerce by using the achievements and methods of the fundamental and applied research as well as organize and conduct applied research in consumer and competitor behaviour, employee motivation, responsibly prepare the information necessary for managerial decision-making in logistics and commerce.	Bachelor's Thesis Bioeconomy Fundamentals of Finances Accounting Consumer Behaviour Language of specialty Mathematics Basic of Business and Public Management Logistics and Commercial Project Management Logistics and commercial Market Research

		Business Planning and Evaluation Human Resource Management Professional logistics and commerce practice Logistics and commerce term paper
Special abilities	7. Apply and make managerial decisions for organization of management and business of logistics and commerce organizations in an innovative manner, establish logistics and commerce companies, plan, organize, coordinate and evaluate their operations, choose integrated technological, organizational, and methodological measures for management of the business environment, and able to develop the competitive and socially responsible business in the domestic and international markets.	Professional logistics and commerce practice Bachelor's Thesis Quality Management Logistical Equipment and Technology Macroeconomics Microeconomics Warehousing and Inventory Management Business Communication Business Development Entrepreneurship Education Basic of Business and Public Management Logistics and commercial Project Management Commercial Contracts Transport Systems Trade Marketing Trade Management and e-Commerce International Trade Logistics Management
	8. Manage business information flows, social, technological processes and the interaction thereof in the operations of logistics and commerce organizations, analyse and substantiate the decisions in the areas of human, financial, material resource planning, organization, coordination, control, information management, and evaluation of the economic condition and performance.	Professional logistics and commerce practice Bachelor's Thesis Entrepreneurship Education Logistics Business Administration Fundamentals of Finance Business Planning and Evaluation Human Resource Management
Social abilities	9. Communicate with the specialists and public in dealing with tasks related to logistics and commerce operations, presenting the completed activities and results thereof, and cooperate effectively with the colleagues and clients, work in a team and represent interests.	Professional logistics and commerce practice Bachelor's Thesis Bioeconomy Logistics Business Administration Fundamentals of Finance Accounting Commercial Contracts

		Logistics and Commercial Project Management Logistical Equipment and Technology Macroeconomics Microeconomics Consumer Behaviour Business Communication Logistics Management Transport Systems Trade Marketing Trade Management and e-Commerce International Trade Business Planning and Evaluation Logistics and Commerce Market Research Warehousing and Inventory Management Language of specialty Business Development Entrepreneurship Education Logistics and commerce term paper Quality Management Basic of Business and Public Management
Personal abilities	10. Take the moral and ethical responsibility for the quality of the work by the subordinate employees and own work, assessment thereof following the professional ethics, civic approach, and perceives the effect of the performance results on the societal, economic, cultural development, well-being, and environment, and learn and improve skills independently in the area of logistics and commerce and plan the learning process.	All study courses

To pursue the aim of the second cycle study programme of *Business Logistics*, learning outcomes have been formulated and study courses delivered in order to achieve the aims as provided in Table 5:

Table 5. Coherence of the field study programme *Business Logistics* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the second cycle study programme <i>Business Logistics</i>		
To prepare the specialists in business logistics able to creatively apply the findings of fundamental and applied research to innovative decision-making related to improvement and development of the bioeconomy sector and business logistics as well as the implementation thereof under the conditions of intensively changing business environment.		
Description of the learning outcomes of the study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the programmes	Study courses of the programme
Knowledge and its application	1. Explain the social science theories, describe the logistics technologies, principles of modelling and designing of the logistics systems on the basis of the fundamental and applied research and able to apply them at the bioeconomy industry companies and logistics enterprises under the conditions of uncertainty.	Logistics Information Technologies Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems Final Work of Master Studies Trade Logistics Applied Research of Logistics International Logistics Management Decisions Modelling Business Strategic Development Agriculture and Food Logistics Technology Management
	2. Apply the knowledge in business development based on business management theories and findings of fundamental and applied research at the bioeconomy sector and logistics companies under the changing conditions.	Logistics Innovation Internship Final Work of Master Studies International Logistics International Business Law Applied Research of Logistics Business Strategic Development Management Decisions Modelling Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems
Research abilities	3. Organize and conduct applied research in logistics, prepare the methodology thereof, process the data, assess the results necessary for improvement of the logistics activity and making of the development decisions.	Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments Final Work of Master Studies Scientific Research Work Applied Research of Logistics Business Strategic Development Agriculture and Food Logistics Technology Management

Special abilities	4. Analyse and critically assess the ideas on improvement of business logistics management, formulate the arguments and assumptions for implementation of the ideas, prepare and apply innovations in business logistics and management of the business logistics technologies necessary for improvement of the economic, social, and environmental performance.	Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments Agriculture and Food Logistics Technology Management Business Strategic Development Management Decisions Modelling Logistics Information Technologies Logistics Innovation Internship Scientific Research Work Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems Final Work of Master Studies
	5. Model and design the logistics systems and prepare the measures for movement of material assets and biological substances within the logistics chain necessary for the coordination and improvement of logistics at the bioeconomy companies and of the operations of other auxiliary sectors.	Logistics Information Technologies Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems Final Work of Master Studies Scientific Research Work Trade Logistics International Logistics International Business Law Management Decisions Modelling Agriculture and Food Logistics Technology Management
	6. Deal with complex non-routine business management problems, make and implement innovative strategic business management decisions under the changing conditions at the bioeconomy sector and logistics companies.	Logistics Information Technologies Logistics Innovation Internship Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems Final Work of Master Studies International Logistics International Business Law Management Decisions Modelling Business Strategic Development

Social abilities	<p>7. Communicate in writing and orally in a consistent and reasonable manner and convey the ideas of improvement of the logistics business to the representatives of the logistics business and other stakeholders.</p> <p>8. Take responsibility for the quality of the work of the team members and own work and perform its assessment following the professional ethics and civic approach in business logistics.</p>	All study courses
Personal abilities	<p>9. Independently identify the learning needs and engage in learning in order to improve the professional qualifications in the area of logistics in the context of life-long learning.</p> <p>10. Use the research knowledge and research experience as well as the skills of systematic and strategic thinking for independent professional activity or research work in the area of logistics.</p> <p>11. Make innovative decisions in business logistics taking into account their ethical aspects and possible effect on the society and environment.</p>	All study courses

To realize the second cycle study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* aim, learning outcomes and study courses were composed as presented in Table 6:

Table 6. Coherence of the field study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the second cycle study programme <i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>		
Provide professionals of business and management with entrepreneurial mindset and skills for systemic management and development of modern organizations by integrating the state-of-the-art functional business knowledge and creative solutions to complex problems in dynamic business environment.		
Description of learning outcomes of each study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the Programme	Study courses of the Programme
Knowledge and its application	1. Creatively apply modern theoretical approaches to business and management, offering integrated and innovative management solutions in different organizational contexts	Entrepreneurship and Innovations Entrepreneurship Project Business Strategies Business Accounting and Finance

		<p>Human Resource Management in Business</p> <p>Entrepreneurial Marketing</p> <p>Organizational Design</p> <p>Communication and Negotiations</p> <p>Leadership in business</p> <p>Term Paper</p> <p>Master Thesis</p>
Research skills	<p>2. Perform scientific and applied research on the changing factors and trends of the internal and external business environment, as well as on the problems and opportunities of business management to identify and systematically evaluate the achievements, methods, and tools of fundamental and applied research</p>	<p>Entrepreneurship and Innovations</p> <p>Business Strategies</p> <p>Business Accounting and Finance</p> <p>Human Resource Management in Business</p> <p>Entrepreneurial Marketing</p> <p>Organizational Design</p> <p>Communication and Negotiations</p> <p>Leadership in business</p> <p>Term Paper</p> <p>Master Thesis</p>
Special abilities	<p>3. Critically and systematically evaluate business problems, opportunities, solution alternatives and challenges after analysing the results of business activities and their dynamics, factors of the changing business environment, trends and their impact on business</p> <p>4. Solve complex business problems by applying appropriate management methods and tools in various areas of business management (marketing, finance, human resources, operations, etc.)</p> <p>5. Develop integrated innovative value propositions and business models, strategies and organizational projects to enable them to implement in a dynamic business environment in conditions of uncertainty</p>	<p>Entrepreneurship and Innovations</p> <p>Entrepreneurship Project</p> <p>Business Strategies</p> <p>Business Accounting and Finance</p> <p>Human Resource Management in Business</p> <p>Entrepreneurial Marketing</p> <p>Organizational Design</p> <p>Communication and Negotiations</p> <p>Leadership in business</p> <p>Term Paper</p> <p>Master Thesis</p>
Social abilities	<p>6. Communicate smoothly and effectively in groups or teams in different management levels, competencies, and cultures and in partnership with stakeholders in the internal and external environment of organizations, take the initiative and lead in developing business initiatives and implementing business development changes in organizations</p>	<p>Entrepreneurship Project</p> <p>Business Strategies</p> <p>Communication and Negotiations</p> <p>Leadership in business</p> <p>Term Paper</p> <p>Master Thesis</p>

Personal abilities	7. Systematically, critically, and creatively make decisions and solve corporate governance problems, based on entrepreneurial thinking, take responsibility for the decisions made and their impact on society and the environment	Business Strategies Business Accounting and Finance Human Resource Management in Business Entrepreneurial Marketing Organizational Design Leadership in business Term Paper Master Thesis
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To realize the aim of the second cycle study programme *Sports Business Management* the learning outcomes were composed as presented in Table 7:

Table 7. Coherence of the field study programme *Sports Business Management* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the second cycle study programme <i>Sports Business Management</i>		
Prepare sports business management professionals for a wide scope of positions in the sports organizations, ranging from management of professional clubs, businesses in sports-related industries to managing professional sports associations and other system-level bodies by providing advanced knowledge, systemic understanding and skills to initiate, form and implement strategies and decisions in different and major areas of contemporary sports business and management: marketing, finance, media and communication, law, strategy and economics.		
Description of learning outcomes of each study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the Programme	Study courses of the Programme
Knowledge and its application	<p>1. Differentiate the principles and structures of different national and international sports business systems, models, their actors and complex relationships at macro and micro level, considering the global forces and diverse local contexts to make effective and appropriate solutions fitting the specific sports organizations.</p> <p>2. Identify the specifics of sports marketing and communication and adopt adequate strategies and instruments both in traditional and digital media environments for a wide range of sports business organizations.</p> <p>3. Apply the diversity of legal entities, contracts, tax provisions, dispute settlement, instruments for legal protection, considering relationship between law and governance in sports industry as well as enabling fair play and transparent management of sports organizations.</p>	<p>Sports Business Sports Marketing Sports Communication Sports Management Sports Law and Governance Master Thesis</p>

Research skills	4. Solve a specific or generic management problem faced by a sports business, organization, or industry, based on the review of current managerial or economic theory and existing practices as well as assessment of current situation.	Sports Business Sports Management Sports Economics and Finance Sports Law and Governance Term paper Internship Master Thesis
Special abilities	5. Demonstrate and apply systemic and case-specific understanding of sports events management, HR management, decision making and process management of sports organizations. 6. Formulate and implement business development strategies of sports organizations by adopting innovative business models and mobilising the important stakeholder groups. 7. Justify the economic rationale behind the functioning of diverse sports business systems, analyse financial data and streams to make financially informed business decisions.	Sports Business Sports Marketing Sports Communication Sports Management Sports Economics and Finance Sports Law and Governance Term paper Internship Master Thesis
Social abilities	8. Co-create the message, idea, meaning, value, and solution to underscore the relationship development between sports organizations, players, fans, and third parties, professionally debating and working in teams, co-operating in project teams, managing them, and taking responsibility for results.	Sports Business Sports Marketing Sports Communication Term paper Sports Management Internship Master Thesis
Personal abilities	9. Transfer the core values, knowledge and principles of sports industry, providing inputs to problem solving, demonstrating analytical and creative thinking necessary for a sports business management specialist, based on the principles of business and professional ethics and social responsibility.	Sports Business Sports Marketing Sports Communication Sports Management Sports Law and Governance Internship Master Thesis

The links between all the study programmes learning outcomes and the courses learning outcomes are presented in matrixes in Annex 3. Each learning outcome of a study programmes is achieved by studying several courses. An individual study course usually having links with more than one learning outcome of the programme. 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 by semesters) and its aim, every course of the study programme relates to 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 ECTS volume and content are sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes of all first and second cycles study programmes.

All course descriptions are prepared according to the uniform VMU requirements – Description of Procedure for Study Course Attestation⁷⁹. All courses should be renewed and confirmed by SPC at least every three years. For example, the latest attestation of all the courses in *Business Administration* study programme took place in Spring, 2019, so, it is planned to be proceeded in Spring, 2022 again.

The existing close linkage among the study programmes and study courses learning outcomes, study and teaching methods and the forms of study implementation in the programmes that was discussed above shows the study and teaching methods are reasonable and substantiated. The achievement of learning 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, the blended and hybrid 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 first cycle and second cycle study programmes in the field of Business use Problem-Based Learning techniques based on full case studies or just some episodes of the method. Teachers in some courses use simulations (Introduction Internship, for example) 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, in Business field courses the lectures often use 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. Internship's 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.

⁷⁹ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VMU-Procedure-for-Course-Attestation_Nov20-2019_edition.pdf in EN

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 used in study courses of Business field are linked to study methods 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 learning outcomes of social abilities group, as well as public presentation and discussion of papers allows to achieve learning outcomes of personal abilities group, and other students listening to the presentations turn into case study, discussion, debate, problem solving study methods practicing, etc.

Table 8 below shows an example of the links among the learning outcomes of the study programme *Business Logistics* and the learning outcomes, study methods and assessment methods of study course "International Logistics", as presented in all study course descriptions at VMU.

Table 8. Example of links among learning outcomes of the study programme of *Business Logistics* and learning outcomes, study and assessment methods of study course of *International Logistics*:

Learning outcomes of the study programme of <i>Business Logistics</i>	Learning outcomes of the study course	Study methods of the study course	Assessment methods of the study course
1. Explain the theories of social sciences, logistics technologies based on the results of fundamental and applied research, the modelling and design of logistics systems, and is able to apply knowledge in innovative way in bioeconomy sector and logistics companies under conditions of uncertainty.	1. Describe the significance of international logistics in the activities of companies and explain the types of international logistics, justifying their functioning principles.	Interpretation, discussion, illustration, case study, practical and seminar tasks.	Observation of discussions, assessment of case analysis, assessment of analysis of practical and seminar tasks, written test.

2. Apply business development knowledge based on results of business management theories, fundamental and applied scientific research in the changing environment in bioeconomy sector and logistics companies.	2. Define the content of the international logistics service system and the characteristics of the service providers.	Interpretation, discussion, individual work, case study, seminar tasks.	Assessment of case studies, observation of seminar tasks, written test, assessment of individual work report.
	3. Analyse the suitability of international logistics service providers and to find the best solution for its application in the field of international logistics organization.	Interpretation, discussion, case study, seminar tasks.	Case study assessment, assessment of seminar tasks, written test.
5. Model and design logistics systems and develop tools for the movement of material assets and biosubstances in the logistics chain needed to coordinate and improve the logistics of companies in the bioeconomy sector and other service sectors.	4. Analyse and evaluate international logistics processes in a business and / or specific business enterprise, identify their problem areas and solve them preparing development scenarios.	Interpretation, discussion, case analysis, teamwork for seminar tasks preparation.	Assessment of case studies, observation of seminar tasks performed, written test.
6. Solve complex non-routine business management problems, make and implement innovative business strategic decisions in a changing environment of bioeconomy sector and logistics companies.	5. Improve processes of international logistics in business by applying innovations, IT solutions and ensure their implementation.	Interpretation, discussion, case studies, individual work.	Assessment of case studies, monitoring and assessment of the presentation of individual work report, written test.

7. Communicate fluently and argumentatively in writing and orally and to convey the ideas of logistics business improvement to the representative of logistics business and other stakeholders.	6. Communicate using appropriate terminology, discussing and solving problems arising in international logistics and making decisions.	Interpretation, discussion, case study, seminar tasks, individual work.	Case study assessment, assessment of seminar tasks, assessment of individual work report, written test.
8. Take responsibility for the quality of his / her own and group members' activities and to evaluate them in accordance with professional ethics and citizenship in business logistics.			
9. Independently set learning needs and studies in order to improve professional qualifications in the area of logistics in the context of lifelong learning.	7. Make decisions about the need for professional development taking into account the latest scientific results in the field of international logistics	Interpretation, discussion, case study, seminar tasks.	Case study assessment, assessment of seminar tasks, written test
10. Use research knowledge and research experience, as well as systemic and strategic thinking skills for independent professional activity or research.			
11. Make innovative business logistics decisions, having considered their ethics and potential impact on society and the environment.			

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 study course description in all study programmes of Business field, discussed and approved by SPCs.

Information presented in current course descriptions (available on every study course Moodle page and VMU website) 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.

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 evaluations where they could expect high final grade without engaging in practical activities. This helps to accomplish aims of the study programmes in Business field to prepare businessmen and managers capable independently or in team to make relevant and creative decisions and execute business 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 / consultation) and e-learning platform Moodle course page in advance.

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

The study plan of the first cycle study programme *Business Administration* is presented in Appendix 1. In the *Business Administration* programme, courses are arranged in semesters so that students, in their first cycle studies, acquire the basic knowledge and skills required to study business administration courses. Later, there is a gradual transition to the courses of the main study field. The consistency of the courses in the study programme is based on the logical sequence of the programme learning outcomes. Students freely choose general University courses, the list and descriptions of which are available on the University website: Group A courses <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/destomi-dalykai/a-grupes-dalykai/> and Group B courses <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/destomi-dalykai/b-grupes-dalykai/>. General University courses are optional from the list of courses offered in groups A and B, which should be followed during the first, second, third and fourth semesters (a total of 50 ECTS required from these groups).

In the first and second years of study, students are introduced to the fundamentals of different fields of study (e.g., Professional Language, Micro- and Macroeconomics, fundamentals of Management, Finance, Marketing, etc.). From the very first year of study, students learn the courses of the field, which help to create the basis for studying more complex courses in the next year of study. Students are also given the opportunity to choose electives that can help to begin development of special skills in finance or marketing areas.

Students also complete the Introduction Internship in the second year of study, where they can apply their knowledge to make business management decisions in a simulated reality - business organization that are very similar to real business decisions and gain a general understanding of future careers. They must also write Term Paper No. 1, which requires to analyse the scientific literature, theoretical perspectives to innovations in business management and to draw conclusions. Thus, they are provided a foundation for further research in business administration.

The second half of the study programme *Business Administration* is designed to study specific courses of business administration related to law, management, and other fields, as well as additional interdisciplinary courses from other study fields. Up to the fifth semester students listen to the basic courses of the study field, so that they could begin to delve into problems of modern business management, learn to apply their knowledge in business administration research, combine interdisciplinary knowledge, and apply it to interpreting data or answering problem questions. This year, students have the opportunity to choose

Sports Management specialization and begin with the study course “Fundamentals of Sports Business Management”.

In the third year of study, students take the course Social and Marketing Research and have to write a second research paper. In this work, they must demonstrate that they can choose and justify a research method, use it to collect data on a chosen scientific problem and perform research, analyse the results, and draw conclusions. Students continue to deepen their special skills in such courses as Small Business Management and Marketing, Brand Management, Human Resource Management, etc. Attention is also paid to the formation of social and personal skills with the help of such study courses as Entrepreneurship and Leadership. During this academic year, students are offered to continue to form their specialization in Sports Management through the courses The Basics of Sports Marketing and Introduction to Sports Communication, which they study alongside the core curriculum.

In the fourth year of studies, students continue to form a portfolio of special skills and have the opportunity to continue their studies in Sports Management specialization. The Qualification Internship organized this year provides students with the opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in a real environment while working in a chosen organization. This internship is provided at the end of the study for several reasons. First, students already have most of the knowledge and skills that the programme seeks to provide them. In fact, they are already almost professionals in the job market and can practice it in real organizations. Second, it is one way for students and the SPC to control if they achieved and can successfully apply the programme learning outcomes. Mentor’s feedback is very valuable not only for the personal development of students but also for the improvement of the programme. Third, it provides an opportunity for students to link their Bachelor’s Final Thesis to the practical problems of specific organizations. Fourth, it is a very common practice in many universities’ first cycle programmes that both the Qualification Internship and the Bachelor’s Final Thesis are organized in the final year of study. It also allows higher involvement of business into the study process. Bachelor’s Final Thesis is a written work that presents the main research statements and results of independent research as well as projected solutions of the specific problems of business administration; Bachelor’s Final Thesis is defended according to a formal procedure and evaluated by the defence commission.

Study plan of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* is presented in Annex 1. The study courses within the study programme Logistics and Commerce have been distributed across the semesters in the way so as to ensure that, by attending the general University study courses, the first cycle students gain basic knowledge and abilities and the skills of independent work necessary for studying the courses of logistics and commerce. Subsequently, they gradually transition to the main courses of Business study field. Consistency of the courses under the programme curriculum is based on the logical sequence of the learning outcomes of the programme. The students choose general University courses that comprise 42 credits. The general University courses are the free electives and are chosen from the list of the proposed group A and group B courses. The list and descriptions of A and B group study courses are available on the University website (see above). They are delivered during the first, second, third, and fourth semesters of the *Logistics and Commerce* programme (the total of 24 ECTS credits assigned and 18 ECTS credits assigned to English language) and are intended to attain the learning outcome 1 of the study programme for knowledge and its application. The free elective general University courses of groups A and B are included in the third and second year. For example, for the academic year 2021-2022, the first-year students

are offered as many as 8 free elective study courses from the subgroup of social sciences (Artificial Intelligence – An Interdisciplinary Introduction; Media Studies; Psychology; Social Welfare, Foreign Language of specialty, etc.). These courses are intended to educate human historicity, secularity, and individual's societal context, geopolitical circumstances of development of the mindset, and the processes of individualizations under the conditions of globalization. The study courses of Mathematics (6 ECTS) is categorized as a course of other fields. It is required to be completed during the first semester in order to strengthen the students' skills of calculations and prepare them for the courses of Accounting delivered in the second semester and Fundamentals of Finance delivered in the third semester. The courses in Business field comprise 132 credits in total, of which 15 ECTS have been allocated to the Professional logistics and commerce practice and 15 ECTS – to the Bachelor's Thesis. The descriptions of 31 course in the field of Business Studies were prepared of the SPC for *Logistics and Commerce* study programme and assigned to Group C as well as linked to the specifics and features of commerce and logistics. This means that the topics, cases analysed, etc. contained in the descriptions of the Language of Specialty, Human Resource Management, and other courses are linked to the issues, problematics and terminology related to management and business organization at the logistics and commerce organizations. Group C courses allocated to the Business field are delivered during all semesters and intended to attain the remaining learning outcomes of the study programme.

The topics do not repeat directly across different courses; however, certain courses are closely interrelated (e.g., Logistics Management and Logistics Business Administration) and consistently complement each other by providing the students with the systematic understanding and deeper professional competences.

Consistency of the study content of the second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* is presented in study plan, see Annex 1. These compulsory courses in Business field shall be completed during the first semester: Trade Logistics, International Logistics, International Business Law, Logistics Information Technologies. Course Agriculture and Food Logistics Technology Management that belongs to another study field is also delivered during the first semester and is intended to gain the knowledge and develop the abilities in the area of agricultural logistics. The rationale behind the consistency of courses is based on the approach where the students are first required to gain basic knowledge on the modern achievements of the science of business logistics, their trends, advanced information systems, new management concepts, strategies, and develop the skills that are necessary to continue into the studies aimed at higher scientific level of business logistics management.

During the second semester, the students study the course of Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments that belongs to another field of studies in order to deepen their knowledge about the logistics innovation, the need for investments and management thereof, as well as develop the abilities necessary for preparation of a project on implementation of innovation and investments. Course Applied Research of Logistics, which is also delivered in the second semester, is intended to provide the methodological basis for applied research of logistics, educate and develop the abilities to choose and apply appropriate methods and procedures for applied research of logistics by analysing the qualitative and quantitative data of the empirical research, preparing the research reports, and developing innovative strategic decisions in business logistics. The students continue deepening their research skills by doing the Research Work intended for independent preparation, organization, and conduction and scientific and applied research that are

necessary for substantiation and dissemination innovative solutions of operational management of the bioeconomy sector and logistics companies. The prepared work is closely associated with the chosen topic of the Final Work of Master Studies and helps the student accumulate deep and comprehensive knowledge on the analysed phenomenon, substantiate the relevance of the scientific and empirical research, formulate the scientific/practical problem, substantiate the level of its exploration, educate and develop the abilities necessary for independent application of the research methods in the innovative research activity that implies integrated use of the knowledge, thereby developing the competences in business logistics management. Besides the compulsory courses implying high research level of problematics and innovation, the students are proposed the alternative for deeper understanding of strategic development of logistics of a business organization (Business Strategic Development) or improvement of internal logistics operations and processes at a company covering the modelling of decisions and teamwork (Management Decisions Modelling). The first alternative is intended for the students who wish to gain the competences of strategic management of international logistics. The second alternative is intended for the students who wish to understand all the operational aspects of the logistics chain at business companies and accumulate the knowledge that would enable them to identify the problems and eliminate ineffective processes from the chain. To enable the students to prepare for practical activity, the students choose the Logistics Innovation Internship during the second semester. It is intended to deepen the practical knowledge in business logistics at business organizations, learn the applied innovations in logistics by observation and/or participation in the logistic operations at a chosen company.

During the third semester, the students study only one course Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems and write and defend their Final Work of Master Studies (the fourth semester for part-time students). Course Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems is intended to develop students' systematic thinking and abilities of evaluation of the processes taking place in the logistics system, analysis of the logistic systems at business companies, identification of the problem areas thereof and addressing them by preparing potential development scenarios and adapting them to the changing conditions.

All the study courses are completed with the exam, except for the Logistics Innovation Internship and Scientific Research Work. Following the internship at a business company, the students write the internship report and defend it orally at the evaluation commission. The Scientific Research Work is completed by preparation of the work report and also defended orally at the evaluation commission. The aim of the defence procedure is evaluation of the student's research work, as well as to conduct the scientific discussion in order to provide feedback on the conducted research, give recommendations on further development of the selected topic.

In the second cycle study programme of *Business and entrepreneurship*, courses are divided into 3 groups (each 18 ECTS): (1) courses mainly focused on entrepreneurship knowledge, skills, and abilities, (2) courses mainly focused on the main business functional areas, (3) facilitating implementation of business. All the courses of the study programme are compulsory; there are no optional courses (as discussed in section 1.6.). The courses, focused on developing entrepreneurship knowledge, skills and abilities are Entrepreneurship and Innovations, Entrepreneurship Project, Business Strategies; the ones focused on the main business functional areas knowledge, skills, and abilities: Accounting and Finance, Human Resource Management in Business, Entrepreneurial Marketing; and those binding both areas

- Organizational Design, Communication and Negotiations, and Leadership in Business. The balance between *Business and Entrepreneurship* courses and the consistency of the field study programme content is explained below (see Annex 1).

In the first semester Entrepreneurship and Innovations, Entrepreneurship Project, Business Strategies, Accounting and Finance, Human Resource Management in Business are taught. The logic of such sequence follows that at the beginning students get the fundamental entrepreneurial way of thinking, understanding the business context and empirical research-based way to create business innovations, afterward the support of distinct business areas. These courses provide the same background to everyone, considering wide range of fields from which students are drawn.

In the second semester students proceed with other business areas studies and have Entrepreneurial Marketing, then end up with the implementation of their entrepreneurial projects by Organizational Design, Communication and Negotiations, and Leadership in Business means. 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 business situation interpreting the data obtained, provide the recommendations based on findings. Term Paper topics and supervisor 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. Final Master Thesis – is a written document in which the main statements and results of an individual investigation of a specific business problems and opportunities 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 business problems and opportunities in constantly changing business environment 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.

The study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* 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 second cycle study programme of *Sports Business Management* four live (except pandemic quarantine period, when was performed in a distance) sessions of one week duration (four weeks in total) takes place. According to agreement with Euroleague Basketball Institute, the first session is being held at the Euroleague Basketball Headquarters in Barcelona. The second session is being held in VMU and plus on-site visit at Žalgiris Kaunas. The third session is being held in the host city of Turkish Airlines EuroLeague Final Four. The fourth session is being held again in VMU, Kaunas. During the sessions students are introduced to the following semester courses, provided with sports business areas professionals presentations, take role in multiple discussions with them, build teams, attend

sports game events, observe venues, and follows sports event management activities in action.

Study courses are taught in cycles and in a distance. Students are provided both a systemic understanding and working knowledge of all major areas of sports business and management in following sequence: Sports Business, Sports Marketing, Sports Communication, Sports Management, Sports Economics and Finance, and Sports Law and Governance, starting with awareness of the specificity of Sports Business, proceed with means how to market the industry, following managing of events and sports organizations processes, and end up with the financial and law instruments for implementation of sports initiatives. Simultaneously students complete an Internship and Term paper where they apply the knowledge obtained in a sports business context. Students bring their studies to an end by preparing the Final Master Thesis adopting modern research methods to solve practical problems in the sports business. The aim, process, and requirements of the Final Master Thesis in the study programme are the same as for the other second cycle study programmes in Business field (see description of other second cycle study programme above).

The learning outcomes, courses, consistency of the study plan, compliance with the goals set for the Business field and the study cycle are constantly reviewed and improved, taking into account the suggestions of the stakeholders (see part 7 for more details).

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 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 evaluation, 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 Schedule⁸⁰.

In the first cycle 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 studies⁸¹ and VMU Study Regulations. Individual studies may be chosen by the first cycle studies students 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 first cycle 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*⁸².

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

⁸⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/vdu-individualaus-studiju-grafiko-teikimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

⁸¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/order-on-individual-studies-organization.pdf> in EN

⁸² See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/academia-cum-laude/> in EN

Studies. 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 studies use credits allocated for University *Artes Liberales* group B study courses credits for these studies. Upon completion of Minor studies, the student is issued a certificate testifying the completion of a Minor study programme⁸³. Many VMU students use this opportunity, for instance, in a period of 2019-2021 from 18 to 19 students per year have chosen Minor studies in *Business Administration*, as well as from 8 to 13 students of *Business Administration* study programme have chosen Minor studies in Information Systems, Law, Public Communication, Entrepreneurship Academy, Economics, Marketing, Psychology, Business Finance, etc.

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

During first two years of first cycle studies students study general courses of *Artes Liberales* (group A and B). Core attention in this stage is primarily given to a general broad education of students. These courses ensure partial achievement of the study programmes' aims to prepare broad erudite bearing such values as cognition of the world and its diversity employing modern cognitive means – foreign languages 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 each compulsory part⁸⁴.

The *Artes Liberales* principles and requirements for the study courses of group A and B 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 Study Regulations.

Group A is comprised of the courses that are obligatory for all students at VMU. 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 English⁸⁵ and the basics of computer literacy⁸⁶. 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 Study Regulations 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

⁸³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/gretutines-studijos/> in LT

⁸⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/destomi-dalykai/a-grupes-dalykai/> in LT

⁸⁵ 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 course (for up to two semesters). Other first year students study levels A1 and A2 in the first two semesters as a D group course. Those who complete level A2 continue in levels B1 and B2 as group A courses. 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.

⁸⁶ 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 course – Informatics in the first or second semester. Those who successfully complete the studies of this course 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 course „Informatics“ does not have to be studied if: (*) candidates have passed the state examination in Informatics; (*) candidates have ECD Licence.

(VMU students have a choice of 30 foreign languages⁸⁷). 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; Nature, Technology and Agriculture sciences; Foreign languages. 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 *Business administration* 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 Committees⁸⁸.

Study field courses (group C) enables the achievement of the aim and all learning outcomes of study programmes, although the range of optional courses in it is available, mostly in first cycle study programmes.

One of the main tasks of teachers is to help students to personalize their studies engaging them in theoretical, practical achievements, specific cases in the area 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 fit personal interests of 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.

Students also are free to choose their internship placements (from the offered list of social partners or to find it by their own) and agree with employer on wide range of activities in Business field to perform.

In first and second cycle 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.

After multiple deliberations in SPC, the Academic Council and the Dean's Office, the decision was made not to offer optional courses particularly in *Business and entrepreneurship* and *Sports Business Management* study programmes. This was done, mainly aiming to properly achieve the learning outcomes in 1,5 year and 90 ECTS volumed study programmes 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 Defence⁸⁹, 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

⁸⁷ See <http://uki.vdu.lt/courses/semester-courses/> in EN.

⁸⁸ Each sub-group within the broader group of B group courses 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.

⁸⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GENERAL-ORDER-ON-THE-PREPARATION-AND-DEFENCE-OF-THE-FINAL-THESES.pdf> in EN.

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. Appeals for procedural violations shall be considered in accordance with the procedure laid down in VMU Study Regulations.

In the first cycle the Final Bachelor Thesis of the *Business Administration and Logistics and Commerce* study programmes reveal the student's ability to understand and analyse business phenomena and processes and to creatively apply theoretical business knowledge and practical skills in solving business problems; based on independent applied research, the ability to analyse and interpret their results, the ability to reasonably formulate research findings and recommendations.

In the second cycle the Final Master Thesis in study programmes of *Business Logistics, Business and Entrepreneurship*, and *Sports Business Management* are based on the analysis, synthesis, and critical evaluation of research papers relevant to the topic of the chosen field of business; the student's independent research, the ability to analyse and interpret their results, to provide solutions for business subjects and to formulate research conclusions. The major difference from the first cycle Final Thesis is the ability of graduates to define the research problem and defensive statements, the required depth in scientific literature analysis and research methodology, statistical analysis of data, scientific discussion on results or applicability of solutions provided for business case (depends on whether the paper is research or project based).

Final Thesis of each study programme of Business study field is related with all learning outcomes of the particular study programme (see Annex 3). Students have to demonstrate the abilities to discuss the selected business problem theoretically (links to knowledge and application-based learning outcomes of the study programmes). They have to choose the appropriate scientific research methods of data collection, its summarization and evaluation and to apply them for the empirical analysis of the business 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 business 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 business areas, critically evaluate business results in the context of organizational strategy, apply research results, planning business 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 business 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 Business field terminology requirements.

When preparing the Final Thesis, students are provided with methodological requirements in specialized Moodle Final Thesis course pages and timetable of submission of interim parts of the thesis on 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 was provided with much more helpful material, guidelines, and time management means. Special Requirements for Preparation and Evaluation 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 Final Thesis Moodle pages. The students also receive guidance from their supervisors, they can be consulted in scheduled hours every week in contact, on distance or by e-mails. Helpfulness of supervisors is measured in feedback system, but also supervisors 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 or related to previous Internships. 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 Business 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, FEM and FBD documents are available for students on Moodle or VMU website.

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 Works⁹⁰. Heads of Undergraduate and Graduate studies at FEM and supervisors at FBD are responsible for organizing plagiarism check, which is performed using plagiarism detection software officially approved at VMU. Results of plagiarism check are documented in Plagiarism Prevention Commission protocol, which identifies 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 second cycle study programmes the Faculty Dean, upon proposal of the Head of the Department, approves the Certification Commission for Master Final Theses, consisting of three teachers, which has to review and assess the completed Final Theses. The main function of the Certification 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. Certification Commission does not provide feedback on the quality of Final Master Theses content. After this evaluation, the student may correct only the drawbacks indicated by the Commission until the specified date. Results of Certification Commission's evaluation are documented in a compliance report, which is presented to the student and to the Qualification Committee.

⁹⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Plagiarism-prevention-VMU.pdf> in EN

From 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 Fields⁹¹.

Graduates of the first cycle studies in the field of Business 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 Business 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
<i>Business administration study programme</i>		
5.	The course <i>Cost Accounting</i> should be mandatory for students of the programme. A more explicit reference to business ethics across the curriculum is also needed, together with an expanded coverage of law, as indicated above.	The course that covers these topics is <i>Financial Accounting and Reporting</i> . By the decision of the SPC, the study courses <i>Business Law</i> and <i>Business Ethics and Social Responsibility</i> were introduced.
7.	A wider coverage of the structure and policies of the EU, insofar as these relate to business policy and development, is recommended for inclusion in the curriculum.	To cover these topics, the course <i>Economics of Integration</i> is taught and, in accordance with the decisions of the SPC, the elective study course <i>EU Financial System</i> was introduced.
<i>Logistics and Commerce study programme</i>		
1.	While the study programme has great potential due to its strong focus on the agricultural community, the curriculum should emphasize more strongly	Description of course <i>Logistical Equipment and Technology</i> has been amended by adding specific topics relevant for agri-business starting with the academic year 2018. To provide practical learning, it is recommended to choose agricultural businesses or organizations conducting international logistics operations as the placement for <i>Professional Logistics and Commerce Practice</i> .

⁹¹ See <https://www.skvc.lt/default/en/quality-assurance/study-program-descriptions> in EN

<p>key contents like international logistics, service marketing and the specific features of the agricultural business.</p>	<p>The description of study courses International Trade and Business Development was improved by adding the topics of international logistics starting with the academic year 2018. The description of study course Trade Marketing was improved by adding the topics of logistics services in agriculture into the practical classes starting with the academic year 2018.</p> <p>To ensure the specific character of the programme by the means of field courses, such as Logistical Equipment and Technology, Bioeconomy, and Trade Marketing, the practical and individual assignments are focused on the specifics of agri-business companies and logistics processes. When instructed on the practice placement for internship in the academic years 2018, 2019, and 2020, the students were advised to choose companies operating in agriculture or international logistics.</p>
<p>2. Learning outcomes need to be better linked to individual courses. In addition, their number should be substantially reduced to make them better achievable and more manageable for program management, teaching staff and students.</p>	<p>The number of learning outcomes in the study programme was optimized, the number of learning outcomes (mostly of knowledge applications and special abilities) was reduced from 25 to 10, their formulations were updated to align with the descriptor of the study field, link them with individual courses and learning outcomes of the courses. In November 2019, the Council of the FBD at VMU Agriculture Academy approved the Description of the Logistics and Commerce Study Programme.</p> <p>Methodological seminar was held for the teachers in the academic year 2018 dedicated to consistency between the intended learning outcomes of the study programme and teaching and learning methods.</p> <p>The plan of implementation of the programme studies was amended according to the requirements of VMU (after merger of universities and the need to correspond VMU study system and principles of <i>Artes Liberales</i>) and the results of external evaluation of the programme.</p> <p>In the period from September 2018 to April 2019, the outcomes of knowledge application and special abilities were reviewed and amended. In May 2018, the study programme was adapted to the requirements of VMU in view of the Group A and Group B general University courses.</p>

Business Logistics study programme

1.	<p>The learning outcomes are good but might be considered sometimes general and theory oriented. They could be further developed to reflect more practical aspects of the programme.</p>	<p>Following review of the experts' recommendations, the remarks by the social partners and academic community, the <i>Business Logistics</i> study programme was improved in the self-evaluation period. The improvement measures were presented at the meeting of SPC of 22/11/2018. The implemented amendments were approved at the meeting of SPC of 19/03/2019, and the study programme improvements were finally approved of the meeting of the FBD Council. The study programme plan was reorganized, and the theoretical courses of Behaviour of Business Organizations in the Global Market (7 ECTS) and Strategic Financial Management of Business (6 ECTS) were removed. 2) The removal of the courses mentioned above, the available credits were used to update the course Management of Logistics Innovation (6 ECTS) that became the course of Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments (7 ECTS were allocated to it). 3) Course Logistics Innovation Internship was introduced into the study plan to provide the students with the possibility to gain deeper understanding of the practical aspects of innovation application and its benefit at actual logistics companies.</p>
2.	<p>The curriculum will benefit by the incorporation of relevant information technology modules as well a bigger emphasis on applied, practical applications of theoretical material taught even having in mind the programme is not oriented to practical preparation.</p>	<p>The teachers delivering the courses of the <i>Business Logistics</i> programme added and integrated the topics of information technologies into the content of courses (Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems, Applied Research of Logistics, Management Decisions Modelling), practical and independent work assignments. Application Infotrance is used during the practical classes. In the self-evaluation period, business representatives (V. Janilionis, project manager at TGW Logistics Group; M. Gelgotas, CEO at Itoma, UAB) gave lectures and shared their experience in the developed and implemented effective, custom-made automated logistics solutions, from the system software development stage to the testing, launch, and maintenance of the system. The examples, operating principles, testing of the IT systems were presented. Since 2019, the study plan includes study course of Logistics Information Technologies (6 ECTS). These improvement measures were presented at the meeting of SPC of 12/11/2018. The implemented amendments were approved at the meeting of the SPC of 19/03/2019, and the study programme improvements were finally approved of the meeting of the FBD Council.</p>

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

Strengths

- Each study programme in Business field has a clear and distinct identity, which is decoded into aim and learning outcomes of each programme.
- The portfolio of study programmes in Business field in VMU fully corresponds to the market needs, covering different focuses in Business field and both first and second cycles of the studies system.
- The aims, learning outcomes and content of study programmes in Business 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.
- Business 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 Business 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 Business field at VMU 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

- After the Descriptor of Study Field of Business is approved, in a year learning outcomes of study programmes in Business field should be reviewed. The initial activities have already been carried out during the last review of the study programmes in Business field, although the process of renewal is intended to finalize in Spring semester, 2022, in a form of periodical attestation of all study courses' descriptions (once in three years, period ends up in Spring, 2022).

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

VMU's business research integrates a wide range of thematic areas, such as entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, logistics, sales, corporate strategic and operations management. Research is carried out not only within these thematic areas, but also in order to achieve cross-functional and often interdisciplinary synergies between the areas (both with each other and with other social sciences). This synergy is programmed in the mission of VMU as an institution of science and studies. In 1989 VMU was re-established as the only university in the country with wide coverage which extensive research and study programmes were based on the principles of *Artes Liberales*. The culture of *Artes Liberales* has contributed to the emergence of more dynamic and interdisciplinary trends that reflect the needs of a market economy and society. The fields of business and management were one of the first fields of science and studies implemented at the restored University, which benefited directly from the philosophy of *Artes Liberales*. This helped VMU to become one of the most

important research and study centres in this field in Lithuania. The study programmes in the field of Business belong to the general direction of management and administration research field (03S), in which VMU was evaluated with three points (2018), which is the highest score among the institutions participating in the largest Lithuanian Joint Doctoral Committee on Management (VMU, MRU, ŠU, KU and ASU until 2019, when merged with VMU). The overall scientific potential of the unit (economics and management combined), expressed as the economic and social impact of the research, was also assessed with 3 points.

According to the data of the annual comparative evaluation (Results of the formal evaluation of Lithuanian universities and research institutes in the field of social sciences), in 2017 the sum of points of VMU social sciences papers included in the weighting of formal evaluation papers was 1541.12 and lagged behind VGTU (1782.45) and VU (2403.85). In 2018, the sum of points in the field of social sciences of VMU, included in the weighting of formal evaluation research papers, was 2288.35, and only VU scored more points (3707.73). According to the results of the formal evaluation of works in the field of social sciences of Lithuanian universities and research institutes in 2019, VMU scored 1728.86 points and lagged behind MRU (2017.28), VGTU (2026.51) and VU (4248.89). The fields of management and economics had the highest number of science points in the context of other VMU social sciences (both in absolute terms and on average per researcher).

VMU's Business field study programmes and research activities are currently implemented by two structural units - FEM and FBD, therefore this part of the self evaluation presents the research activities of the researchers of both departments and their teams, substantiating the competencies in the implemented programmes.

VMU employs one of the leading scientists and experts specializing in different areas of business management in Lithuania. Here we provide a brief overview of the key business researchers by their general area of expertise (their research activities and relationship to the content of the study programmes are explored in the later sections of this part):

- prof. dr. G. Jucevičius is a member of international expert institutions in the field of innovation and entrepreneurship (International Society for Professional Innovation Management, Academy of Management), permanent expert of innovation projects of the European Commission Horizon Europe, leader of many research projects related to innovation management and business strategy.
- prof. dr. L. Pilelienė is the country's leading researcher and expert in the field of neuromarketing. She is also the head of the VMU Neuromarketing laboratory, and the head of many marketing research projects a member of the Euro-Asia Tourism Studies Association.
- assoc. prof. dr. O. Stripeikis is the head of VMU Business Practice Centre, a member of the University Industry Innovation Network, and the main coordinator of entrepreneurship training projects implemented by VMU.
- assoc. prof. dr. V. Žirgūtis - member of the Project Management Institute PMI, member of the Confederation of Laboratories for Artificial Intelligence Research in Europe (CLAIRE), expert of Horizon Europe.
- prof. dr. I. Bakanauskienė - member of the Lithuanian Association of Personnel Management Professionals, member of the Human Resources Commission of the Lithuanian Business Confederation.
- Assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė is a member of many international H2020 research projects and one of the country's leading experts with a unique combination of competencies in the fields of marketing, energy, and climate-neutral society.

- dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė is the most active young researcher in Lithuania in the field of neuromarketing, regularly receiving national awards as one of the most productive PhD students in science (having defended her dissertation in 2020) in Lithuania.
- assoc. prof. dr. N. Klebanskaja is the research coordinator of the Baltic Institute of Management (BMI), the leading Lithuanian business school (VMU FEM is the founder of BMI; EPASS accreditation), an expert of the Administrative Science Association of Canada (ASAC);
- assoc. prof. dr. M. Šontaitė-Petkevičienė is the head of the Kaunas branch of the Lithuanian Marketing Association (LIMA);
- assoc. prof. dr. A. Raupelienė is an international expert in the fields of quality management of innovative business processes, human and social capital formation, participates in ISO / TC 260WG6 Knowledge Management and ISO / TC 260 WG9 Employee engagement working groups in developing quality standards.
- assoc. prof. dr. A. Rūtelionė is a member of the Consumer Research Association, the European Marketing Association, the European Manufacturing Research Association, and the American Marketing Association.

VMU is the lead partner / coordinator of Lithuania's largest institutional consortium of doctoral studies in Management (together with Mykolas Romeris University, Klaipėda University, Šiauliai University and until 2019 - Aleksandras Stulginskis University). In 2021 VMU has 22 PhD students in the field of Management - 14 FEM and 8 FBD (the Business field in PhD studies is not distinguished). In addition, it is important to mention that in 2020 there were as many as 4 foreign PhD students who studied at VMU, when only five years ago only Lithuanians were researchers at FEM. During the period of 2016-2019 at least one foreign PhD student joined the VMU business research group every year. According to the number of PhD students from foreign countries, VMU is one of the leaders in internationalization in Lithuania.

VMU business research group (which includes experienced researchers and PhD students) conducts research on topics that reflect the latest trends in science, such as:

- "Increasing the Strategic Resilience of Enterprise Value Chains: An Ecosystem Approach" (N. Budrys, prof. dr. G. Jucevičius);
- "Development of Entrepreneurial Business Ecosystem in the Environment of Traditional Industry" (L. Švipas, prof. dr. G. Jucevičius);
- "Factors of value-added creation in short food supply chains" (L. Lauraitienė, V. Vitunskienė)
- "Development of intercultural competence and internationalization of global-born companies" (J. Dabravalskytė-Radzevičė, prof. J. Vveinhardt);
- "B2B marketing on social media and modelling its impact on product sales" (K. Rėklaitis, prof. dr. L. Pilelienė);
- "Modeling of Sustainable Development of Food Distribution System" (M. Samuolaitis, prof. dr. R. Drejeris);
- "Artificial intelligence in individualizing value to the client" (N. Babayev, assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė);
- "Evaluation of the Impact of Financial Accounting Harmonization in the EU Countries on the Quality of Financial Statements and Investment Efficiency" (S. Katutytė, D. Zinkevičienė);
- "Forming a brand image based on personal privacy in the music industry" (E. Gouitcheche, prof. dr. L. Pilelienė);

- “Modeling of Innovative Content Marketing Solutions” (R. Repovienė, assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė);
- “Evaluation of digital customer engagement in machine-generated content using face-to-face interview as a marketing tool” (Kh. Israfilzade, prof. dr. L. Pilelienė);
- “Evaluation of the Impact of Product Demonstration on Consumer Behaviour in the Interactive Media Environment” (E. Abromavičius);
- “Consumer Perceived Brand Value Modelling” (V. Bičiūnaitė-Svobonienė, prof. dr. A. Bakanauskas);
- “Modelling the influence of visual advertising elements of fast-moving products on consumer behaviour” (V. Grigaliūnaitė, prof. dr. L. Pilelienė). It should be noted that this dissertation, defended by V. Grigaliūnaitė in 2020, was recognized by The Lithuanian Young Scientists' Union as one of the 5 best dissertations of the year (out of 91 candidates). V. Grigaliūnaitė continues her scientific and teaching activities in the fields of Business / Marketing at VMU.

New knowledge gained during the above-mentioned research is constantly integrated into the study process by updating existing study courses and including new ones. To avoid repetition, the specific scientific research projects, and their integration into the study process are presented and discussed in section 2.2. when revealing the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art, and technology.

The research strategy is based on the 3 “I” Strategic Principles: Internationality, Interdisciplinarity and Impact. These strategic principles also apply to business area research.

International experience and mobility of researchers. According to the intensity of Erasmus+ exchanges (data from the European Commission), VMU is generally among the Top 40 European universities, and VMU FEM is the only business school in Lithuania belonging to the Campus Europae network. All this contributes to the greater international mobility of researchers and their access to the latest experience. In 2019-2021 Business researchers (from both FEM and FBD) have regularly used Erasmus+ mobility opportunities and taught at various European universities (e.g. University of Alicante (M. Šontaitė-Petkevičienė), Instituto Politecnico do Porto, University of Nicosia (L. Pilelienė)), University of Foggia (A. Kyguolienė), West Pomeranian University of Technology (V. Grigaliūnaitė), University of Extremadura (D. Perkumienė), R. Rasa Pranskūnienė, Eskisehir Osmanmangazi (Turkey), University of Foggia (J. Grėblikaitė), J. Vilkevičiūtė, Białystok Technical University, Białystok, Poland. In addition, researchers were part of international professional networks (AOM, EURAM, ISPIM, etc.) and participated in high-level international conferences organized by these networks. They regularly worked as experts in evaluating international research projects (e.g., Horizon 2020, European Commission calls for proposals for Twinning institutional research projects). In the future, international mobility will continue to be promoted through both organizational and financial means (especially after the lifting of the Covid-19 restrictions). Sufficient financial resources make it possible to promote the mobility of researchers through annual participation in EU mobility programmes (such as Erasmus+), and through applications for researcher mobility calls organized by VMU 2-3 times a year.

Synergies in research through international partnerships with leading European business schools. VMU has probably the most international master's degree programmes in Lithuania - all of them have an important research element. For example, VMU FEM maintains institutional partnerships with the top 40 European business schools (Copenhagen Business School (CBS), Norwegian School of Economics (NHH), Paris HEC, Louvain School of Management (for the Executive MBA), the University of Trento and the University of Aveiro);

many of these partnerships are linked not only through dual degree programmes but also through research synergies. For example, in the fields of Business, Marketing and Finance, the main international partners are the Louvain School of Management at the Catholic University of Louvain (LSM-LLN) and the University of Trento (Italy). Researchers from these partner universities come for training visits to VMU FEM, as well as share their research experience with students and lecturers, lead student research projects (e.g., Prof. M. Failo from University of Trento in the field of experimental economics, Prof. P. Semal from Catholic University of Louvain in value chain management). Such cooperation with foreign partners also results in joint scientific publications (e.g., a joint monograph with Prof. J.P. Larçon from the Paris HEC).

For its part, VMU FBD maintains institutional partnerships with foreign universities, such as the University of Extremadura (Spain), the University of Anadolu (Turkey), the University of Foggia (Italy), the University of Szeged (Hungary), etc. Many of these partnerships involve joint ventures. Researchers come for training visits to VMU FBD, also share their research experience with students and lecturers, advise students on research projects. Such cooperation with foreign partners also gives rise to joint scientific publications (e.g., during 2018-2020, three joint publications were issued by assoc. prof. D. Perkumienė with prof. dr. A. Siva-Sanchez from University of Extremadura).

Such collaboration with foreign researchers will continue in the future, developing and expanding existing networks. These initiatives are supported by financial assistance for researchers going to partner universities (often in combination with Erasmus+ funding). Such financial support will continue in the future. In addition, the procedure for VMU FEM to join the international CEEMAN network was officially launched in 2021 (more research-related synergies are provided in Section 2.2).

The growing internationality of business and business management research and scientific journals. In 2018-2020 VMU's overall research publishing strategy and business research focused more and more on quality parameters (i.e., give preference to publications in journals that have higher scientific impact factor and publish fewer articles instead of publishing many articles in less recognized scientific journals). This is also reflected in the strategy of internationalization of scientific journals of VMU structural units. The journal *Organizational Management: Systematic Research* (ed. prof. dr. G. Jucevičius) was one of the first business and management science journals in Lithuania. From 2017 it is published by the international publishing house *De Gruyter* (renamed *SCIENDO* in 2019) and there was a transition from bilingual (English / Lithuanian) articles to the full English format, i.e., articles are published in English language only. The journal publishes authors from around the world. The share of international authors has increased to about 60% in the last 3 years. It is planned to further increase the share of international researchers published in the journal in the future. Cooperation with *De Gruyter / SCIENDO* platform will continue, as it provides an excellent basis for such international cooperation, providing access to international networks and databases of top-level journals. In 2020 a new contract has been signed. In addition, the agreement with *De Gruyter / SCIENDO* platform was also signed in 2021 by another business-related scientific journal published by VMU - *Management Theory and Studies for Rural Business and Infrastructure Development* (ed. assoc. prof. dr. R. Pakeltienė). This shows the continuity of VMU's commitment to the internationalization of science in Business field.

Interdisciplinary research enabled by the unique VMU *Artes Liberales* culture. The liberal, open, and non-hierarchical culture of VMU has a very positive effect on the research carried out in the field of business and the interdisciplinary synergy of social sciences. The

social dimension occupies an important place in the specialization of business research of its faculties, and it distinguishes it from other business schools / faculties in Lithuania. The most innovative research topics and publications emerge from interdisciplinary links in areas such as sustainability and sustainable development, neuromarketing, behavioural, trust, networking, business / innovation ecosystem research. Here some examples follow. Neuromarketing research performed by prof. dr. L. Pilelienė and dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė, has a strong dimension in the science of psychology. Another example is that VMU FEM business management researchers participated in the Horizon2020 project "Creation of a Center for Cultural and Creative Industries at the Interdisciplinary Junction of Arts, Culture, Education and ICT". Researchers in the field of Business liaise with researchers from other faculties in the fields of public communication, the arts and the creative industries. Researchers in business management (e.g., prof. dr. G. Jucevičius, assoc. prof. dr. S. Staniulienė), implementing the Research Groups Project (MIP), Research Council of Lithuania, for 2020-2023, conduct research on the development of organizational knowledge ecosystems in the context of business enterprises. The research uses the perspective of the theory of complexity, which inevitably integrates the approaches of various social sciences, as well as ecological sciences, which are very close to the identity of VMU as a scientific institution. It should be noted that the interdisciplinary perspective of complexity is also applied in the research of the VMU FBD, who actively carry out research in the context of sustainability and sustainable development. For example, FBD lecturers-researchers participate in the VMU coordinated INTERREG project "Promoting the Potential of Biomass Value Chains in the Baltic Sea Region" (BalticBiomass4Value). The aim of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the public and private sectors in the Baltic Sea Region to produce bioenergy in a more sustainable and cost-effective way, using new biomass sources for energy production (mainly bio-waste) and exploiting the potential for bio-energy by-products. INTERREG is an interdisciplinary international project covering the fields of social, technological, and natural sciences. Developers and teachers are also participating in the Horizon 2020 project "Promoting a Sustainable Circular Bioeconomy in Central and Eastern Europe" (BIOEASTsUP). The project will encourage the BIOEAST initiative to become a catalyst for the Centre for Research and Innovation, Rural Development and Other Bioeconomic Development in Western Europe, creating a favourable cross-sectoral framework for the sustainable exploitation of biomass potential.

VMU is an associated member of Biobased-industries Consortium (BIC)⁹² (from 2020). BIC members cover the entire bio-based value chain and consist of large industries, small and medium-sized enterprises, regional clusters, European trade associations, and European Technology Platforms. Being a part of this Consortium, VMU researchers are in the international network of business actors and research institutions.

Interdisciplinary cooperation is planned in the future as well, as it is a priority of the new VMU research strategy for 2021–2027. Financial resources are allocated to research clusters at the University level on an annual basis. In addition, researchers from different groups can take part in interdisciplinary project funding competitions twice a year at VMU.

An institutional framework that supports interdisciplinary teams. Interdisciplinary collaboration is enabled by the institutional structure of research teams. A distinctive feature of VMU in the field of development of science and art activities is the practice of science and research clusters. Research clusters are active groups of researchers from different fields who carry out joint research, integrate studies and science, and combine the scientific potential of

⁹² See <https://biconsortium.eu/membership/associate-members> in EN

several departments. VMU currently has 48 research clusters in the humanities, social sciences, arts, science, and technology.

Horizontal research clusters such as “Management Transformation for the Development of a Socially Sustainable Society and a Competitive State”, “Research on Marketing Management in a Modern Environment”, “Research and Experiments on Socio-Economic, Political and Financial Stability and Smart Economic Growth” are directly related to the Business field. The first research cluster promotes the integration of different disciplines, with a particular emphasis on management research (research and innovation ecosystems, organizational culture, business models, entrepreneurial behaviour, human resource management in knowledge-based business organizations). The second cluster brings together researchers focusing on business marketing solutions (research areas such as neuromarketing, brand management, value dimensions, organizational reputation and social responsibility, consumer behaviour and marketing communication trends). The third cluster is a bit wider and brings together researchers conducting research in the fields of finance and economics (only research areas related to the Business field should be mentioned - corporate governance of start-ups, financing decisions in uncertain conditions, business accounting systems). Research in these clusters is carried out by VMU FEM researchers, who teach mainly in the study programmes *Business Administration*, *Business and Entrepreneurship*, *Sports Business Management*, and partly - *Business Logistics*, *Logistics and Commerce*. The boundaries of research clusters are quite flexible. Researchers can participate in several clusters at the same time (depending on the research project).

In their turn, the researchers of VMU FBD conduct research related to the business field, and the coordinating programmes (*Business Logistics*, *Logistics and Commerce*) of the faculty representing it in the departmental research groups. The main research topics of the Business field are the following: development of agricultural and other bioeconomy business organizations; strategic development of agricultural and other bioeconomy business organizations; marketing and logistics of agricultural and other bioeconomy products; sustainable development of business processes and resources in agricultural and other bioeconomy organizations; business diversification and social business models.

In the future, it is planned to further strengthen interdisciplinary research links in joint publications and research project applications (especially with new groups of University researchers who became part of VMU after the merger with ASU and the internal consolidation of the University). Future interdisciplinary research is planned to pay special attention to the issues of sustainable business and sustainable development in business. This concerns the post-Covid-19 issue, as well as the potential for new institutional synergies and the resources allocated to this area of research at EU level.

The growing importance of applied research with practical implications. VMU gives great importance to applied research in Business field, which contributes to the solution of real-life problems and experiential learning of students (for more information, see Section 2.3.). VMU has a VMU Business Practice Centre⁹³ (established in 2014), which provides students with the opportunity for experiential learning through applied research and case studies. Many VMU business researchers work as experts and consultants of this centre, thus directly contributing to business decisions in real life. For example, dr. J. Kisieliauskas and dr. A. Kyguolienė were included as research partners in the application for the commercialization of intellectual solutions of music producers and broadcasters (with Shakespeare music Ltd). In addition, VMU maintains long-term institutional relations with major national

⁹³ See <https://minded.lt/about-us-2/#studentams> in EN

organizations (e.g., Volfas Engelman, Žalgiris, Lietuvos energetika, etc.), applied research institutes (e.g., Lithuanian Energy Institute) or professional associations (e.g., Lithuanian Marketing Association) by participating in various joint projects that have an impact on society / business. Researchers also work with national agencies such as Invest in Lithuania or Business Lithuania (e.g., the Kaunas City Brand Project) and associations such as the Lithuanian Banking Association to participate in the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) principles in the banks. In the future, applied research will be further expanded by strengthening relationships with senior executives and key shareholders from the Baltic Management Institute (BMI) and the Alumni Network. In 2020 VMU FEM has signed a new agreement with BMI on such cooperation and expansion of the network. Financial resources for applied research are attracted from business partners and R&D funding projects (e.g., the “Inočekiai” programme is coordinated by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation).

Thus, summarizing the above information, the institutional strategy for strengthening Business field research is based on the consistent pursuit of the following priorities:

- promoting the international mobility of researchers and the international dissemination of their research results (by participating in institutional calls for funding for researchers, which are published 2-3 times a year, through annual participation in EU mobility programmes);
- strengthening international research cooperation (by providing institutional support and funding for membership of leading professional associations);
- increasing the internationalization of VMU's scientific journals and research community (providing institutional support / funding for participation in leading academic networks (e.g., CEEMAN) and platforms (e.g., *De Gruyter / SCIENDO*), attracting international researchers);
- strengthening interdisciplinary synergies in order to maintain the innovativeness and originality of business research (using VMU research clusters and University funds to strengthen the research and economics research potential);
- modernization of research laboratories in Business field (Neuromarketing, Bloomberg), providing researchers with the most advanced technologies and strengthening the competencies required for research accordingly.

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

The above-mentioned features of research conducted at VMU 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.

Research projects. The study process benefits directly from the publication of research projects and related articles conducted by VMU researchers. The following are examples of the integration of research projects into the study content of VMU FEM by researchers teaching in broad-based Business field programmes (*Business Administration, Business and Entrepreneurship*):

- VMU FEM research team (G. Jucevičius, R. Bendaravičienė, S. Staniulienė, I. Bakanauskienė, etc.) conducted research and published a collective scientific monograph “Organizational Management in an Environment of Uncertainty: Theory and Practice” (2017). In particular, the research has helped to improve the courses taught in the *Business and Entrepreneurship* programmes, justifying the various contexts of uncertainty in which entrepreneurs and managers of entrepreneurial businesses operate (e.g., it

added the management under uncertainty dimension into the courses “Entrepreneurship and Innovations”, “Organization Design”, “Strategic Human Resource Management”, etc.). The research presented in the monograph allows students to present the essential principles of management and development of modern innovative organizations operating in highly dynamic environments.

- Prof. dr. G. Jucevičius led two national research projects (both funded by the Research Council of Lithuania) “Enabling Self-Organization in a Modern Innovation Ecosystem” (SELFORG) and “Organizational Innovation Strategies in the Emerging Economic-Institutional Environment” (INNOSTRAT). The new knowledge gained during these projects helped to enrich the study course “Competitiveness and Innovation” of the *Business Administration* programme, as well as the introductory course “Entrepreneurship and Innovation” taught in the *Business and Entrepreneurship* programme. In addition, in 2021 prof. dr. G. Jucevičius and assoc. prof. dr. S. Staniulienė started the implementation of the MIP research project, Research Council of Lithuania, “Smart Development of the Organizational Knowledge Ecosystem” (duration until 2024). The content of the project is directly related to the dimension of entrepreneurship and innovation in Business field studies.
- Prof. dr. Lina Pilelienė and dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė has implemented national neuromarketing research projects and they are probably the most experienced scientists in this field in Lithuania. The results of their research are integrated into the study courses (e.g., “Marketing Principles” taught in the *Business Administration* programme). A new research-based study course, Neuromarketing, has also been developed.
- Prof. dr. G. Jucevičius and assoc. prof. dr. T. Karpavičius research team conducted research and prepared publications on the topic “Football Business System: A Structural Approach”. It can be stated that the results of this study also significantly contributed to the design of *Sports Business Management* study programme, reflecting the essential components of the sports business system and related competencies.
- The EU co-financed H2020 project “Cultural and Creative Innovation Competence Centre in Lithuania” (INNOCULT) contributed to the improvement of VMU FEM competencies in the field of cultural and creative industries, which were included in the content of different study courses (e.g., “Entrepreneurship and Innovations”), as well as in the newly developed *Creative Business and Innovation Design* first cycle study programme.
- An applied research project focusing on new marketing areas “The Impact of Content Marketing Elements on Search Engine Performance: The Case of Google AdWords for Leisure Services” (by assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė, R. Repovienė) helped to evaluate the impact of content marketing on search engine advertising. The findings of the research contributed to courses of *Business Administration* study programme (e.g., “Marketing Principles”). Assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė and PhD student N. Babayev started to study destructive technologies and their influence on creating value for the consumer. These studies also provided added value to the courses mentioned above.
- The research project “Access to Housing for the Population and Measures to Increase the Availability of Housing” (No. P-REP-18-8, category - public procurement research) touched on sensitive issues for the public to deepen their knowledge about the development of research methodology and conduction of the research. Therefore, this research is used as a good example teaching to conduct research in “Social and Marketing Research” course of *Business Administration* study programme.

- 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 will enrich the expertise of scientific research methodology preparation and add to the teaching quality.
- Assoc. prof. dr. R. Legenzova conducted research and prepared publications in the areas of choice of accounting policy of companies, evaluation of financial condition and performance and evaluation of financial reliability of companies (as well as their impact on decisions made by company managers), while dr. A. Kamandulienė conducted research in the field of working capital of companies. The insights gained during the research allowed to improve the course Business Accounting and Finance (both researchers in the programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* are responsible for this course).

Study programmes in Business field and related research activities implemented by the VMU FBD deserve special mention. FBD lecturers are the creators of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* and the second cycle programme *Business Logistics*. The faculty has a concentrated potential for researchers interested in logistics and trade issues. Although the implementation of the study programmes started in 2012-2013, FBD has many years of research experience in the field of agricultural logistics. The initiator of the study programmes *Logistics and Commerce* and *Business Logistics* prof. dr. A. Gargasas defended his PhD dissertation "Evaluation of the efficiency of logistics processes in manufacturing companies" in 2000, as well as prepared over 10 scientific papers on this topic. Since 2019, 6 scientific articles on logistics were published. 2 of them are focused on green logistics issues and published by M. Vienažindienė and co-authors ("Modeling the implementation of green logistics principles: theoretical aspect", 2021; „The right to a clean environment considering green logistics and sustainable tourism", 2020). 4 articles are dedicated to improvement of the quality of logistic issues/services published by different researchers of FBD („The impact of COVID-19 on the transportation and logistics industry“, 2021; „The improvement of the quality of logistic services“, 2021; „Development of sustainable distribution logistics system“, 2020; „Quality management systems in logistics“, 2019). Currently one PhD student (M. Samuolaitis) is preparing dissertation related to logistics issues, and one dissertation was defended in autumn 2021 related to trade issues. Currently, this field of research is being developed and scientific papers on logistics are published by assoc. prof. dr. M. Vienažindienė, assoc. prof. dr. V. Tamulienė, assoc. prof. dr. A. Raupelienė, assoc. prof. dr. J. Zaleckienė, assoc. prof. dr. M. Samuolaitis, assoc. prof. dr. I. Mūgienė, assoc. prof. dr. A. Čapienė and other faculty staff. Following the structural changes in ASU in 2018, and the establishment of FBD, most of the logistics research is related to the development of bioeconomy businesses and the topics of bio-business product supply chains. This is based on the important role of logistics in the development of the EU bioeconomy, especially in the food sector. The EU's bioeconomy strategy aims to provide the public with safe food at competitive prices while conserving resources and protecting the environment. Logistics contributes to the availability of local and regional raw materials and food at competitive prices through appropriate infrastructure, including logistics. The food industry is one of the largest production sectors in the EU and wholesalers and transport companies play an important role in this EU food system in terms of logistics and distribution. Research reveals that logistics solutions can save to 38 percent on food and other bio-product costs. For this reason, in the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce*, students study the course Bioeconomics, and in the second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* they study

Management of Agricultural and Food Products Logistics Technologies. The projects implemented by the FBD, which allowed to improve the content of business programmes, were also mentioned:

- Joint science-business project under the measure "Intelligence" (project leader prof. dr. J. Žukovskis), the main goal of which is to create a platform for cooperation and sharing of agricultural entities in cooperation with representatives of science and business. The implementation of this project contributed to the development of business relations, and the information gathered during the research helped to improve the content of *Business Logistics* courses ("Management Decision Modelling", "Business Strategic Development").
- Programme developers and lecturers also participate in the research commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture "Methodological Recommendations for Project Innovation Evaluation" (Executors assoc. prof. dr. R. Pakeltienė and assoc. prof. dr. J. Baranauskienė, prof. dr. Antanas Maziliauskas). The aim of the research is to prepare methodological recommendations for the evaluation of innovations suitable for the evaluation of projects of the Rural Development Programme. The examples of good practice analysed in this project have contributed to the improvement of the course "Business Planning and Evaluation" of study programme *Logistics and Commerce*.
- During the implementation of research and business projects under the "Inočekiai" programme, a feasibility study on the modernization of business processes was prepared, and the preconditions, conditions, and opportunities for the development of social entrepreneurship in Lithuania were analysed. The results of these studies contributed to the different courses of *Business Logistic* (i.e., "Logistics Innovation Internship", "Modelling of Management Decisions", "Business Strategic Development").
- The European Innovation Partnership project "Management of Short Supply Chains of Biologically Valuable Products and Development of Local Markets" (supervisor prof. dr. V. Atkočiūnienė) was commissioned by the National Paying Agency under the Ministry of Agriculture and contributed to the content of the course of "Trade Management" of *Logistics and Commerce* study programme by enriching it with new examples of case studies, revealing the peculiarities of short supply chains and their impact on the local market.
- FBD researchers conduct research on innovative and relevant topics, such as assoc. prof. dr. M. Vienažindienė together with the team conducts research on green logistics. The results of the research, published in high-level databases, and their insights are presented at international and national conferences. V. Tamulienė conducts research on green consumer behaviour, socio-ethnic marketing solutions in organizations, the use of ecological products in topics, publishes research results in high-level scientific journals and conferences. In 2019, E. Plotnikova published a monograph Inland Water Investment Management. Researchers are invoking their research results to the content of courses of *Logistics and Commerce* (e.g., Logistics Management, Consumer Behaviour, Logistics Business Administration, etc.) and *Business Logistics* (e.g., Designing and Modelling of Logistics Systems, Modelling of Management Decisions) study programmes.
- Assoc. prof. dr. Rasa Pakeltienė with the team started the implementation of the international project "Networking activities in support of the common agricultural policy (CAP). Support for innovation and knowledge exchange – EIP-AGR". Researchers are responsible for knowledge and innovation transfer to agri-business. It is expected that the

project results will contribute for the development of agri-business and will be also shared with master students of Business Logistics programme.

Long-term institutional cooperation of VMU with leading international organizations, business schools and their experts, whose participation greatly enriches the quality of business study programmes. This synergy arises in cooperation with BMI, as VMU is the academic founder of this leading business management school in Lithuania, and through the double diploma master's study programmes organized by VMU FEM together with foreign partners. For example, prof. dr. Pierre Semal from the Louvain School of Management (UCL, Belgium) regularly teaches the course Value Chain in International Business and involves students in related research projects. Prof. dr. Luigi Mittone, a renowned expert in behavioural studies at the University of Trento (Italy), deliver the Master's course in Behavioural Economics and involves graduates in a research project. Meanwhile, Professor Jean Paul Larçon of Paris HEC (co-founder of BMI together with VMU FEM) has involved FEM researchers in an international research project and in the preparation of a monograph on global value chains.

It should be noted that VMU implements general, as well as specialized Business field programmes.

VMU, in cooperation with the Euroleague Basketball Institute (EBI), the largest commercial basketball league in Europe, is jointly implementing *Sports Business Management* programme, which is taught by competent business experts from both VMU and foreign universities. For example, prof. dr. G. Jucevičius, while supervising the PhD student T. Karpavičius in the topic of "Football Business System: Structural Approach", conceptualized the football business system, also conducted a comparative international study of English, Scottish and Lithuanian football business systems, and has published a number of scientific publications and reports at international conferences on this topic. The performed theoretical and empirical research is perfectly integrated in the introductory course "Sports Business" of the *Sports Business Management* programme, which is led by prof. dr. G. Jucevičius. Another VMU researcher assoc. prof. dr. A. Šimkus, leading the module Sports Law and Governance, is actively publishing in the field of volunteering in sports and public organizations. In addition, a number of foreign experts and researchers teach in this programme, which is implemented and coordinated by VMU. For example, prof. dr. Ch. Kennett of the University of LaSalle (Barcelona, Spain) is a co-author of the prestigious Routledge Handbook of Sports Policy, which provides insights into the latest trends in the development of professional sports leagues. Prof. dr. W. Andreff from the Sorbonne University (Paris, France), who teaches in the programme's Sport Economics and Finance module, is one of Europe's leading sports business finance professionals, having published his research in top-level sports business science journals such as the European Sport Management Quarterly, Journal of Sports Economics.

The international mobility of researchers also contributes to the development of study programmes. For example, prof. dr. G. Jucevičius worked for 12 months as a researcher and SCIEX collaborator at one of the leading European business schools at HEC University in Lausanne, Switzerland. The professor worked on a team of researchers led by Pigneur and Osterwalder who are developing a world-renowned Business Model Canvas tool. The competencies accumulated during the research are used in such courses as Competitiveness and Innovation in *Business Administration*, Sports Business in Sports Business Management.

The science and study environment based on the philosophy of VMU *Artes Liberales* is distinguished by the interdisciplinary synergy of social sciences and humanities, which also

enriches the study programmes in Business field. One example would be the Neuromarketing Laboratory, which combines marketing, psychology, neuroscience and uses advanced technical equipment (electroencephalography, stationary and remote equipment for eye monitoring, skin galvanic response, etc.; see section 6.1 for more details). These opportunities are used both in the general course Marketing Principles and in the more specialized Marketing Communications (for the selection of elements in advertising), and Consumer Behaviour (for the analysis of consumer behaviour in stores; all in the *Business Administration* programme). Another promising area of interdisciplinary potential is eSports. The ICT-based tools of Magnus eSports⁹⁴ (see section 6.1. for more details) were only launched in 2019 but have already attracted a great deal of interest from students, both as a new dynamic platform and as a fast-growing business model. FEM is the main strategic partner of the Lithuanian Basketball Federation in the development of eSports. In addition, the Bloomberg Financial Laboratory was opened in 2021, enabling business students to access and integrate the latest financial data in science and study using ICT tools.

Cooperation in VMU-related partnership platforms closely contributes to the updating of study content in accordance with the latest trends in science and practice. For example, the internationally recognized Baltic School of Management (BMI), co-founded by VMU, makes a significant contribution to inviting top-level business practitioners from leading Lithuanian companies as speakers in lectures or as research experts. In addition, VMU researchers lead the Final Theses of BMI graduates, who are the top executives of Lithuanian companies, and this joint participation in the research of the most advanced companies provides valuable insights that later enrich the content of the taught programmes.

There is also close cooperation with the Lithuanian Marketing Association (LIMA), whose Kaunas branch is headed by VMU associate professor M. Šontaitė-Petkevičienė. Cooperation with LIMA provides an opportunity to invite high-level experts and special guests to first and second cycle programmes. The marketing courses of business programmes include new changes in marketing concepts and their practical application.

In turn, the VMU Business Practice Centre acts as a platform for cooperation between business researchers and students at all levels. At the centre, students are introduced to modern methods of business development through internships, can test their ideas and work with companies to present their research or test hypotheses. Applied research and projects conducted and presented to companies by business students contribute to the enrichment of programmes in solving problems relevant to modern companies and involve students in real business research. The following projects implemented by VMU teachers and researchers in Business Practice Centre can be mentioned as they contribute to the strengthening of entrepreneurial competencies:

- The ActYouth project, funded by the Erasmus+ programme (the main aim of the project is to create a system for recognizing, assessing, and developing the horizontal skills of young people, students, and graduates, i.e., entrepreneurship, initiative, creativity).
- Interreg Europe project “ECoC-SME” (Actions for inducing SME growth and innovation through the ECoC event and legacy), no. PGI06047 (project aims to share good practice and ensure continuity between past, present, and future European Capitals of Culture (project partners from Leuwarden, Matera, Rijeka, Timisoara, Kaunas, and Eastern Finland University)), a document to Kaunas City Municipality, submitting proposals for the improvement of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Kaunas).

⁹⁴ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magnus-esport/> in LT

- “Creative workshops: education of students' entrepreneurship and creativity in northern, central and southern Lithuania. Creative Lab” no. 09.3.1-ESFA-K-731-01-0002 (project to develop students' entrepreneurial and creativity competencies. Participants learn to apply the latest global methodologies for developing entrepreneurship, creativity, and social entrepreneurship competencies: Business Model Canvas, Business Model You, Lego Serious Play, Design Thinking, Experience Design. During the project, interdisciplinary student teams actively collaborate with companies or social partners and address their challenges.
- Project “Experience Partners LT” (No. 09.3.1-ESFA-K-731-01-0009) (2017 - 2020) This is a smart practice project, the aim of which is to improve the quality of higher education, ensure high-quality and effective preparation of students for successful integration into the labour market, improve professional and personal skills, and expand the social network. Project partners: Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Vilnius University, Kaunas University of Technology, Klaipėda University, Vytautas Magnus University.
- Project IDEA LAB (“Consulting and training of Aleksotas community residents in developing their entrepreneurial competencies and providing start-up assistance (Idea LAB)” (2019 - 2021). The aim of the project is to increase the entrepreneurship of the community population by providing them with information, counselling, non-formal learning opportunities to encourage them to start a business, as well as the provision of methodological assistance and other services on business-relevant issues to young businesses. The project is designed to help young people who are looking to start their own business to develop personal entrepreneurial competencies that enable them to start and grow a business.
- Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project "Smart Practice: Improving Entrepreneurship Skills in Higher Education". The project aims to strengthen cooperation between universities and businesses and other social partners by encouraging young people to acquire new skills that shape personal entrepreneurship. A methodology was developed during the project and testing began at that time.
- Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership project "Professional Development of University Teachers to Improve Students' Entrepreneurial Skills" (PROFEDU). The aim of the project is to improve entrepreneurship education in higher education institutions and thus contribute to a better quality and potential of higher education in preparing entrepreneurial graduates.
- Creativity Lab. A programme for the development of students' entrepreneurial competencies. It actively cooperates with the social partners, business and non-governmental organizations and seeks solutions to the challenges they pose. Students create suggestions for the city.
- Project DOERS for Kaunas city and district students. Its aim is to help young people get to know themselves, plan their lives and careers, and develop their social and entrepreneurial skills. They also learn about the four core competencies of entrepreneurship - creative thinking, teamwork, emotional intelligence, and the implementation of ideas.

The next section further presents the involvement of students in both applied projects and research activities that strengthen business competencies.

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

Business study programmes are developed based on the principle of unity of science and studies. This principle is particularly pronounced at higher levels of study (i.e., subsequent bachelor's and all master's years, and, of course, doctoral studies).

In the first cycle study programme *Business Administration*, students get acquainted with the main methods of social and market research while studying the course Social and Marketing Research (5th semester, 6 ECTS). At the end of the third semester, students also have an Introduction Internship course (4 ECTS), during which they are not only introduced to modern concepts and tools but can also apply them to analysing real cases in companies. Researchers participating in the programme provide students with concepts and methods while representatives from different companies identify the issues, they ask students to solve. Students have developed business and marketing communication plans for organizations such as Kaunas Botanical Garden, Lithuanian Basketball League, Nemuno Žiedas, creative industries companies Fėjos namai and Curiosity.

During the four-year studies, *Business Administration* students must also write two research papers: the first term paper (4 ECTS) is written in the 4th semester and is based on a theoretical analysis of the chosen field, and the second term paper (4 ECTS) is written in the 6th semester where students are asked to present the findings of empirical research (at this stage of the studies they are already familiar with the methods of social and market research).

Research papers in the first cycle programme in *Logistics and Commerce* are prepared in the 6th and 7th semesters. In addition, students get acquainted with the main methods of social and market research while studying the course Logistics and Commerce Market Research (6th semester, 4 ECTS). At the end of the seventh semester, students also have a Logistics and Commerce Professional Practice (15 ECTS), during which they are introduced to modern concepts and tools and also can apply them to analysing real cases in companies. Business field researchers provide students with concepts and methods while representatives from different companies identify the issues, they ask students to solve. Students created proposals for the improvement of warehousing processes and logistics services for such organizations as ECOLINES, JSC KD Jupiter, JSC CONSORTIUM LT, JSC Kalinera, JSC Truktransa, JSC Baltic Transline, JSC Lytagra, etc.

Upon completion of their first cycle studies, students must write a final bachelor's thesis, which must include parts of theoretical and empirical research. In the thesis, students must show a good understanding of the concepts / phenomena of the field of study and properly use them in theoretical and empirical research.

At the second cycle, all Business field study programmes are even more focused on developing students' research skills. Students of the second cycle programmes must prepare 1-2 research papers, during which they carry out theoretical and empirical research in the field of their interest (within the business field) and are supervised by preliminary supervisors of the final master's thesis (1 research paper in the programme *Business and Entrepreneurship*, 1 research paper in *Sports Business Management*, and 2 research papers in the programme *Business Logistics*). For example, in the second cycle programme *Business Logistics* the compulsory course *Applied Logistics Research* was introduced (assoc. prof. dr. G. Vazonienė). During the course students must submit their preliminary draft of a planned final master's thesis research. They are also provided with data bases, the necessary IT tools to analyse data by statistical methods and develop their skills in working with key IT applications in research (SPSS, Gretl, etc.).

At the end of the master's degree, students must prepare a final master's thesis, in which they must provide solutions to business problems based on theoretically and methodologically sound research. The presentation of research-based solutions in a master's thesis is the main difference compared to a bachelor's thesis.

The aim is to increase the dissemination of science by encouraging talented students to publish their papers prepared under the guidance of teachers, in scientific journals and share research findings during conferences. In 2019-2021, bachelors, masters and PhD students of Business field programmes actively participated in the annual conference of young researchers (students) organized by FEM⁹⁵ (the 24th annual conference was held in 2021) and had the opportunity to publish their articles in the conference journal. Publicity and scientific dissemination of works is one of the evaluation criteria and components when assessing students' final theses during the defense. The conference is made up of sections on Economics, Marketing, Finance and Management (the last three sections are particularly closely linked to Business), with a fairly even distribution of participants (around 10-15 students each year per section). Peer-reviewed conference papers are later published in the conference journal⁹⁶.

Students of the Business field programmes *Logistics and Commerce* and *Business Logistics* coordinated by FBD actively participated in the annual conferences "Young Researcher", "Modern Management - Part of Cultural Policy", a biennial scientific-practical conference "Strengthening the Competitiveness of Lithuanian Rural Areas"⁹⁷ (each time the focus is on another relevant topic: publication from 2020) and students had the opportunity to publish their articles in conference journals. In the annual VMU conference "Young Scientist", the participation of masters of the two aforementioned programmes (*Logistics and Commerce* and *Business Logistics*) is mandatory, thus ensuring the involvement of all second study cycle students in research activities. Master students also actively participate in conferences organized by other VMU faculties or other universities for students and young researchers.

All of the above-mentioned conferences give students the opportunity to present the findings of their research and dissertations, re-examine their validity, and prepare for the final defence of the dissertation (which usually takes place after 2-3 weeks). Bachelor students are given additional motivation to participate in the conference by adding an additional point when entering the VMU master's programmes in the fields of economics, business, and management. Most conference papers and articles are prepared in collaboration with their supervisors / business researchers, which also helps to develop students' scientific competence and, in some cases, leads to joint publications in scientific journals (especially with second study cycle students). Some of the best PhD students in the field of business (for example, V. Grigaliūnaitė) have just been noticed / grew up in this process, gradually developing their scientific competence from bachelor's studies.

It should be noted that the involvement of students in research and project activities is also encouraged. For example, together with two first and second cycle students in logistics, Research Council of Lithuania prepared and won the projects "Student Research During Their Free Time" (No. 09.3.3.-LMT-K-712-25-0099). Currently, two students are conducting research in Business field under the measure "Development of Scientific Competence of

⁹⁵ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/vmu-faculty-of-economics-and-management-organizes-young-scientists-conference/> in EN

⁹⁶ All conference materials are available on request

⁹⁷ See https://www.vdu.lt/cris/bitstream/20.500.12259/111999/3/ISSN2351-6909_2020_9.pdf in LT

Scientists, Other Researchers and Students through Practical Research” in the activity “Development of Students' Abilities to Perform R&D (Art Research) Activities”:

- “Improvement of storage processes in the case of the company Baltic fish export” (No. 09.3.3.-LMT-K-712-25-0099). Supervisor of the research work assoc. prof. dr. D. Perkumienė, executor V. Žimontienė, master student of the *Business Logistics* programme.
- “Analysis of the tendency of Lithuanian youth to use sustainably” (No. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-25-0100). Supervisor of the research work assoc. prof. dr. A. Novikova, executor - P. Yermakhan, bachelor student of *Logistics and Commerce*.

One of the key strategic areas of the Agriculture Academy is the development of research activity in terms of quantity and quality by integrating the scientific research and studies, fundamental and commercial (applied) research; therefore, at the initiative of assoc. prof. dr M. Vienažindienė, Head of SPC for the second cycle study programme of *Business Logistics*, the last years of the programme include development of the commissioned research in collaboration with JSC Hoptrans Logistics. In the academic year 2020/2021, a contract for commissioned applied research work “Smart Technology Solutions to Improve Land Shipment: the case of JSC Hoptrans Logistics” was signed between the company, Rytis Paulauskas, the master’s degree student-researcher, and assoc. prof. dr. Asta Raupelienė, supervisor of the applied research work.

First and second study cycle students have access to the ICT infrastructure needed to conduct research, as well as the advanced technical equipment of the Neuromarketing Laboratory and the Bloomberg Laboratory. Students participate in research both as researchers and as respondents - this gives them the opportunity to gain research experience, to observe errors that may occur during surveys or experiments. Students (both during the sessions and on a voluntary basis) participate in the development and testing of research tools (surveys, experimental forms or observation protocols, experimental environments) used in Faculty research.

First and second study cycle students also have the opportunity to get involved in solving practical problems on the basis of applied research at the VMU Business Practice Centre (located on the premises of FEM). In 2018, the Centre's Entrepreneurship Academy became a national winner and was ranked among the 3 best European projects in the category "European Enterprise Awards 2018" (category "Investing in Entrepreneurial Skills"). The Entrepreneurship Academy has been selected as one of 51 best practices for university-business cooperation in Europe. Business Practice Centre brings students together with more than 100 business, capital companies, social partners, and industry associations (e.g., Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, Lithuanian Marketing Association, FESTO, Telia, LIDL, Vičiūnai Group). Each semester, at least 30 students from Business field study programmes participate in the activities organized by the Business Practice Centre.

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for the study programmes Business Administration and Business Logistics.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Links between science and study activities</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
<i>Logistics and Commerce study programme</i>		
4.	Students should be strongly encouraged to participate in research activities.	<p>The students are encouraged to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - showcase their ideas by participating in the competitions for business and social projects; submit applications to the Research Council of Lithuania; - seek funding and conduct research during the summer internship; - deliver presentations at the annual scientific students' conference "Modern Management – Part of Cultural Policy"; - write articles and deliver presentations at the annual scientific students' conference "The Young Scientist". <p>For example, <i>Logistics and Commerce</i> study programme students are first and second places winners for business ideas in "The Idea Generation" competitions in 2017 and 2019, organized by "Entrepreneurship Education Center" VMU, Academy of Agriculture, together with logistics business partners as UAB "ITOMA", UAB Hegelmann Transporte, etc. "The Idea Generation" competitions for business and social projects are organized annually and the winners receive awards, and about 10–12 business ideas are presented to the competition each year. The first place with the idea of how to improve the solutions of people with disabilities in business, and the second-place winners were two freshmen in the <i>Logistics and Commerce</i> study programme with the business idea "D-square".</p> <p>Other example, <i>Logistics and Commerce</i> programme student Perizat Yermakhan presented the presentation by the topic "In the World of Italian Bioeconomy" at student conference "The Young Scientist", VMU, Academy of Agriculture, 2021. This conference has a separate section of Business Logistics and Agricultural Business Management, where the students submit their articles and deliver presentations in the area directly related to the study programme.</p> <p>Also, students have presented they works by topics: "Sustainability and the Media", "Trash equals Energy", "Transport noise management" and etc. at Student scientific virtual conference "Modern management – part of cultural policy: environmental approach". VMU, Academy of Agriculture, Faculty of Bioeconomy, 2021-04-15.</p>

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of
Links between science (art) and study activities

Strengths

- Recognised Business field research team with clear institutional identity, growing international profile of the business research team.
- Close connections between business related research and studies.
- Good potential for cross-disciplinary research in the novel areas of business, adequate level of technical facilities for state-of-the-art research to conduct.

Areas for improvement

- Encouraging even more active participation of business researchers and students of first and second cycle study programmes in Business field in the projects of applied research and preparation of scientific publications.

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 first cycle (undergraduate) and second cycle (graduate) studies. Admission to first cycle studies is administrated and organized by LAMA BPO⁹⁸– 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's⁹⁹ and Faculty's¹⁰⁰ 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 Lithuania¹⁰¹ „Description of General Admission Procedure“¹⁰², and further specified in „Rules for Admission to VMU Undergraduate and Integrated Studies in 2021“¹⁰³. There is admission score calculated based on the evaluation of national and school exams, and school grades. For the first cycle study programmes in Business field the admission score is calculated:

$$K = 0,4 \times \textit{Mathematics} + 0,2 \times \textit{History or Informational technologies or Geography or Foreign language} + 0,2 \times \textit{Lithuanian language and literature} + 0,2 \times \textit{any other subject}.$$

Admission requirements to second cycle study programmes in Business field are set in „Rules for Admission of Students to VMU Full-time and Part-time Master's Studies in 2021“¹⁰⁴ which are set annually by the Order of the VMU Rector. The admission scores are calculated depending on the study programme.

⁹⁸ See <https://bakalauras.lamabpo.lt/international-and-eu-students/holders-of-foreign-qualifications/> in EN and <https://bakalauras.lamabpo.lt/> in LT

⁹⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/degree-studies/> in EN and <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/priemimas-i-studijas-vdu/> in LT

¹⁰⁰ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/studies/bachelor/> in EN and <http://evf.vdu.lt/moksleiviams/> in LT for FEM and <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/faculties/faculty-of-bioeconomy-development/studies/study-programmes/> in EN and <https://zua.vdu.lt/fakultetai/bioekonomikos-pletros-fakultetas/studijos/> in LT for FBD

¹⁰¹ See <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/aaf74b408e0a11e7a3c4a5eb10f04386/asr> in LT

¹⁰² See <https://bakalauras.lamabpo.lt/international-and-eu-students/holders-of-foreign-qualifications/> in EN and <https://bakalauras.lamabpo.lt/bendrojo-priemimo-tvarkos-aprasas/#1> in LT

¹⁰³ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/2021-m.-VDU-priemimo-taisykles_PATVIRTINTA.pdf in LT

¹⁰⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021-m.-magistranturos-priemimo-taisykles.pdf> in LT

The admission score into the second cycle study programme of *Business Logistics* for the applicants who have graduated from the first cycle studies in the fields of Business, Management, Human resource management, Economics, Finance, Accounting, and Marketing is the following:

$$K = 0.7 \times \text{weighted average of the final grades of all the courses in the Supplement of the Bachelor's Diploma} + 0.3 \times \text{final grade of the Bachelor's Final Thesis}'$$

In case of the applicants who have graduated from college/professional studies in the fields of Business, Management, the admission score is:

$$K = 0.7 \times \text{weighted average of the final grades of the college/professional bachelor studies and additional studies} + 0.3 \times \text{grade of the final thesis of college/professional bachelor studies.}$$

The Additional courses are not mandatory for the candidates who hold a professional bachelor's qualification degree and have at least one-year practical experience in business. More details about the Additional studies of *Business Logistics* are published and the studies are delivered every year. It should be noted that the average of 50.7% of the applicants admitted to the second cycle programme of *Business Logistics* were the graduates of college (professional bachelor's) studies and Additional studies at VMU.

For *Business and Entrepreneurship* and *Sports Business Management* study programmes admission scores are calculated depending on the graduated Bachelor study field.

For those who have obtained a university bachelor's degree in the study field (s) of Business, Management, Marketing, Economics, Finance, Accounting, Communication, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Public Administration, Journalism (when Additional studies are not required), the admission scores are calculated:

$$K=0.7 \times \text{weighted average of all courses in bachelor studies} + 0.3 \times \text{evaluation of final bachelor thesis or final exam.}$$

For bachelor graduates of other study fields and college (professional bachelor) graduates, the following formula of admission scores is used:

$$K = 0.4 \times \text{weighted average of all courses in bachelor studies (excluding grades of Additional / Minor study courses)} + 0.3 \times \text{evaluation of final bachelor thesis or final exam} + 0.3 \times \text{weighted average of Additional / Minor study courses.}$$

Other admission requirements for second cycle studies are also set by the same order of the Rector. University's graduates of other fields of study and college (professional bachelor) graduates, are admitted after completing Minor or Additional studies in Marketing, Business, Management, Economics, Finance. Bachelor's and professional bachelor's graduates of other study fields who have not completed the entire Additional studies may be admitted to studies provided that they will take the missing courses during the first semester of master's studies. Applicants to study in English must be proficient in English at a level of at least B2. Submission of scientific publication(s) shall be given priority with an equal competitive score. At least 1 year of work experience in the field related to the study programme may be credited for Additional studies.

Admission to additional studies is announced and carried out every year. More detailed information on the conditions of admission to additional studies is published on the VMU website¹⁰⁵, Agriculture Academy¹⁰⁶, FEM¹⁰⁷ and FBD¹⁰⁸.

The admission procedure to studies in Business field differs to Lithuanian and international students. International applications and admissions at VMU are centralized and carried out by the International Cooperation Department¹⁰⁹. The admission to studies in Lithuanian is organized employing a single online admission 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 studies in Business field can be found on VMU website¹¹⁰ and DreamApply¹¹¹.

In accordance with the comprehensive plan for informing and motivating entrants to study at VMU, information on admission to study programmes and consultations on study issues are provided in the following ways:

- Those interested in the study programme can get the necessary information from the Marketing and Communication Department of VMU.
- Students are also consulted on admission and study process issues in the relevant University departments (Study Department, Academy, faculties) during admission hours. Consultations take place directly, by phone, e-mail, Facebook.

Study Programmes, their content, admission requirements 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 Institutions¹¹²”, and the annual publication “Studies@VMU/20...”¹¹³. 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”¹¹⁴.

For example, the growing popularity of the activities at the Smart Pupil’s Academy (SPA) under the Agriculture Academy among the Lithuania’s gymnasiums is reflected in the increasing number of the schoolchildren who have successfully graduated from the SPA: e.g., 13 classes, or 263 schoolchildren completed the SPA in 2018-2019 (150 schoolchildren

¹⁰⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/studijos/papildomosios-studijos/>, https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/PAPILDOMUJU-STUDIJU-PROGRAMOS-APRASAS_Verslas-ir-entrepreneryste.pdf, https://zua.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Papild_Verslo-logistika.pdf in LT

¹⁰⁶ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/studijos/papildomosios-studijos/> in LT

¹⁰⁷ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/studies/master/> in EN

¹⁰⁸ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/faculties/faculty-of-bioeconomy-development/studies/study-programmes/> in EN

¹⁰⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/> in EN.

¹¹⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/degree-studies/> in EN

¹¹¹ See <https://vytautasmagnus.dreamapply.com/> in EN

¹¹² See https://www.bilngimn.lt/informacija/2021LAMA_BPO.pdf in LT

¹¹³ See <https://issuu.com/vmuniversity/docs/leidinys-2020-web> in LT

¹¹⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/people/more-than-a-specialty/> in EN

attended the Entrepreneurship Class); 21 class, or 350 schoolchildren (about 200 schoolchildren in the Entrepreneurship Class) – in 2019-2020, and as many as 35 classes, or 770 schoolchildren (461 schoolchildren graduated from the Entrepreneurship Class), graduated from the SPA remotely in 2020-2021. The recommendations by the schoolchildren participating in the SPA enable improving not only the activities of the Academy, development of the schoolchildren competences by offering attractive training activities each year, but also enhancing dissemination of information about the studies and improving the information and communication measures of the study programmes in Business field.

It should be noted that, in the recent years, the Agriculture Academy has been particularly active in terms of implementation of the projects on formation of the image of studies. The projects involved presentation of the study programmes to the general public, hearing of the public opinion about presentation of information on the study programmes. E.g., one of the projects, “The Knowledge Elevator”, was conducted by the Faculties of the Agriculture Academy at the regional municipalities and local action groups of Lithuania and involved classes and lectures to the teachers, schoolchildren, and locals. The project aim was to share the University knowledge on the topics relevant to the target groups and share information about the study possibilities. The project started in the academic year 2020-2021 and included 10 remote events and 5 direct events. E.g., in view of the first-year students’ survey results, the new popularisation and marketing campaign of the studies “Exclusive study opportunities for nature and technology enthusiasts” was created in the Spring semester 2020/2021 at the Agriculture Academy. E.g., another relevant project measure launched in the academic year 2019-2020 – the AgroBio study visit to various schools of Lithuania. During the visit, the quiz and competition of Biobusiness Ideas were held for the 10-12 graders at various gymnasiums of Lithuania. More than 320 schoolchildren at 17 gymnasiums of Lithuania’s regions participated in the visit activities in the academic year 2019-2020.

The information about the second cycle study programmes is intensively disseminated among the target groups: the alumni of the Bachelor’s studies at VMU, employees of business organizations, college students. E.g., the information is emailed to the social partners’ companies that place banners in their Intranet or forward the newsletters popularizing the studies to their employees’ email addresses. The information about the study opportunities is also disseminated by close collaboration with the colleges (Kaunas, Marijampolė, Alytus, Panevėžys, Vilnius) executing the professional Bachelor’s programmes. The college students take active interest in the possibilities of continuing studies in the Master’s degree study programmes and, e.g., their choice to continue into the second cycle study programme is fairly popular – college graduates account for more than 50% of the *Business Logistics* students.

Before the pandemics, there were the traditional national high school expos in Kaunas and Vilnius besides the annual visits to schools, municipalities, local action groups, and organizations. The COVID-19 situation, however, has brought changes in the possibilities to spread the information about the studies, and all information resources and marketing tools of VMU were moved online as well because physical means (leaflets, flyers, posters) became unpopular, study fairs could not be organized in a contact way (starting with the spring 2020).

Tables 9 and 10 below present the admission results to the first and second cycle study programmes in Business field during 2019-2021. Statistics on the submitted applications (Table 9) to the first cycle (bachelor's) study programmes allow us to state that the interest of entrants in Business studies is relatively stable. The general trend in the number of entrants

is decreasing due to demographic, legal, social and economic changes in the country, as the number of high school graduates is significantly decreasing, admission requirements are increasing, therefore a number of entrants do not meet the requirements because of worsening maturity exam results, also the cost of studies is rising rapidly (e.g., upon enrolment in the study programmes of the group of study fields of Business and Public Management in 2021, the annual tuition fee for full-time studies increased by 959 Eur and for part-time studies increased by 639 Eur compared to 2020 - a rise of as much as 57%). The annual tuition fee is approved every year by the decision of VMU Senate in accordance with the normative tuition fees approved by the order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania.

Table 9. The number of applicants to study programmes in the first cycle of Business field

	Programme	<i>Business Administration</i>			<i>Logistics and Commerce</i>		
		State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total
2019	1 st priority	57	15	72	70	21	91
	Other priorities	115	99	214	205	155	360
	<i>Total</i>	<i>172</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>286</i>	<i>275</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>451</i>
2020	1 st priority	49	19	68	82	13	95
	Other priorities	154	89	243	233	122	355
	<i>Total</i>	<i>203</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>311</i>	<i>315</i>	<i>135</i>	<i>450</i>
2021	1 st priority	46	18	64	70	12	82
	Other priorities	158	86	244	200	102	302
	<i>Total</i>	<i>204</i>	<i>104</i>	<i>308</i>	<i>270</i>	<i>222</i>	<i>384</i>

Table 10. The number of applicants to study programmes in the second cycle of Business field

Year	Programme	<i>Sports Business Management</i>			<i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>			<i>Business Logistics</i>		
		State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total
2019	1 st priority	-	45	45	-	26	26	8	11	19
	Other priorities	-	-	-	-	4	4	-	3	3
	<i>Total</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>45</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>30</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>22</i>
2020	1 st priority	-	47	47	-	19	19	6	7	13
	Other priorities	-	-	-	-	8	8	-	13	13
	<i>Total</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>47</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>27</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>26</i>
2021	1 st priority	-	46	46	-	31	31	9	1	10
	Other priorities	-	-	-	-	12	12	9	11	20
	<i>Total</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>46</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>43</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>30</i>

The total number of applications to the second cycle (master's) study programmes (Table 10) is non-decreasing, which confirms the demand for study programmes in the field. This result shows that the growing demand for Business professionals and executives in the market determines the popularity of these studies and is especially relevant for career planners working with in-depth, modern knowledge in Business field.

The application (Tables 9 and 10) and admission (Tables 11 and 12) statistics indicates that the first and second cycle study programmes were popular during the period analysed. Though, the number of entrants remains stable. We see a stable number of entrances to first cycle studies as a positive result 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 the result of good quality of study programmes and its increasing popularity the stable number of students was admitted. Also, as admission procedures to second cycle programmes *Business Logistics*, *Business and Entrepreneurship*, and *Sports Business Management* are executed separately (including timing and sales channels) all students mark it as a first priority. A few exceptions in study programmes *Business Logistics* and *Business and Entrepreneurship* indicated in Table 10 represents cases where applicants to the other second cycle study programmes in Business field indicated this programme as a possible alternative.

Table 11. The number of students who signed study contracts in Business field in the first cycle

Programme	<i>Business Administration</i>			<i>Logistics and Commerce</i>		
	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total
2019	8	30	38	2	24	26
2020	13	18	31	18	13	31
2021	8	23	31	4	20	24

Table 12. The number of students who signed study contracts in Business field in the second cycle

Programme	<i>Business Logistics</i>			<i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>			<i>Sports Business Management</i>		
	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total	State	Non-state	Total
2019	8	14	22	-	22	22	-	21	21
2020	6	20	26	-	15	15	-	19	19
2021	6	11	17	-	26	26	-	15	15

Statistics on the applications and admissions of study programmes in Business field (tables 11 and 12) indicate that programmes were popular during the self-evaluation period. The admission to first cycle study programme *Business Administration* was stable during the analysed period. The number of state funded students remained pretty stable as state financing is allocated to faculties by the results of scientific activities and then split equally among the full-time study programmes. The second cycle programmes *Business Logistics*, *Business and Entrepreneurship* and *Sports Business Management* had a slight reduce in admission numbers because of pandemic situation and uncertainty if the in-person sessions will be held live or online, but despite this fact, as we see from the number of applicants, the popularity of those programmes remained high. Both second cycle programmes – *Sports Business Management* and *Business and Entrepreneurship* are marketed as commercial programmes; therefore, no state funded students are allocated to them. The number of entrants to non-state funded places also varies. Various external reasons for the change in these results were in many cases: unstable education policy, increasing competition among higher education institutions, demographic changes (decreasing number of graduates), changing economic situation (weakening financial opportunities for entrants), social changes leading to increasing emigration, weakening special entrants' motivation to continue their studies, general preparation and knowledge weaken as well.

Analysing the structure of new entrants to studies (see Table 13 and 14) we can see that 25.5-30 percent of entrants in Business field are in first cycle study programme *Business*

Administration. There is no dominating programme in the second cycle study programmes. In 2020 because of pandemic situation *Business and Entrepreneurship* had less popularity as lectures here are organized in live sessions only from Autumn 2021, and some potential students postponed their entrance. The same happened with *Sports Business Management* in 2021, which is international (taught in English) study programme and has in-person sessions which are held at three different locations in Europe (at student costs), so numbers are naturally lower in uncertainty period when multiple locations are not easily accessible for citizens of different countries (they postponed their entrance as well).

Table 13. The relative means on entrants to the first cycle study programmes in Business field

Study programmes	2019	2020	2021
<i>Business Administration</i>	30%	25.5%	28%
<i>Logistics and Commerce</i>	20%	25.5%	21%
Total:	50%	51%	49%

Note: First+Second cycle=100%

Table 14. The relative means on entrants to the second cycle study programmes in Business field

Study programmes	2019	2020	2021
<i>Business Logistics</i>	17%	21%	15%
<i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>	17%	12%	23%
<i>Sports Business Management</i>	16%	16%	13%
Total:	50%	49%	51%

Note: First+Second cycle=100%

Analysing the entry scores to first and second cycle study programmes (Tables 15 and 16) in Business field they are lower for non-state funded studies.

Table 15. The highest, lowest, and average entry scores to the first cycle study programmes in Business field

Year	<i>Business Administration</i>						<i>Logistics and Commerce</i>					
	State funded			Non-state funded			State funded			Non-state funded		
	highest	lowest	average	highest	lowest	average	highest	lowest	average	highest	lowest	average
2019	9.29	7.84	8.57	7.94	5.45	6.4	9.26	7.86	8.56	8.15	5.44	6.338
2020	8.41	6.94	7.63	7.98	5.57	6.13	8.79	6.67	7.18	6.61	5.4	6.13
2021	8.67	7.4	8.01	8.22	5.4	6.4	7.7	7.7	7.74	7.53	5.44	6.04

Table 16. The highest, lowest, and average entry scores to the second cycle study programmes in Business field

Year	<i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>			<i>Business Logistics</i>						<i>Sports Business Management</i>		
	Non-state funded			State funded			Non-state funded			Non-state funded		
	highest	lowest	average	highest	lowest	average	highest	lowest	average	highest	lowest	average
2019	9.4	6.5	7.73	9.77	8.82	9.25	8.32	5.89	7.59	9.4	6.6	7.99
2020	9	6.45	7.43	9.38	8.75	9	8.85	5.08	7.83	9.82	6.72	7.84
2021	8.9	6.45	7.85	9.6	8.41	8.91	9.23	5.75	7.4	9.35	6.1	7.89

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.

Analysis of average entry scores in first cycle study programmes show the competition for state funded places. From the data presented in the Table 15 and 16 it is clear that the variance of entry scores to all study programmes in Business field is very small.

Analysis of average entry scores in second cycle study programmes show that competition for state funded places had been stable and/or 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 national regulations, following information provided by the SKVC, as well as general or individual (in the absence of general) recommendations and in consultation with the responsible staff from the SKVC. 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 SKVC 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 Outcomes¹¹⁵. 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 partial 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. For example, in the self-evaluation period, the students applied for recognition of the courses completed at foreign universities after their return: in the Spring semester 2018, the courses completed by 11 students of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* at foreign universities, and the courses completed by 1 student of the second-cycle study programme of *Business Logistics* were recognized. During the period analysed there was no inquiries for recognition of foreign qualification in

¹¹⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/qualification-recognition/> in EN and <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/VDU-studij%C5%B3-rezultat%C5%B3-%C4%AFskaitymo-tvarka-1.pdf> in LT

all study programmes in Business 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. Newly enrolled students, who have completed part of their studies at another university and apply for recognition, undergo the procedure at the faculty/academy conducting the respective studies – the correspondence of the study course content and its volume is assessed.

Principles and processes of recognition of competences acquired in non-formal and informal way are regulated by VMU Study Regulations, Description of the Procedure for Assessment and Recognition of Competences Acquired through Non-Formal and Informal Education¹¹⁶. 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. For example, in the self-evaluation period, a fairly large number of the students of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* applied for recognition of the learning outcomes of the Entrepreneurship Education Practice. Having assessed the competences gained by the applicants in a non-formal and informal way, the Commission made the decision to recognize the Entrepreneurship Education Practice as the course on the basis of the students' work experience in this area. In 2019, the Entrepreneurship Education Practice was recognized for 22 applicants, in 2020 – for 6 applicants. Practice has shown that the students who have work experience in business or currently employed in the area of logistics, trade usually apply for non-formal recognition of the study courses.

The efficiency of recognition of partial studies can be proved by looking at the number of students who were transferred to first cycle study programme *Business Administration* from other universities, faculties, or study programmes (see Table 17). These were the students who wanted to change their university and/or study programme and have already passed some courses which coincides with a new study programme.

Table 17. Number of transferred students to first cycle study programme *Business Administration*

	from other universities	from other faculties in VMU	from other programmes	Total
2019/20	2	11	-	13
2020/21	2	7	3	12
2021/22	2	3	-	5
Total	6	21	3	30

Because of unique *Artes Liberales* approach in VMU, students from other universities can be transferred to the 2nd year of first cycle 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 destination study programme. There were no such cases in all second cycle study programmes during the period analysed. That might be due to the

¹¹⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Description-of-Procedure-non-formal-ENG.pdf> in EN

shorter duration of studies. We observe students entering for their second graduate degree. And as second cycle 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 can take advantage of the opportunities provided by the Erasmus+ programme:

- To go to one of VMU partner universities for a study exchange for half a year or a year (487 partner institutions in the European Union and EEA / candidate countries; 115 partner institutions outside the European Union). Under normal conditions (not during the pandemic period), about 200 VMU students take advantage of this opportunity each year.
- To participate in Erasmus+ traineeship exchange from 2 to 12 months. Within 12 months after graduation, VMU also provides an opportunity for graduates to go on an Erasmus + traineeship. Under normal conditions (not during the pandemic period), about 150 VMU students and graduates take advantage of this opportunity each year. Second cycle students may also participate in this traineeship program within 12 months of completing their studies.

In addition to the opportunities offered by the Erasmus + program, VMU students are also encouraged to go on academic exchanges:

- To go to one of the 173 VMU partner universities in non-EU / EEA countries for a study exchange with a VMU mobility scholarship or scholarships awarded by partner universities for half a year or a year. Under normal conditions (not during the pandemic period), about 30 VMU students take advantage of this opportunity each year.
- To do an internship from 1 to 3 months with VMU mobility scholarship in companies / organizations in non-EU / EEA countries. Under normal conditions (not during the pandemic period), about 10 VMU students use this opportunity per year.
- Other opportunities: to participate in an internship lasting from 2 to 6 months in Lithuanian education schools, Lithuanian communities, and Lithuanian studies centres abroad (under normal conditions, about 15 VMU students and graduates use this opportunity per year); to participate in partial studies or internships related to Lithuanianess, receiving a F. L. Mockūnai nominal scholarship (under normal conditions, this opportunity is used by 1 - 3 VMU students per year).

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 days¹¹⁷ are organised, Erasmus+ competitions are posted on VMU website¹¹⁸, *Outlook*, social media, etc.

First cycle study programme *Business Administration* (see Table 18) is taught both in Lithuanian and English, so there is possibility for foreign students to enrol in it for full-time studies. The admission numbers during the analysed period remained stable during 2019-2021, with a decrease in admission 2021/2022 because of pandemic situation. Due to the global character of the business area of logistics and commerce, the study programmes of both cycles are of interest not only to the Lithuanians, but foreigners as well. In the self-evaluation period, active popularization of the first and second cycle programmes as degree studies was started and targeted for foreign students. These activities were productive, and

¹¹⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/erasmusdays/> in EN

¹¹⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/> in EN

the study programmes were started delivering of both cycles in English.

The first cycle study programme of *Logistics and Commerce* was launched in the Autumn semester 2019, the second cycle study programme of *Business Logistics* was launched in the 2020 Spring semester. The statistics of the numbers of foreign students admitted to the study programmes of *Logistics and Commerce* and *Business Logistics* (see Table 19) has been varying. These changes have been largely influenced by the same factors, discussed above. In view of the above, the popularization and organization of the studies have been updated since 2021/2022 to offer the possibility of remote studies for the foreign students.

Table 18. Full time international students in study programmes in Business field in the first cycle

Year	<i>Business Administration</i>				<i>Logistics and Commerce</i>			
	No. of applications	No. of approved candidates	No. of entrants	% of first cycle students	No. of applications	No. of approved candidates	No. of entrants	% of first cycle students
2019/20	157	57	27	71	162	17	17	65
2020/21	93	40	21	68	71	10	10	32
2021/22	96	20	11	36	18	-	-	-

Number of applicants to second cycle study programme *Sports Business Management* remained relatively stable throughout the analysed period (see Table 19), because the program is taught online.

Table 19. Full time international students in study programmes in Business field in the second cycle

Year	<i>Business Logistics</i>				<i>Sports Business Management</i>			
	No. of applications	No. of approved candidates	No. of entrants	% of second cycle students	No. of applications	No. of approved candidates	No. of entrants	% of second cycle students
2019/20	103	15	15	68	40	16	16	76
2020/21	120	27	25	96	43	17	17	90
2021/22	57	8	6	35	43	14	14	93

Yet only 10-45% of all approved candidates had started studies. As it is shown in the table, there was a decrease of entrants in the latest period. Some of the candidates were rejected after interviews because of the poor English, low motivation, and unsuitable prior education. The main reasons why approved candidates did not show up for studies were related to rejection of visa (by Lithuanian Immigration Office), challenges of pandemic situation, and students' inability to finance studies.

Data on Erasmus+ study exchange and Erasmus Internships (Table 20) proves that both first and second cycle students use possibilities to study and work abroad. Numbers are the highest in first study programme *Business Administration*, because international students studying in this programme take advantage to study abroad and have even broader international experience. Numbers are significantly lower in second cycle study programmes *Sports Business Management* and *Business and Entrepreneurship* and *Business Logistics*. This might be because students of these programmes choose specific field to study, and they are interested and focused mainly on our offered curriculum. Most of them 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. But there is a rising interest in Erasmus+ Internship in second cycle programmes when students explore new opportunities in foreign companies. In second cycle study programme *Sports Business Management* Internship is a part of curriculum, so some students decide to have it abroad and uses Erasmus Internship opportunity. The students of the program *Logistics and Commerce* did not go to foreign institutions for part-time studies or internships during the reporting period, therefore the data are not presented in the table.

Table 20. Number of outgoing students in Business field for partial studies or internship

Year	First cycle		Second cycle			
	Study in EU	Internship	<i>Sports Business Management</i>	<i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>	<i>Business Logistics</i>	
			Internship	Internship	Study in EU	Internship
2019	1	1	3	-	-	1
2020	5	1	4	-	1	2
2021	6	2	7	1	5	-

A Business study field students' survey conducted in January 2021 showed the key reasons behind inactive participation of the students in Erasmus+ programmes: lack of foreign language skills (33.3%); fear of losing the available career prospects (22.2%); possible difficulties at VMU in seeking recognition of the subjects studied abroad (19%), and other. In view of the situation, the general action plan is currently being prepared to promote active participation of the students.

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 2019 there were 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 opportunities.

Information on the studies is provided during various communication channels and means. All VMU students have free access to VMU intranet system *Moodle* (virtual learning environment for publishing information on courses, methodical material, etc.). For the purposes of communication, cooperation and searching for information as well as ordering individual services, students use the student portal <http://studentas.vdu.lt> developed for their needs, communication also takes place using the University's e-mail and document management system Office 365. Besides, frequently used channels are the University website, University and Faculty Facebook, newsletters.

The Dean, vice-deans, Head for departments, as well as heads and members of SPCs meet periodically the students and discuss current, important study and career opportunities related issues. The staff of the Faculty, Academy administration 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 MS Teams, Zoom, 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 Compensation¹¹⁹; and the Description of Procedure for Compensation for Tuition Fees¹²⁰. 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 Department¹²¹ 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 are given a possibility to apply for J. Smilgevičius scholarship¹²² 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 4 students in Business field (all of them were bachelor students) were awarded this scholarship.

Upon the need, students can receive free-of-charge counselling of a psychologist at VMU Psychology Clinics¹²³ in individual meetings or online.

¹¹⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Mokestini%C5%B3-lengvat%C5%B3-teikimo-ir-kompensacij%C5%B3-skyrimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

¹²⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/Mokejimo-uz-studijas-tvarkos-aprasas-SEN-070en.pdf> in EN

¹²¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/departments-and-subdivisions/student-affairs-department/> in EN

¹²² See <http://evf.vdu.lt/skelbiamas-konkursas-j-smilgeviciaus-stipendijai-gauti-3/> in LT and <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/partners-and-sponsors/> in EN

¹²³ See <https://psichologijosklinika.vdu.lt/english/> in EN

Students with disabilities are consulted and assisted by a disability coordinator in dealing with various issues related to their studies and environment. Upon the need, a disability coordinator also advises students on disability etiquette, conducts other educational activities.

VMU Student Representative Council¹²⁴ also takes care of students' social support. It represents the interests of students, develops cultural and social activities.

Students are supported in modelling their career plans. VMU Career Centre¹²⁵ 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 2020¹²⁶) meetings with VMU Business field alumni members are organized, where graduates introduce their work experience, relevance of acquired knowledge and skills. Faculties have cooperation agreements with different social partners, including commitments to inform about job positions. Announcements for open job positions are placed on Faculties' and Career Centre websites and in Facebook. Direct meetings with the graduates of Business field are held regularly, at least once a year, where the graduates share their work experience with the current students, discuss on the applicability of the knowledge and abilities gained. By collaborating with the Career Centre, the Academy regularly hosts the Career Days of the VMU Agriculture Academy¹²⁷, meetings with the employers, and discussions on the students' career opportunities.

Students can choose a Minor study programme offered by VMU Entrepreneurship Academy to develop entrepreneurial skills and abilities as well as to join *Academia cum laude* individual study system, that allows for motivated first cycle students to expand the scope of their first cycle studies, to go deeper into the chosen study topic, to work with world-wide known professors from other universities.

Other support opportunities: support for the activities of student organisations is provided through project competitions; there are individual consultations given due to the studies choices, their continuation. All the measures are intended to create favourable study conditions and reduce the number of drop-out students, ensuring the quality of studies.

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 first cycle studies receive the most important information in the special annual event "Introduction to Studies"¹²⁸ 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. Deans, Vice-Deans, Heads of Departments and Heads of SPCs meet with students, explaining their aims of their programme, its learning outcomes and their links with labour market needs and job opportunities. Administrators, Vice-Deans are available daily for consulting students on various academic and study organization issues.

¹²⁴ See <https://vdusa.lt/en/> in EN

¹²⁵ See <http://karjera.vdu.lt/en/> in EN

¹²⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/vmu-alumni-day-2020/> in EN

¹²⁷ See <https://karjerosugdymocentras.blogspot.com/2021/02/vdu-zua-karjeros-diena-2021.html> in LT

¹²⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/vmu-introductory-week-for-international-students/> in EN and <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/ivykiai/ivadas-i-studijas-vdu-2021/> in LT

These measures enhance the motivation of new students and encourage them to reach high learning achievements. The “Information week” is organised for potential second cycle students to get acquainted with master studies and opportunities to choose a specific study programme. The results of the annual survey of the 1st year students in the Business field 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 faculties 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.

Students can receive more information about the study programmes at the VMU website. They also have an opportunity to get acquainted with full descriptions of study courses of the chosen study programme or an optional / alternative study courses via Moodle platform. Study course descriptions includes the information of the aim and intended learning outcomes of the study course as well as their coherence with topics, study, and assessment methods. The system of evaluation, basic and additional literature are also presented in the course descriptions.

In order to provide students with timely information about studies, they receive personalized e-mails. Students use a specially designed portal¹²⁹ 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 Centre¹³⁰ to support them by direct contacts or calling, emailing, or contacting through social media. In Facebook social network special accounts for VMU students¹³¹ and FEM students¹³² have been created, which publishes relevant information for students. General information and news are also posted at VMU website. Survey of teaching and studying evaluation of students in Business field are performed after every semester. The survey show that the usefulness of IT services is constantly increasing and in 2021 it was scored 4.65 (out of 5).

The most valuable support for students in Business field comes from faculties’ administration and teachers (according to the results of regular students surveys, described in section 7.4). 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.

Another survey of VMU is conducted by graduates (Exit) from 2020 June until June 2021 showed that first cycle students rated the possibility of consulting with teachers with 3.62 points (from 4), the help of administrative staff - 3.74 points, the adequacy of information about internship opportunities - 3.28 points. Several answers were marked in the open answers, such as: “Information and clarity about professional practice”, “Providing more information to students”, “Communication between students (teachers, administration) and

¹²⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/vdu-jums/vdu-studentams/> in LT and <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/practical-information-for-incoming-students/important-after-arrival/student-id/> in EN

¹³⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/contacts/vmu-student-centre/> in EN

¹³¹ See <https://www.facebook.com/VytautasMagnusUniversity> in EN and <https://www.facebook.com/vytauto.didziojo.universitetas/> in LT

¹³² See <https://www.facebook.com/VDUEVF> in LT

students". The students of the second cycle study programmes evaluated the counselling of teachers - 3.59 points (out of 4), the adequacy of information about the possibilities of internships - 3.71 points. In their answers to the open-ended questions, the second cycle studies students gave positive feedback about the work by the administrator of the second cycle degree studies and prompt communication, and referred to the teachers that have demonstrated outstanding communication.

In general, it could be claimed that different surveys have shown different judgements. It could therefore be concluded that different channels used, the information about the studies provided to the students is abundant. On the other hand, the abundance of information channels occasionally creates confusion among the students. The context of the recent year should also be taken into account, as both the studies and the entire communication process largely took place remotely. It is therefore possible that the large flows of information targeted at the first cycle students of the Business field had certain influence on the scores given by them.

The administration of Business field also performs assessment of students' opinion. The actions on improvement of the communication system have been taken with the focus on more active direct communication with the students. The meetings of the first cycle full-time students and the coordinator of administration of the studies, Head of SPC, and the Dean are held twice a semester, while for the part-time and students online, these meetings are conducted remotely. During the meetings, key issues of organization of the studies, courses of the study programme are presented, the teaching/learning challenges of the semester are discussed; the students have the opportunity to speak about the issues relevant to them, and joint solutions are explored in order to meet the need for quality studies.

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for the study programme Business Logistics.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Student admission and support</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Business Administration study programme		
4.	The University should develop comprehensive procedures for the formal recognition of prior learning and prior experiential learning on the part of students and potential students. Such a system would afford due recognition to candidates who had already achieved some	VMU Lifelong learning Department organizes the process of recognition of applicants' informal competencies according to VMU procedures ¹³³ (also see section 3.2.). Recognition of partial learning outcomes is regulated by VMU Description of the Procedure for Recognition of Learning Outcomes ¹³⁴ . This procedure is performed at VMU or the initial assessment is done by the International Cooperation Department.

¹³³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Description-of-Procedure-non-formal-ENG.pdf> in EN

¹³⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/VDU-studij%C5%B3-rezultat%C5%B3-%C4%AFskaitymo-tvarka-1.pdf> in LT

of the stated learning outcomes associated with the programme.	
Logistics and Commerce study programme	
7. Student participation in international mobility programmes and their knowledge of the English and Russian languages should be enhanced by offering more courses in these languages throughout the study programme or by promoting internships abroad.	<p>Particularly active efforts were made during 2019-2021 to encourage the students to engage and participate in long- and short-term international exchange programmes: the International Relations Department held the University-wide Erasmus+ weeks; the persons in charge of the international activity at the Agriculture Academy met with the students of different years twice a semester to present them the information orally; meetings were organized with former participants of the exchange programmes to increase the students' motivation to participate in the international programmes. All of this contributes to improvement of the mobility programme indicators.</p> <p>With the view towards improvement of the foreign language (English) skills among the students of the study programme, since 2016, the Institute/Department has been holding the international week events by foreign university teachers each year, in the Autumn and Spring semesters. The lectures delivered by the teachers during these events are integrated into the content of the study subjects. In 2019-2021, the students were provided with the possibility to attend the lectures by the foreign university teachers. E.g., on 1-13 March 2021, Prof. dr. Baiba Rivža from Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies delivered the study module (40 hours) in English "New trends in Bioeconomy and Rural Development" to the students. The professor's lectures were integrated into the courses of Bioeconomy and e-Commerce. The students admitted starting with the Autumn semester 2020 have the possibility to choose foreign languages from the list of courses belonging to group A (besides the English language that has been allocated with 18 ECTS in the study programme) and other foreign languages, thereby enhancing the foreign language skills.</p>

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Student admission and support</i>	
Strengths	
➤	A total annual number of entrants in the Business field study programmes has been stable and increasing over the self-evaluation period despite the decreasing number of students in general in Lithuania. As well as constant big competition for admission to all study programmes in Business field where the number of applicants to one place is about 10 in first cycle study programmes and about 2 in second cycle study programmes. It shows that 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 first cycle studies and stable admission scores in second cycle studies. That lowers the variance of knowledge of entrants.
- Relevant and efficient student support system that includes everyone – from teachers to the administration and governing staff – enabling to give a necessary support in the quickest way.

Areas for improvement

- To further develop distant learning programmes in Business field in order to attract more foreign students, as well as representatives of the Lithuanian diaspora and potential students living in a distance from major study centers.

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

Study programmes in Business field are organized in full and part time study modes. Study mode of each study programme is provided in the study field data table on the first page of this report. Depending on the study mode, the duration of the studies differs.

The way studies are organized may differ among study modes and study programmes. Studies can be organized in a face to face, blended or distant way. For example, in the second cycle studies *Business Logistics* study programme for full-time students is organized as traditional learning, i.e., face to face, for part-time students studies are offered at a blended form. For students studying by blended learning, about one third of the classroom work hours are planned, the rest is organized remotely.

VMU provides good opportunities for distant studies. During the implementation of these studies, Office 365 Teams, Adobe Connect and BigBlueButton video conference tools are applied for the organisation of teachers' work with students. Instructions on how to use the mentioned tools and what are their possibilities are described by VMU Innovative Studies Institute (ISI) in the User Guides¹³⁵ for the organisation, implementation, and evaluation of distant learning. For teachers, there are also developed and constantly updated a support system and methodological recommendations on how to adapt the course to distant studies, prepare it for online learning, etc. Teachers are also consulted by e-mail by filling in the request form¹³⁶. Based on the most common student requests (for example, how to connect study courses and video conferences, how to adjust computer settings or how to solve technical problems that occur during assessment in study courses), a distance learning environment user guide¹³⁷ has been prepared for students. For each study course, teachers indicate how to connect to the chosen video conference tool, provide requirements for the participation in study classes.

All courses, irrespective of study mode or study form, 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

¹³⁵ See <http://studyonline.lt/en/vmu-teachers/> in EN.

¹³⁶ See <http://studyonline.lt/en/vmu-teachers/request-form/> in EN

¹³⁷ See <https://studyonline.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/User-manual-how-to-login-to-vmu-moodle.pdf> in EN

teachers also organise group activities, create creative assignments, such as quizzes, mind maps or other activities that allow students to check their knowledge and prepare for exams.

Each course is designed with carefully thought of distribution of students' workload for the contact hours with teacher and independent work to carry out. As presented in course descriptions usually in first cycle studies (with exception of Term Papers, Internships and Final Thesis) all courses consist of 4-6 ECTS, where 30-45 hours of the student contact time are allocated to lectures, 15-30 hours – to seminars (except for 4 ECTS courses) and the remaining time for independent studies. In second cycle studies all courses consist of 4-8 ECTS, where lectures and case study analysis take 30-45 hours, seminars / consultations – 15-30 hours, teamwork – 15 hours, and the rest - 100-123 hours - independent work.

Teachers organize lectures and seminars using various study methods: provision of information (explanation, illustration), using visual aids; explanation of cases in lectures; formulation, explanation and analysis of problem-oriented cases, issues and practical tasks; moderation of discussion and discussions; group discussion of tasks; problem solving. 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 course related real situations. Problem-Based Learning is used in many courses. For example, studying the course *Business Ethics and Social Responsibility in Business Administration* study program students were solving real problems participating in ChangeMakers'On Hackaton 2019¹³⁸, real problems each year are solved in courses *Management Information Systems*, *Managerial Decision Making in Business Administration* study program. Business organizations provide real cases for students to solve. For example, in 2019 companies presented the tasks to solve such as increasing awareness 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, the case analysis of Kaunas Arena, improvement of "Maisto Bankas" advertising, improvement of the advertising campaign of the Multi-gyn Women's Basketball League, JSC Bambino Spa low budget marketing solutions, etc. Students perform a variety of practical tasks that are meaningful, thus, they are motivated by practising. 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 visits to the companies, presentations of industry experts in-house. 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. For example, in study programme *Sports Business Management*, the whole week each semester is dedicated to in-person sessions, when students meet in a full day activity with the representatives of the company's in-house and during the visits to the sports companies, Žalgirio arena. Visits to the logistics warehouses at Kesko Senukai Lithuania, JSC, freight distribution terminal at DPD Lietuva, JSC, Bacmetall, JSC were arranged in 2018-2019. Although the visits at the companies were suspended due to the transition to distance study mode in 2019/2020, 2020/2021 as a result of COVID-19, communication with the social partners was being developed further remotely. In cooperation with Eurospektras, JSC (Cargo.lt), training was held for the second-year students of the *Logistics and Commerce* study programme in 2019. The students were awarded with the certificates of completion

¹³⁸ <https://changemakerson.eu/program/hackathon-2019/> in EN

following the successful attendance and completion of the assignments under the training programme.

The lecturers of the study programmes invite business representatives to the lectures of their courses during a semester. Dozens of invited guests introduce students to the realities of business every semester. In the self-evaluation period, the social partners representing different companies (Tomegris, JSC, Hegelman Transporte, JSC, TGW Limited, JSC, Linas Agro, JSC, Baltic transline, JSC, Kesko Senukai Lithuania, JSC, Auga Group AB, Žali žali, JSC, Mantinga, JSC, and others) shared their practical experience very actively and delivered lectures on the most relevant topics to the students of both study cycles. Several exact examples that took place in 2019: "Žalgiris" e-sports business developer talked to students about e-sports project communication, e-commerce consultant V. Vorobjovas talked about "E-commerce for dummies", sales manager A. Pilypaitis from agency What About discussed about "Google advertising: Adwords vs SEO", etc. Quarantine in 2020 caused transferring of this practice to the distant mode, but the same extent remained. Experts in-house continued to deliver lectures in a distance way using video conferences. For instance, A. Aleksandravičiūtė-Švažienė, Head of the LSMU Public Communication Service and Business Consultant, spoke about "Risks and Crisis Communication: The Challenge of COVID- 19", J. Taruška discussed about "Sales management in the business-to-business market", M. Hall shared knowledge on the topic "Areas of Application and Strategies of Artificial Intelligence: Analysis of Success Examples, Future Perspectives", A. Bakanas conducted a lecture on "Sales & marketing duo in new brands & product development. Cases of Millo & Deeper" topic, A. Aliukonis explained how "Communication Planning and Mechanics" works in practise, and so on. In 2020 Ilja Laurs, one of the most successful a new generation entrepreneur in Lithuania, who during his career has created over 10 successful companies (the most famous of which GetJar was the first Lithuanian start-up in the famous US Silicon Valley), spoke about "Tokenization in the Real Estate Market". In 2021 students had lectures of T. Juodeikis, law firm Čerka ir partneriai, lawyer on topic "Influence of Lithuanian Legal Environment on Human Resource Management Function in Organizations", S. Krasauskienė, Kake Makė Brand Manager, Alma Littera, taught "How to get to know your target audience?", B. Petikonis-Šabanienė and A. Šalčiūtė-Arbačiauskienė, Manpower Lithuania Innovative CEO, shared knowledge on "Future World of Work", G. Kimler, JSC Simplika project manager, delivered lecture on "Experience of personnel selection and temporary employment company Simplika: Through the eyes of a human resources professional" topic, M. Braškutė-Kučinskė and R. Šurkutė, communication specialists, Danske bank, shared knowledge on the "Corporate Social Responsibility: Danske Bank Case", and so on.

Purposeful participation of industry experts and further implementation of Problem-Based Learning and other practice oriented study methods into study process are among the main areas of development of the aims of first and second cycle studies in the field of Business 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.).

As mentioned above, the time devoted for independent studies differs depending on ECTS. Independent work is intended to preparation for lectures, seminars, case-study analyses by studying the teacher's proposed literature, independent studying of literature, preparing for oral work presentation, midterm, and final exam. Students use such study methods as consulting, analysis of literature, search and analysis of information in periodicals,

statistical documents, etc., independent / group work of students in preparing a written report and / or group presentation, preparation of mind maps, projects, etc.).

As it is deeply embedded in the University culture, VMU Study Regulations 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. Because of accumulative grade study achievement assessment system, students can choose how much they are willing to take part in assessments of other parts of accumulative grade (most of the students still take part in all of them). Students are not obliged to attend the lectures or seminars; thus, they can decide to participate in classes according to their abilities during the semester combining studies with work or other commitments. 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.

VMU Studies Regulations, VMU Rector's orders regarding students' achievement assessment and other University documents available to students in VMU website define the procedures of their achievement evaluation. Students can access the assessment criteria information for study courses not just at VMU website, but information as well is presented orally during the introductory week each semester, made available in study course's Study Guide in Moodle. The Study Guide is prepared according to recommendations of VMU Innovative Study Institute¹³⁹ 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, blended, hybrid distant) of each lecture, seminar and assessment, study literature and other requirements. Teachers present and discuss with students t evaluation criteria and the whole Study Guide for each study course.

VMU applies criteria-based study achievement assessment system using a 10-grade scale. 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.

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 midterm or/and an examination) at the same time. Study achievements of students in Business field 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). Assessment of every study course depends on the level of achieving the intended programme and course learning outcomes. The final mark integrates the intermediate work assessment and examination marks. The examination mark makes 30-60% of the final mark. The structure of the accumulative system is presented in the description of each study course.

The results of intermediate work assessment are announced and discussed during lectures within the period of 2 weeks. After the written examination, the final results are announced on the University intranet within the period of three working days and afterwards they are discussed in the student group. Intermediate work and final work assessments

¹³⁹ See <http://studyonline.lt/en/about/> in EN

(examinations, midterm tests) may be organised in a distance following the Description of the Procedure for Organising Distant and Blended Studies¹⁴⁰ approved by the Rector.

In compliance with the VMU Study Regulations, a student who has received a negative mark in a midterm exam may retake it (free of charge) once but not later than within 3 weeks of the date of the midterm exam. If a study course has several midterm exams, only the one with the highest weight may be retaken. A student or unclassified student who has failed an examination (with a mark lower than 5 (five) in the examination) shall have the right to retake the examination once free of charge. Having received a negative final mark for the course after the retaken examination a student has an academic debt for the course 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. If the student does not arrive to the examination because of a justifiable reason, the Dean 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.

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. If the student does not agree with the assessment results, he has the right to address the Dean with a request for the review of the grade in 3 days after the assessment results are presented.

After graduation from first cycle programme students can enter second cycle programmes in the study fields of Business, Management, Marketing, Finance both in Lithuania and abroad (including our double degree programmes). For example, the graduates of first cycle study programme *Business Administration* disperse to a variety of study programmes in VMU – *Corporate Strategic Management, Business and Entrepreneurship, Marketing and International Commerce*, etc. While graduates from the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* enter such second cycle study programmes in VMU as *Business Logistics, Agriculture Business Management*, and others. Graduates of second cycle study programmes have a possibility to continue their studies in PhD programmes in the field of Management at national and international level. During self-evaluation period 1 graduate from *Business and Entrepreneurship* programme entered joint PhD programme in the field of Management run by VDU (along with Mykolas Riomeris University, VU Šiauliai Academy and Klaipėda University).

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

The document of VMU disability policy – University of Inclusive Opportunities – was presented and approved by VMU Senate in 2021. The document is focused on increasing the accessibility of studies and work by properly adapting study and working conditions for VMU community members with disabilities. The document University of Inclusive Opportunities aims to ensure a sustainable disability action plan focused on the students and staff of the University. The aim is to improve the opportunities for persons with disabilities to acquire higher education, to find employment in higher education institutions and to ensure accessible study or working conditions for them.

¹⁴⁰ https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Nuotoliniu_studiju_tvarka.pdf in LT

For students who combine Business field studies with work, care of family members, professional sports, other activities, provide favorable opportunities to study at a time, form and pace appropriate to them. Students can watch the broadcasts of contact lectures according to the hybrid model remotely, consult with the lecturer individually remotely or in writing, choose the time of presentations, instead of group assignments report individually in writing, for reasonable reasons the Dean's office may postpone assignments' dates, and so on. Teachers take into account the cases of students in difficult situations to the extent permitted by the VMU regulatory documents, as this is common in the VMU organizational culture based on informality and immediate communication.

Socially vulnerable groups (orphans, people with disabilities, students from large families, families receiving social benefits 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 Schedule¹⁴¹.

Socially vulnerable groups (orphans, people with disabilities, students from large families, families receiving social benefits and low-income families) receive different discounts for tuition or dormitory fees, scholarships are provided for these students.

Students with disabilities are advised on a variety of issues by a disability coordinator. 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 and FBD buildings, 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 educational campaigns and events are organized at the University.

During the self-assessment period there are 2 students with disabilities in study programme *Business Administration* and 2 more students in study programme *Logistics and Commerce* and study programme *Business Logistics*. The disabilities of mentioned students allowed them to study together with a group.

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 Assistance¹⁴². 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

¹⁴¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/VDU-individualaus-studiju-grafiko-teikimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

¹⁴² See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DESCRIPTION-OF-THE-PROCEDURE-OF-MONITORING-OF-STUDENT-LEARNING-ACHIEVEMENTS-AND-PROVIDING-ASSISTANCE-TO-STUDENTS-AT-VYTAUTAS-MAGNUS-UNIVERSITY.pdf> in EN

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, to use Moodle tools (i.e., Progress bar, Digital badges), etc.

In the studies in Business field, monitoring of students' progress and achievements is split among teachers, administrators for graduate and undergraduate studies, Heads of Departments and Vice-dean for Studies. 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 administrators about non-participating students (in lectures and/or absent from examinations) as well as about those who failed interim examination. Multiple times per semester Dean's office meetings and meetings of Heads of Departments with heads and other representatives of SPC, administrators for undergraduate and graduate studies are held to discuss study process, students' participation and achievements, other quality related issues.

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 teachers allocate one hour of consultation time, where each student can discuss both their assessment answers and their overall achievement in the studied course.

Next to that, according to the VMU Study Regulations, every teacher spends certain number of hours (at least 20 hours for full time position) per semester consulting students on their homework, individual or group assignments, discussing their performance, answering clarification questions, providing suggestions how to study in a more efficient way, providing detailed feedback about homework assignments, mid-term and final exams, consulting on other study-related issues. 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.

Summarizing, the feedback, monitoring students' study progress, is given to the students face-to-face during lectures, seminars, officially announced (via the Outlook and bulletin-boards) hours, as well as using different on-line forms, such as MS Teams meetings, Moodle chat, Facebook messenger, e-mail, discussion forums, other communication environments that are convenient for students. The Moodle system automatically reminds teachers about students' progress as well, the detailed information is available for them in Teacher Portal. Students are encouraged to take self-monitoring.

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

The main sources evaluating the employability of graduates and graduate career tracking are external and internal data. External data covers statistics provided by the magazine "Rankings", Government Strategic Analysis Centre, Consortium for Ensuring the Operation of the Career Management Information System for Students and Graduates of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (karjera.lt). As well 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 is provided twice per year, i.e., 12 months and 15 months after their graduation. Next to that, the University monitors students' readiness to work, employment and career. Readiness to work is evaluated by analysing employers' feedback about students while they are performing practice. Employability and career of VMU graduates is analysed using internal VMU Career Centre's, VMU EXIT, alumni survey data.

Analysing the data presented in the magazine "Rankings", VMU stands among TOP3 universities: in 2019 were evaluated 18.8 points (4th position among universities), in 2020 – 20 points (3rd position among universities) and in 2021 – 18 points (3rd position among universities) according to employers' opinion about graduates of Business field readiness to work (both of bachelor and master studies).

According to Government Strategic Analysis Centre (hereinafter – STRATA) in 2018 on average 51% of first cycle students from the Business field got employment related to their qualification within 12 months after completing their studies, while in 2019 – this number represented 66%, so raised significantly; after second cycle studies data is not provided about 2018, but in 2019 – 74%. The data of 2020 are not provided, because it is conducted 12 months after graduation. Existing data from STRATA represent only those graduates with employment contracts excluding work abroad, individual activities, therefore, can't reflect the real situation as graduates of Business field work as consultants, conduct trainings, etc. often performing under individual activities or business certificates or create their own business, falling in one group with unemployed in STRATA data.

Based on the data of the career portal karjera.lt, the graduates of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* were 73,5% employed in 2018 and 70,8% in 2019, the graduates of *Business Administration* – 51,6% in 2018 and 50% in 2019. 90% of graduates of second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* after 12 months were having employment contract in 2018, and 84,2% – in 2019 respectively. This source doesn't provide data about employment of second cycle of study programmes *Business and Entrepreneurship* and *Sports Business Management*.

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 website¹⁴³.

Based on VMU alumni survey, the graduates of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* were 100% employed in 2018 and in 2019, the graduates of *Business*

¹⁴³ See <http://karjera.vdu.lt/apie-mus/apklausu-rezultatai/> in LT

Administration – 100% in 2018 and 87,5% in 2019. 66,67% of graduates of second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* after 12 months were having employment contract in 2019, with no data about 2018. Provided data may be inaccurate because of little sample of respondents, as there is no data about employment of graduates of study programmes *Business and Entrepreneurship* and *Sports Business Management* due to passivity of filling the questionnaires.

According to EXIT survey (of students ending their studies), conducted in centralised way by VMU Career Centre, in 2020 64% of first cycle and 96% of second cycle graduates of the Business study field were working; in 2021 accordingly 74% of first cycle and 85% of second cycle graduates. The majority of graduates work in a field, related to study programme they finished. Analysing first cycle graduates' results, in 2020 40% of graduates stated that they work is directly related to studies and 44% specified it as partially related, in 2021 respectively, 33% as directly related and 45% as partially related. 43% of second cycle graduates in 2020 specified that they work is directly related to studies and 30% named it as partially related, in 2021 respectively, 47% as directly related and 29% as partially related. Mostly students are working in private sector: 84% in 2020 and 76% in 2021 of first cycle graduates and 82% in 2020 and 100% in 2021 of second cycle graduates of the Business study field. Analysis of nature of work of first cycle graduates, shows that 4% in 2020 and 5% in 2021 of graduates were working in top management positions, 20% in 2020 and 21% in 2021 in middle management positions (managers of units, departments); 4% in 2020 and 17% in 2021 stated they perform tasks of high complexity comparing to 32% in 2020 and 24% in 2021 performing tasks of moderate complexity, 28% in 2020 and 17% in 2021 performing simple tasks; 8% in 2020 and 7% in 2021 had their own business and 4% in 2020 and 5% in 2021 were working using individual activity certificate or business license. The nature of work of second cycle graduates is described by following results: 13% in 2020 and 6% in 2021 of graduates were working in top management positions, 22% in 2020 and 24% in 2021 in middle management positions (managers of units, departments); 26% in 2020 and 29% in 2021 stated they perform tasks of high complexity comparing to 17% in 2020 and 18% in 2021 performing tasks of moderate complexity, 13% in 2020 and 18% in 2021 performing simple tasks; 4% both years had their own business and none were working using individual activity certificate or business license. Next to that, 41% of first cycle in 2020 and 40% in 2021 graduates evaluated the contribution of VMU to preparation for professional activity good adding these, who evaluated more good than bad – 40% in 2020 and 46% in 2021. Respectively, 33% of graduates of second cycle studies in 2020 evaluated VMU contribution to preparation for professional activity as good, in 2021 the evaluation reached 70%, more good than bad – 33% in 2020 and 25% in 2021. Graduates of the first cycle studies stated that studies developed time planning (16% in 2020 and 13% in 2021), problem solving (15% both in 2020 and in 2021), communication and cooperation (17% both in 2020 and in 2021), profession related capabilities (17% in 2020 and 16% in 2021). Next to that it was stated that creativity (10% in 2020 and 8% in 2021), information literacy (8% in 2020 and 13% in 2021), responsibility (9% in 2020 and 14% in 2021) and foreign language (7% in 2020 and 3% in 2021) skills were developed too. Results provided by the second cycle graduates shows that time planning (14% in 2020 and 9% in 2021), problem solving (11% in 2020 and 15% in 2021), communication and cooperation (17% in 2020 and 20% in 2021), profession related capabilities (25% in 2020 and 24% in 2021) were developed successfully following with the developed skills of creativity (8% in 2020 and 13% in 2021), information literacy (11% in 2020 and 13% in 2021), responsibility (12% in 2020 and 5% in 2021) and foreign language (2% both

in 2020 and in 2021). Graduates of the first cycle studies evaluated the usefulness of knowledge and skills for professional activity depending on the way they were gained. The usefulness is as follows: from lectures, seminars - 37% in 2020 and 29% in 2021, performing independent tasks - 14% in 2020 and 21% in 2021, practice - 12% in 2020 and 15% in 2021. In second cycle studies the results are these: from lectures, seminars - 33% in 2020 and 44% in 2021, performing independent tasks - 17% in 2020 and 28% in 2021, practice - 13% in 2020 and 9% in 2021. In both study cycles it was mentioned that next to listed above just to lesser extent, international study or practise experience, activities in different university students' organizations, help of teachers and administration staff, volunteering was useful too.

As not everything is reflected in quantitative data due to limited participation of graduates, performing qualitative analysis of graduate career, examples of successful career after graduating Business field study programmes can be provided. There are graduates of second cycle study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* who started running their own business, consult organizations of private sector, train other professionals, were employed in the biggest retail chains at managers positions, were promoted working in urban municipalities, etc. Personalized data is not provided due to GDPR. The successful graduate career examples are presented at the website^{144 145 146 147 148}, Facebook^{149 150} and in bulletin boards.

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 SPC, study quality assessment groups. Each year, with the help of the University, the club organizes Alumni Day in order to bring together VMU alumni. From 2019 September VMU has joined the career mentoring platform *idialogue*¹⁵¹, where VMU graduates are invited to register and become career mentors.

Regularly, at least once a year, face-to-face meetings with Alumni members are organized at FEM, where graduates introduce their work experience, relevance of acquired knowledge and skills. VMU have cooperation agreements with different social partners, including commitments to inform about job positions. Besides, announcements for open job positions are placed on Career centre's websites, social networks. Staff is involved into proposing individuals for of job applicants upon the requests of employers. Graduates are also invited to various events and lectures to share their experiences, insights, and so on. Agriculture Academy also has its Alumni club, whose main activities are representation of the FBD and its programmes to potential applicants and agribusiness representatives; promotion

¹⁴⁴ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/alumni/> in LT

¹⁴⁵ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magistranturos-studijos/verslas-ir-entrepreneryste/> in LT

¹⁴⁶ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/stojantiems/bakalauro-studijos/verslo-administravimo-bakalauras/> in LT

¹⁴⁷ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/zua-partnerysteje-uab-kesko-senukai-lithuania/> in LT

¹⁴⁸ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/prigimtinis-verslumas-drasa-ieskant-saves-ir-naujaj-atgimes-ziguliukas-kaledine-tiesa-apie-studenta-mata-2/> in LT

¹⁴⁹ See <https://www.facebook.com/vdubpf/posts/1612438358913542> in LT

¹⁵⁰ See <https://fb.watch/alm7IFg6x/> in LT

¹⁵¹ See <https://www.idialogue.lt/> in LT

of partnership between VMU Agriculture Academy and graduates by establishing new regional and professional departments; participation in student events; assistance to students in their career planning and employment. Regional Alumni Divisions have been established and are being developed.

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

The principles of integrity are defined in the VMU Statute¹⁵², the Code of Ethics of VMU¹⁵³, The Plagiarism Prevention Procedures of VMU¹⁵⁴, 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 procedure for plagiarism prevention identify 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 homework, Term Papers and Final Thesis. Both teachers and students have the right to appeal to the University's Academic Ethics Commission, which makes final decisions on academic integrity.

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 first and second cycle study programmes in Business 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 first and second cycle students are checked for plagiarism using iThenticate or Oxsico 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 Faculty Plagiarism Prevention Commission (formed by the Order of the Dean of FEM or FBD). 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 teachers. During the self-assessment period no cases of academic dishonesty have been reported in Business field studies.

¹⁵² See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/VMU-STATUTE-EN-2018.pdf> in EN

¹⁵³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/The-code-of-ethics-of-VMU.pdf>, in EN

¹⁵⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Plagiarism-prevention-VMU.pdf> in EN

4.6. 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 Investigation¹⁵⁵, The Plagiarism Prevention Procedures¹⁵⁶ 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. 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.

During the self-assessment period no appeals regarding evaluation of exam, other assignments or thesis defence procedure were submitted in either first or second cycle study programmes in Business field, except for *Business Logistics* programme where a student appealed Final Master Thesis grade in 2020. The appeal was heard in accordance with VMU procedures, the record of defence of the student's Final Thesis, the Final Thesis, the supervisor and opponent's reviews were reviewed; the final grade was not changed as no procedural violations were identified. The student was notified on the decision of the Commission in writing.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to Studying, student performance and graduate employment		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Business Administration study programme		
4.	The reference in the programme document to “uncomplicated” or “simple” questions as part of the learning achievement evaluation understates and devalues the standard of both the qualification and the curriculum. A more exact form of wording is required. The necessity that students taking assessments/examinations should answer correctly ‘at least half’ of the questions is ambiguous and could be open to misinterpretation.	According to the VMU Study Regulations, the assessment system uses a threshold level of study achievements, which in the form of the course description must explain when the student reaches the minimum, threshold achievement of study results, which differentiates positive and negative assessments in parts of the cumulative score. Descriptions of study courses are updated at least every 3 years, reviewing both the assessment methods and the assessment criteria. The last review date is March of 2019, and the forthcoming review is assigned at the beginning of the year 2022 when all the descriptions of the study courses will be renewed including content, literature as well as teaching and assessment methods. At the beginning of the semester, students of each study course are introduced in detail to the course tasks and their assessment criteria for each level of achievement. For this purpose, every semester teachers prepare a study course guide, which provides much more detailed information than the description of the study course.

¹⁵⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/REGULATIONS-FOR-SUBMISSION-OF-APPEALS-2021-03-24.pdf> in EN

¹⁵⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Plagiarism-prevention-VMU.pdf> in EN

Logistics and Commerce study programme

6.	The weight of the final examination in Logistics and Commerce of the final grade should be reduced. Instead, more weight should be given to the grades of the individual courses.	From 2013/2014 academic years the bachelor's studies are completed in the form of public defence of the Final Thesis rather than final exam, and this recommendation cannot be implemented.
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Business Logistics study programme

4.	Social partners could provide more lectures as these managers could disseminate their applied and practical knowledge.	<p>In the self-evaluation period, the social partners actively delivered lectures, during which the students were introduced to the recent developments in the logistics business, possibilities to solve the problems, information technologies applied, etc. The activity of social partners in terms of lecture deliver is described in greater detail in section 4.1.</p> <p>To place greater focus on formation and enhancement of the practical skills, the study programme teachers collaborated with the social partners during 2019/2020 years in preparation of the assignments for the Logistics Innovation Internship, and the results thereof were integrated into the Final Theses.</p>
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Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of *Studying, student performance and graduate employment*

Strengths

- Majority of the Business study field students complete their studies and successfully integrate into labour market. High employability rate of graduates proves that professionals in Business are in demand in the labour market.
- 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.
- VMU Disability policy document ensures the full involvement of students with disabilities in their studies. For socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs, there are conditions for studying according to an individual study schedule, various discounts for tuition or accommodation in a dormitory are applied.
- The organization of studies in a blended distant way enables students (including those with special needs) to participate in the study process at a convenient time and thus responds to the needs and expectations of students.

Areas for improvement

- Continuously develop and implement Problem-Based Learning and other practice-oriented study methods into first and second cycle study courses to better facilitate achievement of learning outcomes of the programmes.
- The number of first and second cycle graduates participating in the survey conducted by VMU Career Centre has been very low in the last year. Thus, the aim is to strengthen procedures of tracking graduates' employability and career, ensuring more active involvement of graduates in sharing information about their career paths. The most appropriate ways to achieve this still have to be discussed.

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 56 teachers teaching courses in Business field now at VMU. 50 (or 89%) of them (Annex 4 provides the list of teachers) are permanent according to the criteria provided (works at least 3 years and more than half a day at VMU) (see Annex 4). The data presented in the Table 21 shows the student to teacher ratio total in Business field, first and second cycle studies separately and in each of the study programme in the field. The ratio is a little bit higher in first cycle studies compared with second cycle studies because of two reasons: 1. There are more courses taught and teachers involved in the programme which are not from Business field because of specifics of first cycle studies and therefore 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 first cycle studies compared with second cycle studies.

Student to teacher ratio presented in Table 21 is decreasing gradually during the period analysed. In some programmes (first cycle programme of *Business Administration* and all second cycle programmes) we see only minor fluctuations.

Table 21. Student to teacher ratio in study programmes in Business field during 2019-2021

Study programme	2019	2020	2021
<i>Business Administration</i>	9,2	9,1	9,0
<i>Logistics and Commerce</i>	15,9	9,9	7,3
First cycle studies	12,2	9,5	8,2
<i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>	2,7	2,7	4,6
<i>Business Logistics</i>	14,4	13,9	13,4
<i>Sports Business Management</i>	2,9	2,0	3,1
Second cycle studies	5,6	5,2	6,4
Total in the field	9,5	7,7	7,4

In first cycle programme *Logistics and Commerce* this student to teacher ratio has decreased more than in other programmes mainly because of the decrease in number of students. In second cycle studies the number of students from 2020 to 2021 increased in all three programmes, and that is why the average student to teacher ratio increased from 5,2 to 6,4 accordingly.

The teaching experience of academic staff in Business field ranks from 2 to 40 years with an average value of 9.5 years. This fact indicates about a balanced combination of age

and experience of teaching staff. Most of the permanent teachers work in the University full-time. 11 of them have administrative positions in the Faculty and 7 have administrative positions in the University (Marketing and Communication Department, The Centre for Enterprise Practice, The Centre of Business and Social Partnerships). Most of them combine teaching and working in professional field. Practical work experience in the field of teaching is predominant from 2 to 25 years with an average value of 7,5 years. This shows the teachers' extensive pedagogical and practical experience and the required competence in Business field. This allows practical knowledge and experience to be integrated into the study process, providing students with not only theoretical material but with the research-based data as well. Among the teachers we have business consultants, senior specialists, project managers, directors for commerce, CEOs of a company, initiators and executors of various national and international projects, organizers and facilitators of trainings / seminars, experts in evaluating research projects and others. 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 the University. This close relation between teaching and practice is especially important in Business field where innovations and new experiences are changing so fast.

All the teachers-practitioners in Business 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 2 teachers-practitioners (L. Petrauskaitė and M. Šerpytis) who teach in first cycle programme of *Business Administration*. In the other group there are 8 teachers-practitioners. They are scientists working full-time or studying PhD at VMU. Besides, they also perform practical activities in business. All 8 of them teach only in first cycle programmes. This could be explained by the fact that there are more field courses in first cycle studies than in second cycle. And the requirements for teachers differ in the way that there should be more researchers in second cycle programmes.

Academic staff of the courses in Business field is also active in research as it has been discussed in the part 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 Business field guarantees teachers gaining knowledge in research or practical experience.

During recent 3 years of investigation there were only few teacher replacements. Prof. A. Gargasas resigned in 2019 and was replaced by assoc. prof. dr. M. Vienažindienė. Prof. dr. P. Žukauskas retired in 2020 and was replaced by dr. G. Cibulskas. Because of overload of assoc. prof. dr. O. Stripeikis and assoc. prof. dr. S. Staniulienė few of their first cycle courses were taken by internal candidates PhD students A. Ganusauskaitė, A. Čapienė, and E. Savickaitė-Kazlauskė. These 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 students too, their research interests are in-line with their students'. The faculties aim 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.

Another reason of changes in academic staff and the way of young teacher involvement is changes in programme curriculum. Business is a very fast changing field where innovations happen very quickly and competences necessary for a professional change fast. To represent that the changes in curriculum are made with introduction of new courses. In order to make

changes in curriculum, SPCs analyse the feedback collected from students, alumni; discuss with social partners; as well as address to all the teaching staff asking to propose courses that would represent the newest trends in Business 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 the Provision of Studies¹⁵⁷. First cycle study programmes have only one requirement: “no 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 second cycle studies there are two requirements for teaching staff: “no less than 80 percent of the courses of the second 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 22, we see that the composition of teaching staff in Business field meets the official requirements.

As seen in Table 22, most teachers in all study programmes have a position of associate professor. There are about 27% of teachers with no academic degree in first cycle study programmes. This share was constantly increasing during the period analysed because of involvement of more practitioners and PhD students. We see this resulting in better teaching quality, higher involvement, and satisfaction of students. In Business field there are 5 lecturers that are planning to defend their PhD thesis in 2021-2022. During recent 3 years of investigation, 2 lecturers (R. Drejeris and J. Žukovskis) transferred from associate professors to professors and 1 lecturer (A. Raupelienė) transferred from the position of professor to the position of associate professor.

Table 22. The composition of teaching staff in study programmes in Business field

	Study programme	Prof.	Assoc. prof.	PhD	No degree	Scientists	Requirement
First cycle	<i>Business Administration</i>	19%	29%	24%	28%	67%	50%
	<i>Logistics and Commerce</i>	18%	48%	9%	25%	75%	50%
Second cycle	<i>Business and Entrepreneurship</i>	33%	56%	11%	0%	100%	80%
	<i>Business Logistics</i>	26%	65%	0%	9%	91%	80%
	<i>Sports Business Management</i>	47%	41%	12%	0%	100%	80%

In the study programme of *Sports Business Management* 47% of teachers have a position of professor because, following the aim of the programme and considering changing environment and students’ proposals, each course in this programme additionally has a guest professor (Sports Business – prof. dr. Christopher Kennett; Sports Marketing – prof. dr. Fabio Ancarani; Sports Communication – prof. Aarthi Rajaraman; Sports Management – prof. dr. Giorgio Prodi; Sports Economic and Finance – prof. dr. Wladimir Andreff; Sports Law and Governance – prof. dr. Sean Hamil). But since they are not permanent according to the criteria provided (works at least 3 years and more than half a day at VMU), they are not mentioned in the list of teachers in Annex 4.

¹⁵⁷ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/347_45e562393bb4cc8f88e301800250f792.pdf in EN

The duration of teachers' working time and the principles of planning and calculating teachers' workload structure, their implementation and monitoring is determined by the Description of the Procedure for Calculating VMU teachers' workload, approved by the Rector in 2021 April 2 by Order No. 154. The average workload of a teacher (when working full-time) is 36 hours per week. The workload of the teacher consists of the following activities: contact work with students, non-contact work, carrying out research and experimental development, competence development and organisational activities.

Taking into account the positions of teachers according to the fields of science, the hours of contact work with students are determined on the basis of normative workloads (for 1 full-time position): in the fields of humanities, social sciences and arts for a professor – 550 hours, an associate professor – 600 hours, a lecturer – 650 hours, an assistant – 700 contact work hours per year.

All teachers' scientific publications and other scientific production are placed in the database of VMU Library. The teacher's activities and results in the field of professional development are evaluated every five years during the attestation. Qualification requirements for VMU teachers and researchers (artists), the procedure for attestation and organization of the competition as well as other relevant documents are available on the VMU website¹⁵⁸. Detailed information on the scientific and academic contribution of each teacher during the year is formalized, scored (as a base for the system of variable remuneration part for teachers; significant points are given for publication in top-level scientific journals, as well as promoting by individual grants) and analysed by administration in the personal annual reports on scientific and didactic activities and research output. At the end of each year, teachers declare the results of scientific, organizational, and didactic activities by submitting individual activity reports. This information is also monitored by the VMU Department of Science and Innovation.

There are four study programmes in Business field that are taught in English – *Business Administration, Logistics and Commerce* (first cycle), *Business Logistics* and *Sports Business Management* (second cycle). One programme in Business field is also taught in Russian – *Logistics and Commerce* (first cycle). All teachers in Business field know one or more foreign languages (English, Russian, Polish). Main languages are English and Russian, and the majority of teachers can conduct classes in them. English language of all the teachers working there is not lower than B2. Russian language of teachers working in *Logistics and Commerce* programme is also not lower than B2. To ensure the best language skills VMU offers possibilities for all the teachers to study any foreign language they wish for free. Institute of Foreign Languages also offers special trainings for teachers and scholars that usually take place in January when there are no regular lectures for students organized. Teachers of Business field attend them periodically. Most of the teachers are conducting the same course in Lithuanian and in English (for example M. Račkauskas – Theories of Economics and Management; R. Bendaravičienė – Social and Marketing Research; A. Raupelienė – Human Resource Management). From the Faculty perspective, to ensure good language skills of teachers in classes taught in English, in same courses we have different persons for Lithuanian and English class. For example, in first cycle studies Leadership is taught by A. Ganusauskaitė in Lithuanian, and by D. Kraskauskienė in English, Competitiveness and Innovation class is taught by G. Jucevičius in Lithuanian, and by K. Israfilzade in English, Quality Management class is taught by V. Vanagienė in Lithuanian, and by R. Drejeris in English.

¹⁵⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/research/relevant-research-documents/> in EN

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

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

- To go for Erasmus+ teaching visits to VMU partnership universities in the EU as well as EEA/candidate countries (487 partner institutions) or outside the EU (115 partner institutions). Under usual conditions (non-pandemic period), about 200 VMU teachers accept teaching mobility possibilities in a year.
- To go for Erasmus+ training (qualification development) visits to any institution or organisation (including other higher education institutions) in the EU as well as EEA/candidate countries or to any partnership university outside the UE. Under usual conditions (non-pandemic period), 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 faculties have 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 high level of international mobility of the academic staff of courses in Business field. The total number of visits abroad reached 68 in 2019 (academic staff went to Poland, Egypt, Israel, Portugal, Finland, Italy, Sakartvel, Greece, Spain, Latvia, Turkey, Slovakia, Russia, Thailand, Cyprus, Poland, Bulgaria, Morocco) which makes 1,4 visits per one permanent teacher in Business field studies. The international activities include the teaching and training visits with Erasmus+ programme (52 agreements signed in Business field, 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). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic the numbers of visits abroad were small (4-9 per year) in 2020 and 2021, teachers used distance learning programmes (in Spain, Bulgaria, Latvia, Germany, Greece) instead.

During the recent three years about 54% of the permanent teaching staff from courses in Business field were participating in various academic mobility actions. The 3 years average is 19,6 visits per year or about 50% of the teaching staff of courses in Business 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. Also, some teaching staff have participated in intensive sessions of *Sports Business Management* abroad. 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. During the meetings of the cluster members that take place several times a year, the teachers are asked to present their experiences from the visit, the proposed cooperation opportunities in the fields of joint research, organization of studies and research activities, and improvement of study programmes are considered.

Also, the lecturers of the *Logistics and Commerce* (first cycle) and *Business Logistics* (second cycle) study programmes used the opportunity provided by the Research Council of Lithuanian (except for the COVID-19 pandemic period in 2020-2021) to participate in the competition during the analysed period. The support provided to teachers gave an

opportunity to participate in scientific internships (A. Novikova - University of Perugia, Italy, 2019), scientific conferences (J. Savickienė, G. Vazonienė, V. Vitunskienė) to improve their qualifications and study.

VMU devotes particular attention to inviting teachers from universities of other countries. During 2019-2021, there were 35 international teaching visits to Business field courses (teachers came from France, Spain, USA, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Egypt, Czech Republic, Germany, Moldova, Indonesia, Cyprus). It should be noted that the incoming teachers give lectures not only in Business field studies, but for mixed flows of students from different study programmes in the Faculty.

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

Professional development activities of teachers at the University are regulated by the Description of Procedure for Professional Development at VMU (2018). Professional development of the teaching staff 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.

In 2019 two professional development topics received particular attention from teachers: "Active learning methods and student involvement" and "Student feedback: how can we help them learn better?". Trainings were organized internally several times per year and various VMU lecturers were invited to conduct the training; they shared useful recommendations, expert insights, and their experience (about 45% of all teachers from Business field have participated in these trainings). In 2020, based on the experience of the previous year, trainings were delivered both by VMU lecturers and external experts on the application of innovative teaching / learning methods, providing effective feedback and assessment of study achievements, and involving students in studies and research. In 2020 and 2021 the teachers (about 90% of all teachers from Business field) were actively involved in the trainings conducted by VMU Institute of Innovative Studies on the organization of distance learning, cooperation and assessment tools in distance learning, responsible use of technology, etc. Teachers choose topics according to their respective digital abilities – from beginners, who were introduced to the main possibilities and functions provided by technology, to high-skilled teachers, who were introduced to more complex solutions, technology selection criteria. For example, in 2020, 22 training seminars for the development of digital competencies were organized and focused on the following topics: „Adobe Connect

Video Room Management During Thesis Defense”; „How to prepare for the distance examinations?”; „MS Teams tool for organizing video lectures and preparing videos”. Teachers were also actively consulted on the organization of distance learning: on the distance learning environment, video lectures and individual topics for target groups.

Teachers were also interested in the trainings conducted by VMU Institute of Foreign Languages for the development of teachers’ English language skills. Topics offered to VMU teachers range from „English Verb Tenses” to „Writing Academic Argumentative Essay” or „Academic Debates”, „Academic Talk: Negotiations” and „Effective Reading of Academic Text”.

At the end of each training, participants provide feedback on the training taken. This allows to adjust the content of training and reveals other areas of interest for the professional development of academic staff. Training topics are also selected according to the teachers’ suggestions for the future training presented in the VMU teacher survey. The professional development needs of teachers are also formulated by the administration of faculties, SPCs.

The academic staff in Business field is very active in training. For example, during the past 3 years there were 8.4 events of training and development of competencies per person (teachers were participating in business events, trainings, seminars, webinars, conferences, workshops, etc.). Most of them (total 147) were aimed to increase competencies in course field (teachers have attended events on human resource management, e-commerce, digital marketing, logistics, time management, coaching, leadership, change management, business planning, entrepreneurship, and others). Some of academic staff in Business field joined or already are the members of BMDA (Baltic Management Development Association) and LiMA (Lithuanian Association of Marketing) and were attending practical conferences and seminars organized by them. These participations are 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 events) and didactic competencies (total 16 events) were very important for the academic staff.

The teachers in person or distantly participated in conferences, congresses, forums, schools, internships in Lithuania and abroad (due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions). It should be mentioned that although the COVID-19 pandemic limited in person training and participation activities, it opened opportunities to participate in various events online, at the same training and enabling to use various IT tools and software. Also, depending on the relevance of the training event for scientific and pedagogical teacher’s development, some events were paid from the FEM and FBD funds. This provides opportunities for teachers to improve their qualifications without using their own resources.

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for the study programme Business Administration.

Recommendations for the area under the assessment provided by the experts during the previous external evaluation*		
<i>Teachers</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Logistics and Commerce study programme		
8.	Faculty and university should try to attract	VMU has sufficient financial resources for international mobility under the Erasmus + program for teaching and learning visits; teachers can also benefit from funding for trips

	<p>funding to encourage teaching staff to undergo professional development activities not only in Lithuanian, but also abroad.</p>	<p>provided by faculties. The teachers are continuously and systematically encouraged to submit applications via Erasmus+ for long- and short-term visits abroad for teaching and learning, seek funding via the Research Council of Lithuania for participations at the conferences abroad. The programme teachers (L. Marcinkevičiūtė, J. Vilkevičiūtė, A. Raupelienė, R. Dapkus, R. Rukuižienė, V. Vanagienė, etc.) participated in the visits abroad (in Belgium, Italy, Poland, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, etc.),</p> <p>The funding was received via the Research Council of Lithuania for a conference abroad (funding for research visits abroad "The 2018 International Symposium on Economics and Social Science-Summer Session (ISESS)", Japan, No. P-KEL-17-168 (Greblikaitė J.). The scientific research results were presented at the international conference "Joint world conference on social work, education and social development 2018" in Ireland, No. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-06-0190, 2018-03-21/2018-07-08 (G. Vazonienė); "The internationalisation of Lithuanian research – the development of RDI links (LINO LT)" – the researcher's visit to Inca Garcilaso De la Vega University, Lima, Peru, contract No. LINO-LYR-337, 28/10/2018–04/11/2018 (D. Perkumienė); "Dissemination of the research results at the annual international conference "Meditereanean Conference for Academic Disciplines, Valetta, Malta", contract No. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712, 2018 02 01/05 01 (J. Greblikaitė); "The future ecosystem services of the Lithuanian coastal zone: the global change perspective" (EcoServe); contract No. 09.3.3-LMT-K 712-01-0178, 01/02/2018–12/01/2021 (ASU as a partner, participants: J. Žukovskis, J. Vilkevičiūtė, V. Pilipavičius, D. Urmonienė.</p>
Business Logistics study programme		
3.	<p>Considering the quite low number of professors teaching in the BL programme, it would help to support and motivate the current academic team to become professors in the foreseeable future.</p>	<p>The teachers teaching in the programme are encouraged and motivated to become professors. R. Dapkus teaching in the program has been holding the professor's position since September 2018, and since 2020, prof. dr. R. Drejeris (Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments) and prof. dr. J. Žukovskis (Logistics Systems Designing and Modelling) have been delivering lectures under the programme. The teachers' professional development plan is prepared at the Faculty in order to help meet the requirements to professor's position and attain this degree in the future. For 2 teachers who worked under the programme as the visiting teachers, competitions for 5-year office were announced as the basis for attainment of the professor's degree in the near future.</p>

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of
Teaching staff

Strengths

- The number of teaching staff in Business field is sufficient for qualitative provision of studies in both first and second cycles.
- The teaching staff of courses in Business 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 Business field, there are also enough of experienced teachers, who can transfer experience and contribute with scientific insights.
- Teaching staff of study programmes in Business field has competencies and/or is quickly able to develop them. For example, teachers can teach courses in English so that entire study programme could be delivered in foreign language; as well they are able quickly and efficiently move to online teaching in a very short time without serious losses of study quality, etc.
- Increasing involvement of teaching staff in the country's business events, trainings, seminars bring knowledge of innovations, experiences, acquaintances not only with academics, but also with practitioners.

Areas for improvement

- The teaching staff in Business 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 Business field at VMU.

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

VMU is aiming to create the best possible studying conditions for all students and academic staff¹⁵⁹. 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 faculties buildings 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 VMU 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.

¹⁵⁹ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTtfSRozWKY> in EN

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 VMU 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 produces copies of materials, necessary for lectures and supplies 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 MS Teams (Adobe Connect and BigBlueButton were used 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, blended and hybrid), to share teaching and learning instruments, to provide distant learning even in full range of studies as it happened in 2020 and 2021. This period showed a high level of readiness to provide distant studies as students evaluated in a special survey. All the functions necessary for Problem-Based Learning and teamwork have been realised in Moodle, MS Teams 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 MS Teams.

VMU distant learning environment Moodle is updated every year, what expands the possibilities of the environment and ensures the selection of the latest functions. Operating systems of servers and data storage are constantly updated. In 2021 VMU has 13 classrooms that are used for video conferencing. The classrooms are equipped with the necessary equipment to ensure a smooth distance connection by creating suitable conditions for remote cooperation and hybrid lecturing both for students in auditorium and remote ones (cameras, microphones, etc.).

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 evaluation results. IThenticate and Oxsico software is used by teachers for antiplagiarism purposes, especially for screening Thesis and other students'

paperwork.

The resources of the Business field are concentrated mainly in two VMU buildings: of FEM and FBD. Students use MINDED VMU “Idea Development and Design Laboratory” at FEM. It is equipped with creative spaces to work for interdisciplinary teams, generate ideas, create prototypes. The base is equipped with methodologies and tools: Lego serious play; Design thinking worksheets; prototyping methodologies.

Laboratory of Neuromarketing at 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, to evaluate 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 Business field courses teachers use various software and tools depending on their needs. For instance, Bloomberg for business environment analytics, Mage software for business activities’ simulation games in Introduction Internship, graphic editing programmes as Adobe Photoshop for developing visuals, websites development platforms as Wix and Weebly, user experience analysis programmes as UXperia, web analytics tools Google analytics, Google trends, Google Keyword planner, Facebook analytics, advertisement creation platforms Facebook Business manager, Google Ads, etc. at FEM. FBD computer classes have general applications installed (Word, Excell, Powerpoint, MS Access), as well as specialized applications (SPSS, MatLab, business management programmes B1, Teamgate, Debit, Pragma, special purpose programmes for statistical evaluation of survey data SYSTAT 10, SIGMASTAT, SIGMAPLOT 8.0, STATISTICA). ArcGIS Logistics10.3 software, digital maps, etc. are also used. It is possible to use process control modelling programmes Adonis, Flexsim, ARIS Cloud. The following programmes are suitable for teleworking: MS Teams, Zoom, Voov, Cisco Webex Meetings.

From pandemic period in Autumn 2020 the access to Adobe Creative, SPSS and other cloud software through remote computer classes was provided for Business field 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 programmes 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. Both teachers and student are informed by administration about where and how to register for use of the particular software in computer classrooms or laboratories, as well as about the new tools available, encouraging teachers to find ways to use their potential for their own courses and research, discussed in clusters and institutes.

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

The library conducts information literacy training, the aim of which is to provide knowledge about information resources, their search and access capabilities, to develop effective information search and selection skills, to acquaint with the principles of academic integrity, to provide information on correct citation of information sources in studies or

research. Video presentations are prepared for distance learning.

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 units¹⁶⁰. Members of VMU 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 website¹⁶¹.

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 (1,8 million in total). 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 databases¹⁶², VMU Research Management System (CRIS)¹⁶³ and VMU virtual library¹⁶⁴.

VMU community has access to almost 676 thousand electronic resources (410 thousand of e-books, 38 thousand of e-journals, 228 thousand of conference presentations, audio recordings, study theses, and other documents). The community also uses 61 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 Business field such 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 VMU 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

¹⁶⁰ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/about/structure/departments/> in EN

¹⁶¹ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-studies/facilities-and-study-spaces/booking-a-workspace/> in EN

¹⁶² See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/databases> in EN

¹⁶³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/cris/?&locale=en> in EN

¹⁶⁴ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/> in EN

resources. The most necessary printed documents are freely available to users and stored 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 website¹⁶⁵, electronic catalogues, in the virtual library, in VMU CRIS. The detailed review of library resources in Business field (33,500 of traditional documents, as well as 47,661 e-resources, 24 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. The system has accumulated over 65 thousand publications, almost 19 thousand records of final theses (ETD), almost 30 thousand el. documents: books, magazine articles, ETD, and other documents, over 10 thousand external links to full-text documents. VMU CRIS repository contains 41 titles of the University's electronic scientific journals.

A lot of teachers in Business field 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 their publications for studies - monographs, textbooks, study books in Lithuanian. Some examples: monograph of the team of authors "Organizations Management in the Environment of Uncertainties: Theory and Practice" and textbook "Organizations Management", "Internationalization of Company Activities: Theory and Practice" by P.Žukauskas, "Personnel Management" by I. Bakanauskienė, "Managerial Decisions: making and implementation"; by I. Bakanauskienė and A. Kyguolienė; "Electronic marketing" by A. Bakanauskas and V. Liesionis, "Integrated marketing communications" by A. Bakanauskas, etc.¹⁶⁶.

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

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 buildings have been renovated, creating more cosy and attractive spaces for students to work in teams, have a rest during breaks, take a snack, spend some time together gaming, watching films, etc. For example, Magnus eSports space¹⁶⁷ was established for students and professionals – social partners (School Basketball League, "Žalgiris" eSport team, etc.), where they could integrate eSports business practices to business studies, when eSport event is planned in advance. Administration constantly organized events and meetings offering an environment for building colleagues' network (paused during quarantine and started again).

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 example, 7 stationary (for classrooms) and mobile (for events, fairs, etc.) projectors, and 20 stationary computers are ordered in Maintenance and Investment Department and renewed this year at S.Daukanto street building.

¹⁶⁵ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/> in EN

¹⁶⁶ See <http://ebooks.vdu.lt/bookshelf/ekonomika-ir-vadyba/> in LT

¹⁶⁷ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magnus-esport/> in LT

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 were purchased for the needs of the Business field, which are currently in the supply stage; it is planned to further supplement material resources with project funds as soon as the 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 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 website¹⁶⁸. 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. For example, in 2021 the teacher in the *Business Administration* programme has ordered a new edition of the textbook for “Operations Management” course; the library confirmed the order that the textbook is available for purchase; a few months later, the library curator informed the teacher that the ordered textbook was already available in the library; before the autumn semester started, the teacher renewed the material and list of sources on course Moodle page and in the course description.

The social partners of the study programmes are interested in giving students the opportunity to get to know the business processes in practice, so the need for student internships is constantly being updated in cooperation with the social partner companies. During such internships, tripartite agreements are concluded, students practice in specific workplaces in such companies as JSC “Hegelman transporte”, JSC “Hoptrans Holding”, JSC “AIVARAI”, JSC “Kesko Senukai”, and other companies.

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for the study programme Business Logistics.

¹⁶⁸ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-research/purchase-request/in-EN>

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Learning facilities and resources</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Business Administration study programme		
1.	The fact that students may use the resources of other libraries is encouraging. However, this should not diminish the University's efforts to expand, and update recommended reading material. As already indicated, the sparsity of current textbooks for some courses/subjects is a cause of concern, despite the availability of suitable databases.	<p>In recent years, procedures have been simplified to order additional study materials and literature for teachers.</p> <p>According to the needs expressed by the teachers, the library promptly acquires the necessary textbooks, databases, or access to virtual teaching / learning materials.</p> <p>Faculty administration encourage teachers to constantly update the content of the study courses, to use the newest literature for periodical review and update the study courses content and resources. At the University level, teachers are certified for their courses applicability for online learning on the virtual learning environment Moodle. One of the points of this attestation is the topicality of study materials.</p> <p>The acquisition of the Bloomberg database at the Faculty has enriched the study materials as teachers can use the most up-to-date data on the business and its environment, both in lectures, seminars and in research.</p> <p>An additional study course Term Paper No. 1 was introduced in the study programme, so that students are encouraged to analyse the latest literature and business data, which would help them better prepare for the Final Thesis, as well as for future professional activities.</p>
2.	It is essential to ensure the ongoing relevance and appropriateness of information technology hardware and software. Such learning resources should be made available in sufficient quantities and be readily accessible for student and staff usage.	<p>Technological provision of studies and research is one of the priority areas of the University and the Faculty. Improvements in this area are taking place in several directions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Periodic discussions both with business representatives as well as teachers and students about the most relevant software needed in the study process. One of the latest steps (2021) is an updated accounting programme used in the lectures of Financial Accounting and Reporting in order to follow the market trends. - Newly developed Bloomberg workplaces allow students to access the latest and most comprehensive database of the business and its environment, both in their studies and in their research. The special procedures developed at the Faculty make this database available to all students with such a need. - Under extreme quarantine conditions, the Faculty was able to access the software necessary for studies and research even while working from home. - The research laboratories operating at the Faculty are also available to the students of the study programme "Business Administration". <p>(presented in more details in Section 6.1)</p>

Logistics and Commerce study programme

<p>1. Student participation in international mobility programmes and their knowledge of the English and Russian languages should be enhanced by offering more courses in these languages throughout the study programme or by promoting internships abroad. In this context, it would also be worth considering whether the relevant course material should include more foreign language items/databases.</p>	<p>Teachers constantly update the descriptions of study courses, providing the latest study material, in foreign languages as well, and links to international databases.</p> <p>VMU librarians supports teachers with available or ordered by request material (traditional or virtual) in foreign languages (see more details in sections 6.1 and 6.2.).</p> <p>Students participation in international mobility programmes are promoted (see more in section 3.3.).</p> <p>Students should reach at least B2 of English during first two years of studies by VMU regulation. They are offered additional levels (till A2), up to students choice. Russian, as well as 28 more language studies are available for programme's students.</p>
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Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of *Learning facilities and resources*

Strengths

- There is a sufficient number of high quality, newly renovated classrooms and study areas for the students in Business study field, where each classroom is equipped with technical devices, such as multimedia projector and computer, relevant software and specific equipment, and 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 Business field, VMU library regularly updates electronic and printed resources; number and constitution of licensed electronic databases are relevant to Business study field and provide students and teaching staff with full-text scientific articles and books online.

Areas for improvement

- Administration 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 Business field.

7. Study quality management and publicity

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

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 issues:

- VMU Statute¹⁶⁹ (2018) determines general principles of quality assurance of studies and research.
- VMU Study Regulations (2021, new edition) describe the process and responsibility distribution in study quality assurance.
- Description of Procedure for Study Quality Assurance at VMU¹⁷⁰ (2021, new edition) defines in more detail quality assurance processes, instruments, and responsibility when planning, implementing, and improving studies.
- Description of Procedure of Feedback for Improvement of Quality of Studies at VMU¹⁷¹ (2021, new edition) regulates gathering information from different stakeholders and data application as well as dissemination for evaluation and improvement of studies.
- Description of Procedure for Study Course Attestation at VMU¹⁷² (2019, new edition) determines evaluation of study courses in accordance with programme aims, learning outcomes and study process needs. This description requires the evaluation of courses to be performed at least every 3 years.

Compared with previous practices, described in the previous self evaluation report, the internal quality assurance in Business field 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 teachers or Heads of Departments, in equal level), what corresponds prevailing unique organizational culture in VMU's *Artes Liberales* tradition.

After the merger of universities in 2019, the main necessary changes in adapting studies in FBD to the study system of VMU *Artes Liberales* have been made and have been adopted VMU Study quality regulation. The coordination of study quality management between the two faculties in Business field is necessary and is already underway. Although joint strategic sessions had already been held before, the necessary cooperation between both faculties administration, the members of the SPC and the lecturers in the preparation of the Business field self evaluation report during 2021 provided a good impetus, as well as the activities of a special working group in Business field in order to identify and eliminate duplication of courses in Business field.

Studies are managed by the participation of the following parties, each having a particular role in the system: The Senate and Rector's Council of VMU, VMU Study Quality Unit, SPC, FEM Academic Council, the Agriculture Academy Council, the Faculties' Councils, the Deans of the Faculties and the Heads of the Departments (Heads of Graduate Study Centre, Undergraduate and Graduate Studies at FEM and Head of Department of Business and Rural Development Management at FBD).

¹⁶⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/VMU-STATUTE-EN-2018.pdf> in EN

¹⁷⁰ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VMU-Procedure-for-Study-QA_June-02-2021-edition.pdf in EN.

¹⁷¹ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VMU-Procedure-for-Feedback-Organisation_June-02-2021-edition.pdf in EN.

¹⁷² See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VMU-Procedure-for-Course-Attestation_Nov20-2019_edition.pdf in EN.

The Senate of VMU¹⁷³ ratifies study programmes, manages studies, discusses strategic issues of study programmes in the field, approves essential renewals of studies 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.

The Rector's Council of VMU¹⁷⁴ considers the issues of study, science, art, organization of economics, prepares the norms of academic workload, prepares projects of tuition fees and contribution amounts, drafts the procedure of admission of students to the University, considers proposals of competition commissions; considers and prepares drafts of the Study Regulations and its amendments; discusses the issues of distribution of the University's premises and territories to the subdivisions, etc.

VMU Study Quality Unit¹⁷⁵ is responsible for preparation and implementation of strategies for study quality assurance, development of internal quality assurance system of studies, initiation of training on evaluation and improvement of studies, consultations on study quality issues.

The SPC is the main coordinating body in the study programmes management and update process. The SPC makes decisions by common agreement, and they are documented as meeting minutes. SPC performs a periodic internal evaluation of particular study programme: in order to identify strengths and weaknesses of studies, SPC carries out the analysis of studies each year following the information of studies gathered by surveys and other methods as well as integrating the results of external evaluation. The annual analysis of the programmes includes the main issues as follows: compatibility between the programmes and newest research trends, correspondence between the programmes and labour market needs, demand of the programmes, suitability and sufficiency of the programmes resources, teachers' competence, students' progress, students', and teachers' mobility as well as other issues. The results of the analysis are discussed with the Heads of the Departments and the Deans of the Faculties, FEM Academic Council, the Faculties Councils, and they are also presented during the meetings with students, alumni, employers.

Results of the evaluation are applied by SPC to plan the actions for the improvement of programmes when preparing annual study programme improvement plans. These plans are developed, and their monitoring is carried out following the form that has been approved by the VMU Senate¹⁷⁶ (see example in section 7.3.). SPC is responsible for the implementation of the plans and discusses their progress in meetings twice a year. The improvement plans of all the programmes in the field are agreed with the management of the faculties, and they are presented for the Faculty Council. The decisions on the renewal of the programmes are made in cooperation with Study Department, International Cooperation Department, Library and other University divisions responsible for organization and administration of studies.

The SPC of each programme is composed of 7 members: the Head, 3 teachers, social partner, graduate, and student. 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 evaluation and preparation of quality improvement plans as well as monitors implementation of these plans.

¹⁷³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/senate/> in EN

¹⁷⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/rectors-council/> in LT

¹⁷⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/departments-and-subdivisions/studies-department/> in EN.

¹⁷⁶ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VMU-Procedure-for-Study-QA_June-02-2021-edition.pdf Annex 2 in EN.

- 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, course-related, didactic requirements, and trends. They disseminate good examples of international experience, carry out programme self-evaluation, 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.

Students can present suggestions in both SPC meetings and the Faculty Council through their representatives, also in conversations and regular meetings with the Heads of Departments. Social partners, teachers and students of the programme (as well as all administration staff related to its implementation) are encouraged to give programme update suggestions to SPC, especially during its meetings. Teachers are responsible for teaching quality, renewal of the course content and study materials, adoption of adequate teaching and learning methods and clear evaluation criteria¹⁷⁷. Teachers are asked during the first lecture of the semester, by Moodle, Outlook, Teams and other communication channels to discuss expectations about the course with the students. Also, due to the prevailing organizational culture based on immediate communication, teachers are usually able to ask students for their views on various aspects of study quality during the semester in order to be able to take them into account during the semester. During the last lecture, the prevailing practice among teachers is to openly discuss with students how many their expectations have been met, what competencies and at what level have been developed, what positive and negative aspects about teaching a particular course can be summarized and directions for improvement can be projected. An anonymous students' teaching and study evaluation survey of each course every semester helps the teacher to check and supplement the feedback about the taught course and to improve it. Teachers then analyze the results of the feedback and make suggestions for improvement during the meetings of SPC and FEM Academic Council. 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). 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 SPC's inquiries, initiatives, and decisions are discussed by SPCs representatives in FEM Academic Council or in the Advisory Commission for Studies and Science under the Council of the FBD and then approved by the Faculty Council. The Academic Council was founded in 2015 at FEM by the decision of the Faculty Council for periodical discussions on common issues of Heads of SPCs in the different study fields, Heads of the Departments, Dean and Vice-Deans on common issues and opportunities in study programmes management, as well as to monitor the internal quality assurance of the study programmes, ensure the conformity of the study programmes with the academic standards, the labour market, science

¹⁷⁷ 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, information on mobility, etc. These reports are fulfilled on an annual basis and serve as means of financial incentives.

community and society needs, internal human and material resources, to make recommendations due to the improvement of study programmes and processes. In 2019-2021 the Academic Council at FEM initiated and coordinated the processes of reviewing, updating, and preparing the study programmes, which included making decisions on forming several cross-faculty courses. 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 study courses certification every three years following VMU Order of Study Course Certification. At the same time, the content of particular courses is constantly reviewed and certified for distant or blended studies in Moodle as well. After the last certification in 2019, the teachers updated and improved the study 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. FEM Academic Council carried out an analysis of all courses taught, looking for possible duplication of content; overlaps have been eliminated by restructuring the content of courses, separating courses from each other, merging or even rejecting them (from 2021 in Business field, as in other separate fields of study, this task is performed by special working groups throughout the University). Finally, FEM Academic Council initiates and coordinates self evaluation processes of all study fields of the Faculty and visits of external experts according to the schedule provided by SKVC.

The Deans of the Faculties and the Heads of the Departments supervise the programmes implementation from the administrative point of view. The Head of Department approves of the curriculum related questions, 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. When making the decisions regarding the update of the programme, the SPC and the Heads of Departments collaborate with the Study Department and its Study Quality Unit, Vice-Rector for Studies, Student Affairs Department, 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.

FEM Council is responsible for the quality assurance of the Faculty study programmes in the 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, FEM Council approves the renewals of study programmes, results of study programmes' internal evaluation and study programmes' quality improvement plans. Meanwhile, the Councils of the Agriculture Academy and FBD have shared the functions on the basis of hierarchy. For example, the Council of the Agriculture Academy considers the issues of the study field once in the academic year and passes decisions on improvement of the field. The FBD Council considers the proposals of SPC on updates of the content of the study programme, reorganization of the study plan, discusses the implementation of the program, considers the commissions of the final exams and final theses as well as the defence results, emerging issues, and approves the documents regulating organization of the studies at the Faculty.

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

In order to increase the involvement of stakeholders, various ways of collecting their opinion are used: questionnaires, interviews, conversations, round table discussions, etc.

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 suggestions 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 FEM building and what they would like to improve, a year ago - how well students were prepared for distant learning in technical meaning; then a survey on how traditional and distant lectures are assessed by students was performed.
- 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 FEM Academic Council, Faculties' Councils, with the Heads of the Departments and the Deans of the Faculties, they are also presented during the meetings with students. After discussion of the issues and possibilities in the FEM 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.

University surveys are conducted using an electronic survey system, which is used to collect the results of surveys of different years; the results are conveniently and clearly displayed in the system. Access to the surveys' results is provided to the administration and SPC, who share aggregated information with teachers, students, and other stakeholders. Moreover, all teachers at the University have access to the detailed results of the survey on teaching and learning in their study courses they provide each semester in Teacher's Portal.

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 FEM Academic Council, Faculties Councils, for the Heads of the Departments and the Dean of the Faculty or via surveys.
- Students give their evaluations of studies through the student representative in the SPC and Faculty Council, via student surveys, discussions, conversations and in common in the Faculty 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 internships 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 programmes in Business field, therefore the constant contact with graduates and their employers is maintained, as well as cooperation agreements are signed 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 at FEM and collaboration opportunities with 10 potential business partners were further developed. Following a review of these companies, a database of selected social partners was created, comprising a total of 255 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, Hegelmann Transporte, Hoptrans Logistics, Baltic Transline, DPD Lietuva, Kesko Senukai Lithuania, Linas Agro, etc.

In the recent years, the contracts were either signed or renewed with Hegelmann Transporte JSC, Hoptrans holding JSC, the Customs Practice Association, Kesko Senukai Lithuania JSC, and new connections have been developed intensively with Mantinga JSC, Lithuanian National Road Carriers' Association Linava, Kaunas Carriers' Club for the purpose of development and implementation of the study programmes, establishment of the internship placements, students' career development, conduction of joint research work, provision of additional benefits to the students, etc. In the academic year 2021-2022, it is planned to sign cooperation agreements with such organizations as PI Green Policy Institute, Kurana JSC, Roquette/Amilina AB, Tomegris JSC. Currently, negotiations are being held with these organizations on conduction of research, development of the professional practice

internship, establishment of scholarships for encouragement of active students, preparation and implementation of the study projects, and other relevant measures for enhancement of the quality of studies and motivation. Planning of joint activities together with the Ministry of Agriculture has already started as well. One of the activities is modelling of the possibilities for establishment of regional logistics centres enabling formation of the local farmers' product baskets according to the consumers' (educational and other public bodies or state companies) orders. This would enable development of the students' professional internship placement, commissioned research, etc. Development of cooperation with the social partners is in line with the relevant measures of enhancement of the quality of studies and motivation as well as consistent and comprehensive possibilities for development of the Business field programmes.

The organizations actively provide recommendations on the correspondence of the study programmes to the labour market demands, appropriateness of the practical abilities gained by the students, and accept the students of the study programmes for professional internship. After the internship, the students are often offered to resume their professional careers at the companies and take various positions, starting with that of a manager and up to the leading positions. For example, to ensure the quality of organization of the professional internships, a joint project "Gerapraktika.lt" was conducted in 2019 in association with the Lithuanian Confederation of Employers, placing particular focus on development of cooperation between the University and business companies. The project was aimed at enhancing the organization of students' professional internship, as well as integrating the practice of social partners into preparation of the specialists and development of their modern competences on the labour market. The following is another example demonstrating how social partners become engaged in the processes of education of practical skills and evaluation of assignments under the courses of the *Logistics and Commerce* study programme. In the Spring semester 2019, Martynas Gelgotas, representative of Itoma, JSC, contributed to the organization of smart practice, and problem cases of an actual company were offered to 16 students to explore the solution scenarios and activities. The students were developing their practical skills and enhancing the thinking and abilities based on entrepreneurship. The students' knowledge and resourcefulness were assessed by the company and its representative M. Gelgotas who was also the member of the committee for the *Logistics and Commerce* study programme.

Involvement of social partners in the internal quality assurance of studies in Business 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 Councils 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 co-operation with companies and their representatives during internships, where students solve business-relevant tasks during internship, take place.

Business studies are particularly enriched by the involvement of the social partners in lecturing, which provides opportunities to develop students' practical skills. Specific examples of targeted cooperation with the social partners are shared section 4.1.

In networking with the social partners during meetings, Business field staff representatives seek to engage in discussion and pursue the views of the social partners on

the relevance of certain business 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.

The alumni's recommendations are received during the surveys, by communicating with them as the ambassadors of the study programmes by email, phone, on the social media, at various meetings, organized by the alumni club "Agriculture Academy Alumni Club". For example, the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* and second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* have already released a large number of active and promising alumni who are employed as middle and top managers at business companies. The following are a few examples of the alumni of the study programmes engaging in development and assurance of the quality of the study programmes. A. Grybauskas, one of the main ambassadors of the both study programmes and current social partner actively participates in internal quality assurance of the studies: he delivers lectures, holds practical classes, actively works with the students who are interns at his company, and is the face of the study programmes in terms of the image thereof. Another alumnus, S. Šegždaitė, who has become the face and ambassador of the study programme *Logistics and Commerce*, actively shares the practical experience gained during the internship and current employment at a company with the community on the Faculty website, FB, and videos.

The students are mobilised by the University's Student Representative Council that delegates the student representatives to act as members of the Faculty Council, Teacher Attestation Commission, and SPCs. The students are always invited to join the Dean's Office, community meetings. The students are welcome to express their opinion about the studies during the dedicated surveys and share recommendations directly during the surveys or via the student representatives at the Faculty Councils, SPCs, or by communicating with the teachers directly. The Deans and heads of Departments meet with the monitors of the student groups regularly, and the Heads of SPCs also hold active discussions with the monitors on the issues of the quality of studies at the start and end of each semester.

Cooperation with schoolchildren, which are study programmes stakeholders and have interests in them as well, also takes place: lectures and consultations in Junior Achievement student training companies take place, lecturers participate in Junior Achievement fairs / competitions as members of the commission; students schoolchildren are introduced to the VMU FEM eSport area, tournaments are held here; during the joint initiative of 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 and the studies offered here, etc. The schoolchildren learn the information about the specific study programme in the Business field when engaging in the activities proposed by the Smart Pupil's Academy during individual classes (e.g., one of the Entrepreneurship Education classes included the lectures and active assignments on the relevant topic of "The Future Trends of the Logistics Business", lect. dr. A. Čapienė). The school children are invited to join the lectures with the students where they can listen to the teachers and social partners' lectures, complete the assignments developed by the social partners (e.g., in the Spring semester 2021, webinar "Try the Profession with the Professionals!" was held. During the webinar, A. Maknavičius, Director of Logistics and Sale at Mantinga JSC, delivered his lecture "Logistics Giving Wings to the Products" and provided creative assignments. Both the schoolchildren and the students had the chance to win great prizes for successful completion of the assignments). The schoolchildren perform creative assignments (e.g., in the Spring semester

2019, the schoolchildren and students performed creative assignments at the practical classes of the study course Marketing and developed the plans/programmes for marketing and distribution of bioproducts). When participating in various academic, creative activities proposed by the faculties, the school children have the chance to learn about the study programme and its teachers, students beforehand, and their recommendations enable identifying a clear strategy for marketing of the studies, improve the presentation of the first cycle study programmes to the society, as well as to respond to schoolchildren opinions and evaluation on studies in order to improve study programmes in Business field.

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-evaluation and improvement. Annual analysis of studies allows us to identify shortcomings in time and take necessary actions for improvement. Teaching and learning quality evaluation 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 evaluation invites students to think over their own learning and consider possibilities for improvement.

Quality evaluation 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 course-specific recommendations lead to improvement.

Questionnaire of stakeholders is a widely used method for determining their opinion, while targeted discussions, interviews and conversations help to gather deeper insights and suggestions for improving the quality of studies. For example, the results of teachers' questionnaire are meaningfully supplemented by the results of teachers' interviews on the factors determining the quality of studies. Targeted discussions by faculties /academies and interviews with students help to identify more clearly the advantages and problems of studies as well as to anticipate their solutions.

Results of the evaluation (results of surveys and stakeholder discussions, statistical data, external experts' conclusions, etc.) are applied in the improvement of studies by preparing study programme Improvement plans and implementing them in order to eliminate the identified shortcomings. The following example (in Table 23) is an illustration from the Improvement plan of *Business and Entrepreneurship* study programme in 2021:

Table 23. An example of the Improvement plan of *Business and Entrepreneurship* study programme in 2021

Areas for the improvement of the study programme	Planned actions	Action links to survey and external evaluation results	Responsible persons	Timeline	Implementation results: information on actions taken
Review / update of the learning outcomes of the study programme according to the new Descriptor of the Study Field of Business	View / update the aim, uniqueness, and learning outcomes of the study program according to the new Descriptor of the Study Field of Business, and update the course descriptions accordingly	-	Head of SPC assoc. prof. dr. Sonata Staniulienė	01/09/2021-30/06/2022	Renewed for Autumn semester, 2021
Optimization of students' research work	Proceed to one research paper that does not belong to a specific course, but to all courses of the study programme, assessed during the defence, providing feedback to improve students' skills in preparing their final thesis. Prepare specific requirements for the preparation of the research paper and the Moodle page of the course	During the student surveys (2020), the need was expressed to better balance the workload of written assignments in different courses during the semester (students ¹ made an observation that the workload in preparing research papers is too high considering their employment)	Head of SPC assoc. prof. dr. Sonata Staniulienė Teachers of the programme: assoc. prof. dr. R. Bendaravičienė prof. dr. I. Bakanauskienė Prof. dr. G. Jucevičius Prof. dr. N. Petkevičiūtė assoc. prof. dr. O. Stripeikis assoc. prof. dr. R. Legenzova assoc. prof. dr. Miglė Šontaitė - Petkevičienė	01/09/2021-30/06/2022	Implemented since new admission in Autumn, 2021. Moodle page will be prepared till 01/02/2021

Consistent monitoring of studies helps to make systematic improvements.

The results of teaching quality evaluation 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.

Results of internal evaluation (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 took 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 Unit periodically suggests new data for review, and the SPCs and lecturers are encouraged to take an interest in them.

The results of each student survey are presented and discussed at the VMU Rectorate, with the participation of FEM and FBD representatives, then in the Faculty Council, in the extended FEM Academic Council meetings, and in the SPCs, which propose, discuss, and approve programmes improvement decisions. Representatives of FEM and FBD 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.

The External Evaluation Reports on study programmes Business field were received in 2013, 2014 and 2017, that provided the expert recommendations on programmes' improvement. Shortly after the evaluation, SPCs started examining the potential alternative directions of programmes development and conducted the changes. Later examples of programmes management and improvement follow.

After experts recommendations received in 2013, the study programme *Business Administration* was complemented with the course of Business Ethics and Social Responsibility both in response to the comments expressed by the self-evaluation experts and to the market demand expressed by the social partners of the study programme. This study course allows students not only to acquire special skills, but also to develop the basic values and attitudes necessary for a graduate of this study programme. The study programme was also complemented with an optional study course EU Financial System both in response to the comments expressed by the self-evaluation experts and to the market demand. This course allows to deepen the knowledge in the field of financial environment and to expand the knowledge about the influence of the European Union on the business environment.

In the study programme *Business Administration*, co-faculty courses have been introduced, which unite students of several study programmes and are intended to acquaint them with the basics of different study fields, which is especially relevant for students of the study programme *Business Administration* due to its specificity and orientation towards a versatile management specialist. The pursuit of universality in the training of business management professionals requires the provision of basic knowledge and skills in various areas of business management.

Additional Term Paper has been also introduced to strengthen students' research skills. The Term Paper No 1 is more focused on the ability to perform critical analysis of scientific literature, to formulate and justify the main objective and research problem of the scientific work, and to write a scientific text. In the second year, students' research skills are supplemented with knowledge of research methods, formation of research methodology,

research performance, interpretation of research results and critical evaluation while working on the Term Paper No 2.

The study programme *Business Administration* has been complemented with several updated courses from C group: Competitiveness and Innovation, Small Business Management and Marketing. These study courses were introduced in order to adapt to market trends and the need for a business management specialist to know both innovations and the peculiarities of small business, which dominates Lithuanian companies.

The study programme was complemented with four optional study courses in the field of marketing: Brand Management, Digital Marketing, Visual Communication in Marketing and Business to Business Marketing. These elective study courses allow the student to choose this direction of additional skills formation and to accumulate additional baggage of marketing skills throughout the study years. The study programme was complemented with the optional study courses Taxes and Taxation and Performance Measurement Systems. These additional optional study courses allow the student to choose this direction of additional skills formation and to accumulate additional baggage of financial skills throughout the study years.

Considering popularity of study programme *Business Administration* among athletes, Sports Management specialization was introduced in the study programme meeting demand and considering the study programmes' portfolio at the Faculty. In particular, the successful launch of the second cycle study programme *Sports Business Management* has made it possible for first cycle students to choose related courses within the *Business Administration* study programme to successfully pursue a master's degree in the future. The need for this specialization is also increased by the large number of students who represent VMU sports teams at various levels of competitions. These students are also interested in having a choice of study courses related to sports business management.

In view of the survey results, amendment of the content, study plan of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* was started for them to correspond to the VMU *Artes Liberales* principles, as the students had proposed expanding the choice of the courses and foreign languages. In view of the students' remarks on the overlapping of the content of study courses, all the courses of the study programme were reviewed in the academic year 2019-2020, the sequence of courses was amended, and the study plan of the final year was improved by removing the course of Service Marketing (4 ECTS), reducing the volume of the course Logistics and Commerce Project Management down to 4 ECTS, and increasing the volume of the course Business Communication up to 4 ECTS. The teachers also prepared new descriptions of the study courses by updating the content in view of the recent developments in science, modern practical developments related to the topic of each course. The descriptions of all courses were considered at SPC with one reviewer assigned to each description, and then the descriptions were certified. SPC also passed the decisions to update the study plan in the academic year 2021-2022 by increasing the volume of the internship up to 15 ECTS, thereby extending the duration of internship at the companies; amending the curriculum by eliminating the irrelevant study courses; updating the contents of the topics of the study courses (Human Resource Management, Business Law, Quality Management, Trade Management and e- Commerce, Consumer Behaviour, Business Planning and Evaluation). In view of the survey results, the decisions were made to encourage the teachers to seek certification of the courses for level II and III, plan teacher training on the use of innovative teaching/learning methods, make the feedback process and information dissemination more effective by holding more intensive and frequent meetings between the Dean, Head of SPCs, students (at least twice a semester), presenting SPC activity, inviting the students to engage

in the activities of quality improvement. The coordinators of the Agriculture Academy administration group plan to hold centralized meetings twice a semester with the group monitors and discuss the challenges of studies, possibilities for improvement of the quality of studies, and possibilities for engagement of active measures.

In view of the recommendations provided by the experts during the previous external evaluation, students' evaluations, upon hearing of the remarks by the social partners and academic community, SPC of the second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* passed the decisions on improvement of the study programme during the period of evaluation. For example, in the academic year 2019-2020, the content of the study programme was amended according to the study principles of VMU, the course descriptions were prepared, and the attestation thereof was performed. Other amendments of the study programme *Business Logistics*: study programme plan was reorganized and the theoretical courses of general character (Behaviour of Business Organizations in the Global Market and Strategic Financial Management of Business) were removed; the course Management of Logistics Innovation was amended and became the course of Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments. The following courses were introduced into the study plan: Logistics Innovation Internship to provide the students with the possibility to gain deeper understanding of the practical aspects of innovation application and its benefit at actual logistics companies, and Logistics Information Technologies to provide the students with the theoretical and practical knowledge about the modern logistics information systems and specifics of their application and management. To improve the content of studies, the teachers added and integrated the topics of information technologies into the content of courses (Designing and Modelling of the Logistics Systems, Applied Research of Logistics, Management Decisions Modelling), practical and independent work assignments. The decision to work with software application Infotrans during the practical classes was made. In view of the students' opinions and recommendations, the course of Agriculture and Food Logistics Technology Management delivered by the teachers of the Faculty of Engineering was amended for its content to be focused on the engineering solutions. Upon consideration of all the parties' arguments, it was decided that the study course was necessary for the students of Business Logistics; however, its content had to be adapted to the formation of knowledge and skills as the learning outcome of the studies in the field of Business by modifying the practical assignments, laboratory works, reviewing the content of the study course, its evaluation system, as well as taking into account the students' learning needs. Hence, under the decision of SPC, the content of description of the study course was amended at the end of the academic year 2021, and the teachers reviewed their methods and parts of the evaluation system applied by them. More active efforts to invite business representatives to deliver lectures related to practical application of IT solutions have been planned. The Improvement plan has been developed for the academic year 2021-2022 and provides the following improvement actions: to organize training on the use of innovative teaching methods for the teachers of the study programme; to encourage at least some of the teachers to pursue internship at the logistics companies (1 month) for improvement of the practical skills related to the course and integration thereof into the course content; to prepare the materials for the courses (Management of Logistics Innovation and Investments, Logistics Information Technologies, Business Strategic Development) for the purpose of attestation of the level II of blended remote studies; to conclude the cooperation agreements with the suppliers (e.g., for acquisition of the software (Equinox – warehouse management; SAP – business management; GSM Tasks – fleet management) to be used for the study courses.

Another example of the second cycle study programme development is of the study programme of *Business and Entrepreneurship*. In order to increase competitiveness and attractiveness of the study programme, taking into account short duration of study programme, changes of courses, ECTS and sequence of the courses were done in 2019-2020. Proposals for changes were based on detail analysis of student's feedback from surveys, other second cycle study programmes in a field of Business both in and outside of Lithuania, requirements provided for Business field positions in job advertisements, supply and demand of courses in private training sector. Instead of three Term Papers of 4 ECTS, 1 Term Paper of 6 ECTS and Entrepreneurship Project course of 6 ECTS were introduced, as well as courses of Entrepreneurial Marketing and Leadership in Business, with the aim to provide complex knowledge, skills and abilities in *Business and Entrepreneurship*, to focus on business practice with deepened focus on business start-upping and development.

The next example is in the second cycle study programme of *Sports Business Management*, where following the aim of the programme and considering changing environment and students' proposals, in each course guest professors and guest social partners were introduced to the programme. For example, in Sports Management module guest professor prof. dr. Giorgio Prodi (University of Bologna) and guest speaker – Lukas Laska (Marketing Manager at MH Sports Marketing) were invited to deliver their competencies from sports business management area.

All decisions regarding studies (including issues on evaluation 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 stakeholders. The results are published on VMU website, emailed to students and teachers, stored in Outlook public folders, delivered in social media, and shared by other channels, i.e., information on study quality and measures taken to improve it is announced in the Annual Report of Faculty Activities, SKVC and LAMA BPO website, and so on. The conclusions of the previous evaluations and the progress reports of the study programmes are also presented on the VMU website next to the description of the programmes.

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

- „AIKOS“ – open information, consulting and guidance system, established by the Ministry of Education¹⁷⁸;
- VMU website¹⁷⁹;
- FEM website¹⁸⁰ and FBD website¹⁸¹;

¹⁷⁸ See <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Pages/Default.aspx> in EN.

¹⁷⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/231/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/289/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/321/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/249/> in LT and <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/267/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/show/299/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/show/311/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/show/297/> in EN. 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.

¹⁸⁰ 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.

¹⁸¹ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/faculties/faculty-of-bioeconomy-development/studies/study-programmes/> in EN

- On Facebook¹⁸²;
- Websites of social partners' companies.

The collection of feedback information is coordinated, the data is analysed and summarized, the results are stored and made public by the University divisions that organize the collection of specific feedback information: VMU Study Quality Unit is responsible for centralized study quality surveys, other surveys are handled by the administration of faculties, SPC, Student representation, Career Centre, etc. Detailed information on the responsibilities for feedback is provided in the Description of Procedure of Feedback for Improvement of Quality of Studies at VMU¹⁸³.

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 surveys of first year, every semester, EXIT students and graduates is obtained through annually organized and conducted at VMU. Additional surveys in FEM and FBD are conducted on demand. For instance, in a survey conducted in the spring semester 2020 during start of the pandemic of Covid-19, 43% of students rated their general condition as indefinite, 37% - as good or very good, other – poor, so, it tended to be rated as average. Nevertheless, 74% of the respondents assessed 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 good by 56% of respondents, 24% rated it as average.

VMU Study Quality Unit conducts an annual first cycle students survey, showing that studies meet expectations for 85% of students of *Business Administration* study programme, 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 answers to open questions for graduating students about what they liked, they outline friendly, modern, and liberal professors and their lectures, which gave them a lot of life-experience, the atmosphere, wide opportunities to build suitable schedule of lectures, high study quality, the readiness of staff to solve most of the problems which arise in the process. In the analysis of areas for improvement the following remarks were made: the access and scheduling of common for every student of VMU courses from group A and B, duration and frequency of foreign language lectures, difficulties to quickly move from building to building during the breaks between group A and B lectures, complaints about the absence of a canteen and lack of parking spaces, inconvenience of the student portal, etc., what is not in jurisdiction of the Faculty. In preparing for the labour market students 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 *Business Administration* – 3.69; students were able to consult with teachers (3.54); opportunities for international mobility were provided (3.38); the equipment of auditoriums, laboratories and other study premises was adequate (3.46); the study load was right (3.56); the content of the study courses correspond to the purpose of the study programme (3.19); lectures, seminars, laboratory work and other study

¹⁸² See <https://www.facebook.com/vytauto.didziojo.universitetas/>, <https://www.facebook.com/VDUEVF> and <https://www.facebook.com/vdubpf> in LT.

¹⁸³ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VMU-Procedure-for-Feedback-Organisation_June-02-2021-edition.pdf in EN

sessions met expectations (3.46); the cooperation with the Final Thesis advisor was smooth (3.63); the defence procedure was correct and followed (3.67); in summary, the quality of the study programme is adequate (3.08). The contribution to graduates' preparation for labour market appeared being high or very high in first cycle study programme *Business Administration* - 94% (improved by 18 p.p. in the period of 2019-2021).

In general, the students of the first cycle study programme *Logistics and Commerce* who participated in the quality evaluation survey identified the following advantages: the studies are on demand, convenient schedule, the provided knowledge is relevant to the labour market. Nonetheless, the students also identified the aspects to be improved in relation to the content of the study courses, improvement of practical skills of working with the software applications, longer duration of the practice internship, application of inclusive teaching methods, provision of feedback, and dissemination of information. The students' survey assessing teaching and learning is one of the most popular and active surveys. In general, according to the students of the study programme *Logistics and Commerce* who participated in the survey in 2019-2021 (the results of the survey on teaching and learning are presented on the scale of 1 to 10), the students identified teachers' compliance with the professional ethics (score 9.33), availability of the main study information in the VMU Moodle or other distance learning environment (9.17), adding examples to the content of the course lectures (9.04), provision of teachers' feedback on the assignments completed (8.77), good organization of the teaching process (8.73), as the most important benefits of teaching of the courses. In general, the students gave the score of 8.87 to the teaching, which demonstrated high satisfaction of the students of the study programme with the studies and supported the fact that the studies met their expectations. When analysing the students' open opinions about the aspects to be improved, different opinions could be observed in the survey. It should be noted that where problem aspects of a specific teacher's work were indicated in the survey (e.g., lack of use of the innovative teaching methods by the teacher, failure to provide the materials in the distance learning environment Moodle, lack of clarity in the evaluation system of the course, large volumes of assignments and lack of time to complete them during the evaluation period), SPC reviews the opinion provided by the students and analyses the described situation with the Dean, Vice-Dean, the teacher and considers the measures for improvement. 55 students of the study programme of *Logistics and Commerce* approaching the end of their studies participated in the EXIT survey (from June 2020 to June 2021). The students approaching the end of studies generally assessed the quality of studies as good 3.38 points (in scale of 4 points). However, when asked to specify the weaknesses, the answers "nothing was missing" were noticed in most of the opinions, and a few opinions included greater need for the lectures deepening the practical knowledge, work principles, and communication skills in logistics and commerce. Decisions on improvement of the quality of study programme *Logistics and Commerce* were adopted in view of the survey results and described in subsection 7.3.

The students of the second cycle study programme *Business Logistics* provided good evaluation of the study programme quality (3.43 out of 4 points; in EXIT survey), expressed positive views about the great teachers of the study programme, and referred to the benefit of the hybrid remote studies. It has been noticed that the survey on teaching and learning is also popular among the students of the study programme *Business Logistics*. The Master's degree students who participated in the survey on teaching and studying in the period analysed (2019-2021) gave 8.64 points (out of 10) to the teaching in general. The open comments on the teaching generally show that both the foreign and the Lithuanian students

participated actively in the survey (86 comments were provided in total), where they specified both the advantages (teachers' competence, provision of the necessary new high-level knowledge in logistics, specific teachers' professionalism in communication and cooperation with the students, ability to incite interest) and the aspects to be improved (lack of the diversity of new teaching methods; benefit of specific course Logistics Technology Management in Agriculture and Food Products, large volume of assignments, lack of clarity of the evaluation thereof; lack of broader application of the IT technologies, aspects to be improved in the organization of specific teachers' work and submission of the materials; greater applicability of the courses to the remote work; the benefits of practice). It has been noticed that the students also provided good evaluation of their work in the studies (8.71 points). During the period analysed, in view of the evaluations by the students of *Business Logistics*, SPC adopted the decisions in relation to improvement of the study programme described in section 7.3.

In second cycle studies in Business field more of qualitative approach of gathering students' opinions on study quality was chosen. It is so because the number of students it is possible to gather data from is not so big, especially in the first years of executing it, as well as because deeper insights and testimonials were preferred to react aptly, having in mind, that most of the students are already experienced in labour market and are able to evaluate the added value of service delivered by the study programme and to give valuable insights for further study programme's improvement. For example, every year students of *Business and Entrepreneurship* study programme are asked to fill in answers to several open questions in the questionnaire about all courses and the study programme overall. From EXIT survey, the contribution to graduates' preparation for labour market appeared being high or very high in second cycle study programme *Business and Entrepreneurship* – 89% (improved by 41 p.p.). In *Sports Business Management* study programme testimonials¹⁸⁴ and feedback sessions are common practice after each live sessions students gather in the designated place (VMU, EBI or Final Four location). SPCs, Heads of departments, and other stakeholders are analysing this data after each feedback session. Students remarks and the decisions after them for improvement of the study programmes are described in section 7.3.

Summarizing the named advantages of Business 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 each identified study disadvantage was taken very seriously by the staff: some courses were changed to more practical ones by inviting practitioners to teach, the latest software is used (see section 6.1. for details), requirements of the Final Thesis of Business field study programmes were unified and reviewed, more contact time is devoted to their explanation, defence procedures are more carefully considered and implemented.

This confirms the value of Business field study programmes for graduates and the high level of quality of these studies¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁴ See <https://www.sportsbusinessmba.net/alumni/> in EN

¹⁸⁵ A more comprehensive analysis of the survey data is available on VMU intranet and can be showed by request: Outlook Public Folders → Study Quality.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Study quality management and publicity</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Business administration study programme		
1.	<p>The University's ongoing attention to curriculum design and review should continue to utilise feedback gathered from students/graduates/social partners/employers, and all other stakeholders. Regarding suggestions for further improvement, some student opinion has indicated that there seems to be an insufficient linkage between the content of certain courses/subjects and the world of work. There is also a need for additional case study material to enhance the practical dimension of the programme.</p>	<p>The feedback systems of the various stakeholders are constantly being improved and it has already become common practice to continuously improve the quality of studies and their organization, taking into account the comments and recommendations from these feedbacks (for more information on the changes in the programme, see section 7.3.). Over the past nine years, the content and curriculum of the programme have been reviewed and redesigned to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved and more focused on the specialization of business management and the needs of the labour market. The study plan of the programme has been updated to take into account the comments of the students on the content of the programme and to increase the competitiveness of the programme as well. The study programme was supplemented with compulsory (e.g., Business Ethics and Social Responsibility, Business Law) and optional (e.g. EU Financial System) study courses so that students could not only develop basic skills, but also acquire additional skills in finance or marketing as well as to specialize in sports business management. In response to the comments about the lack of focus on the practical aspects of the disciplines taught, the content and teaching methods of all courses in the study programme were reviewed. In the updated courses, theoretical lectures make up a small part, the rest of the time is devoted to Problem Based Learning (PBL) or similar methodology-based studies, analysing real business situations and proposing solutions. Teachers were given the opportunity to improve their qualifications in this field and to learn new teaching methods that would involve students more in practical activities (e.g., trainings organized by the Centre for Innovative Studies specifically for the Faculty teachers; opportunities to go on internships abroad or participate in distance learning abroad). Teachers of study courses are encouraged to invite experts to lectures during which they share practical aspects of the study content. Some practitioners are also involved in seminar activities, both by providing real-life tasks to students and by contributing to the evaluation of solutions offered by students (e.g., Business Ethics and Social Responsibility; Brand Management). Students acquire practical skills during both Introduction and Qualification Internships (17 ECTS or 452 academic hours in total). During the Introduction Internship, students can apply their knowledge to make business management decisions in a simulated reality of a business organization that are very similar</p>

		to real-world decisions in business enterprises and gain a general understanding of future professional activities. Qualification Internship provides an opportunity to apply their knowledge and skills in a real environment while working in a chosen organization.
Logistics and Commerce study programme		
3.	Social partners should be informed better about the contents of the programme to help them monitor how effectively their inputs are integrated into the curriculum.	<p>The social partners have been included into SPC, they participate systematically in the activities of SPC, defence of Final Theses, and meetings by providing recommendations on improvement of the quality of studies, improvement of organization of professional practice internship, Final Thesis topics relevant for the business, preparation of joint projects, etc.</p> <p>The communication with the social partners is regular and systematic: they are invited to the round-table meetings/discussions where their opinion about the outcomes of the study programme, formation of competences is heard and decisions on improvement of the content of the study programme are made. E.g., during the period analysed, the meetings between the members of SPC and the representatives of business organizations (JSC Hegelmann Transporte, JSC Kamida, JSC DPD Lietuva, etc.) were held to discuss the expectations of the social partners in relation to implementation of the study programme and preparation of the specialists holding the required competences.</p> <p>The social partners are invited to join the lectures of the study courses and enrich them with own lectures.</p> <p>During the Autumn and Spring semesters of each academic year, the information and communication means are sent to the social partners to update them on the possibilities of the executed study programme by also inviting the employees of the social partner companies to enroll in the continuing or Additional studies.</p> <p>The fair of internship placements was organized in 2019. At the fair, the participating business organizations were provided with the information on the logistics study programmes executed at the Faculty, their specifics, advantages, and the qualities of the future specialists.</p> <p>The content of the study programme is also presented to the social partners during the organized visits to the companies.</p>
5.	Internal coordination should be enhanced so as to be brought more in line with the established formal	<p>The internal coordination has been improved by clear distribution of the activities and responsibilities among the members of SPC for assurance of the quality of studies and project management between different management levels. In the period analysed, Vice-Dean for the Quality of Studies was responsible for the internal quality coordination process (currently – the study administration coordinator at the Agriculture Academy) who, together with SPC, Dean, Institute/Department, and other quality</p>

<p>procedures of internal quality assurance and programme management.</p>	<p>employees, formed effective performance of the internal quality assurance system and cultivation of the quality culture at the Faculty.</p> <p>The internal quality assurance and coordination processes are clearly described in the Description of Procedure for Study Quality Assurance at VMU, Description of Procedure of Feedback for Improvement of Quality of Studies at VMU, Description of Procedure for Study Courses Attestation at VMU of the, the provisions of which are followed in implementation of the study programme and study quality assurance.</p> <p>During the period analysed, the composition of SPC was amended several times by including active teachers, social partners, and students into the Committee activities. SPC composition was amended, considered at the FBD Council, and approved by the Order of the Chancellor of the Agriculture Academy: 26 September 2019 and 27 October 2020.</p> <p>In the academic year 2019/2020, the members of SPC distributed the responsibility for the areas of analysis of implementation of the study programme as defined in the Description of the Procedure of Study Quality Assurance of VMU, for assurance of efficiency and performance of organization of the work.</p> <p>Clause 32 of the Description of the Procedure of Study Quality Assurance of VMU, specifies the areas of analysis of implementation of the study programme conducted on the annual basis. The internal evaluation of the study programme is conducted in view of the areas, and the improvement actions are planned according to the results of evaluation.</p>
<p><i>Business Logistics study programme</i></p>	
<p>5. Social partners may be also considered to have a stronger and more regular impact on formulating the set of learning outcomes as well.</p>	<p>In the period analysed, the composition of SPC was amended by including the representatives of companies JSC Kesko Senukai, JSC Hegelmann Transporte, JSC Hoptrans holding who actively provided/provide recommendations and remarks on a regular basis. In view of the above, SPC amended the learning outcomes of the study programme, updated the study plan in line with the learning outcomes.</p> <p>The compositions of SPC were amended by the Order of the Chancellor of the Agriculture Academy: of 26 September 2019 and 27 October 2020.</p> <p>For closer cooperation with the regular social partners, the collaboration contracts were signed for the purpose of development and constant improvement of the study programme, study process, and research projects: e.g., in the academic year 2021/2022 – JSC Kesko Senukai, in the academic year 2020/2021 - JSC Hegelmann Transporte, UAB Hoptrans holding, Customs Practitioners Association.</p>

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 Business field 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. Responsibility for decision and monitoring of programmes' implementation is clearly defined and supported.
- All types of data on study programmes implementation and its evaluation are being regularly collected; issues of study programmes management are regularly discussed at SPC of a particular study programme in Business field, the Deans' Offices, the Faculties' and Councils meetings.
- The improvements made to the programmes reflect the inputs and recommendations from all stakeholders during internal and external evaluations. Advice from experts is taken into consideration, revision and implementation of the programmes is coordinated with social partners as well. Business field in 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 anonymity, the number of students and alumni participating in state and VMU level surveys from Business 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, internal surveys in faculties were started to conduct and appear to be more inclusive and bring more relevant feedback for SPCs.
- To pursue further integration and coordination of the quality management of Business field studies and the improvement of study programmes through faculties' joint efforts via regular meetings to address common strategic and study quality management issues.