

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY



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MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
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Field of Study:

MANAGEMENT (L02)

Second study cycle

SELF EVALUATION REPORT

December 2022

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.	Corporate Strategic Management	6211LX046	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (2 academic years)	120	Master of Business Management	Lithuanian	Bachelor's degree	04/06/1997	-	K. Donelaicio str. 52, Kaunas
2.	International Executive MBA	6211LX047	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (1,5 academic years)	90	Master of Business Management	English	Bachelor's degree	16/11/2006		K. Donelaicio str. 52, Kaunas
3.	Agricultural Business Management	6211LX056	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Part time (3 academic years)	120	Master of Business Management	Lithuanian	Bachelor's degree	19/05/1997	-	Universiteto str. 10, Akademija, Kaunas distr.
4.	Agri-Food Business Management	6281LX006	U (university studies)	Master (second cycle)	Full time (2 academic years)	120	Master of Business Management	English	Bachelor's degree	09/05/2018	-	Universiteto str. 10, Akademija, Kaunas distr.

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In line with the Methodology, there was Self Evaluation Group organized for the second cycle study programmes in the field of Management. The group was formed by the Deans of the faculties on 10th of February 2022 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 February 2022, where the progress in development of the report, the analysis of different areas of the study programmes in Management field implementation have been discussed till the submission of the report in December 2022.

CONTENT

INTRODUCTION	5
ANALYSIS OF FIELD AND CYCLE OF STUDIES	9
1. Study aims, outcomes and content	9
2. Links between science (art) and study activities	52
3. Student admission and support	68
4. Studying, student performance and graduate employment	84
5. Teaching staff	97
6. Learning facilities and resources	108
7. Study quality management and publicity	119
ANNEXES:	
ANNEX 1. STUDY FIELD PROGRAMMES' PLANS	
ANNEX 2. LIST OF FINAL THESES	
ANNEX 3. STAFF LIST	
ANNEX 4. VMU LIBRARY RESOURCES IN MANAGEMENT FIELD	
ANNEX 5. AGREEMENT ON COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF JOINT STUDY PROGRAMME	
AGRI-FOOD BUSINESS MANAGEMENT	

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.

Management 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 Executive MBA* programme which is organized at Baltic Management Institute (hereinafter - BMI), the leading Lithuanian

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

executive school, in Vilnius. FEM has undergraduate (bachelor), 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 has 769 students in all three cycles of studies, 61 academic staff personnel members and 5 employees of non-academic staff.

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 6 administrators (for bachelors, masters, and doctoral study process, for international relationship, for research activities and for students internships) 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. In 2022 FBD had a total of 497 students (275 bachelor students and 222 master students), 15 PhD students, 42 members of the teaching staff, and 5 members of the non-academic staff.

Four second cycle study programmes are delivered in the study field of Management at VMU: *Corporate Strategic Management*, *International Executive MBA*, *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-Food Business Management*. Studies in Management field are provided since 1997. The programmes are developed in accordance with the changes in study environment and labour market needs.

The second cycle study programme of *Corporate Strategic Management* is implemented by the Department of Management since the establishment of FEM and was registered on 1997-06-04 (Order No. 1188). In 2015, the original programme *Management of Firms and Organizations* was remodelled by strengthening its strategy dimension. The upgraded and repositioned programme became one of the most demanded graduate programmes at VMU (e.g., in 2022, it took 3rd place within VMU in terms of competition for the entry). The changes to the programme were welcomed not only by students, but also by the international experts - in 2017, the study programme received a positive evaluation and the maximum 6-year accreditation (accredited by the Order No. SV6-14 of SKVC)⁴.

The second cycle *International Executive Master of Business Administration* (hereinafter - MBA) study programme is implemented from 2006. In 2013, the study programme received a positive evaluation and the maximum 6-year accreditation (accredited by the Order No. SV6-15 of SKVC)⁵. VMU ensures that *International Executive MBA* programme meets Lithuanian academic standards and legal requirements and Baltic Management Institute (BMI) administers *International Executive MBA* programme which is designed and delivered by a consortium of 5 European higher education institutions: Paris School of Management based in France (HEC), IAG Louvain School of Management in Belgium (LSM), Copenhagen Business School in Denmark (CBS), Norwegian School of Economics in Norway (NHH) and VMU in Lithuania. An Agreement of Cooperation, based on fruitful collaboration since 1998 to establish BMI as well as to develop and deliver *International Executive MBA* programme, formalized the BMI international consortium of academic partners in April 2003. BMI itself is a not-for-profit Lithuanian public institution based in Vilnius that was established in 1999 precisely to administer this international academic partnership for delivering *International Executive MBA* programme of Western European quality for experienced high-level managers

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/2017/04/VMU_Corporate-Strategic-Management_MA_2017_final.pdf in En ir LT

⁵ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/valuations/docs/434130_VDU_Verslo_vadybos_programa_vadovams_Ma_2013.pdf in EN and LT

from the Baltic region and beyond. BMI first received EPAS accreditation of its *International Executive Master of Business Administration* programme in 2006, with re-accreditation for 5 years granted in 2010, again in 2015 and 2019.

The second cycle *Agricultural Business Management* study programme has been delivered at FBD since 1997 upon registration of the study programme. The external evaluation of the second cycle study programme of *Agricultural Business Management* was conducted in 2017 (accredited by the Order No. SV4-32 of SKVC for the 6-year period)⁶.

The second cycle study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* was accredited in 2018 (Order No. SV6-26 of SKVC)⁷. *Agri-Food Business Management* is joint study programme with Estonian University of Life Sciences in Tartu and Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies in Jelgava. This joint study programme has not participated in an external expert evaluation in Lithuania, but has successfully passed an international evaluation in Latvia in 2019 under the project No. 8.2.3.3.0/18/A/009, which is supported by the ESF, "Expert services from industries for evaluation of the content of study programmes and making recommendations", and the experts from Latvia and abroad expressed a very favourable opinion on the current content of the programme and the prospects for its further development and implementation.

This is the first self evaluation of the Management study 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 2019-2022.

The recommendations given by the previous external evaluation experts for all second cycle study programmes in Management study field are named and their implementation is described at the end of each evaluation area of this self evaluation report.

Discussions in SPCs and the other decision-making bodies allowed to differentiate 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 Management field studies was prepared in cooperation with the representatives of both faculties (see the Self Evaluation Group).

⁶ See https://skvc.lt/uploads/valuations/docs/434131_ASU_MA_Agricultural%20business%20management_2016.pdf in EN and LT

⁷ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/840705_ASU_Zemes-ukio-ir-maisto-verslu-vadyba_ekspertu-issivados-1.pdf in LT

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 Management 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 Occupations⁸ 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 Management field.

Information provided in AIKOS⁹ shows that the number of study programmes of Management 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 second cycle students in Management field (annual graduate surveys EXIT are annually organized by VMU Studies Department, data is analysed in 4.4.), while both study programmes in agriculture industry are specific and unique in Lithuanian education system in the second cycle of studies.

The compliance of Management 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 management competencies. According to Graičiūnas (1933) developed formula to describe the span of control, managers could have a maximum of 7 subordinates¹⁰. To assess the demand in the labour market for executives, having 1,280,200 employees in 2021¹¹ in Lithuania, the minimum demand of job placements for managers in higher hierarchical levels in organizations then is 182,885 in Lithuanian labour market. The separate demand group in labour market of office managers and management specialists, working in administration of organizational activities, exists as well. For instance, from 39 191 job advertisements at the biggest Baltic job advertisements portals cvmarket.lt 443 job vacancies were for executives, 576 - for human resources managers, and 1,495 - for administrators (in sum it composes 6.4% of all job vacancies), not including wide opportunities to work for managerial positions in remote way all around the world¹². 5,408 job vacancies are available in agriculture/forestry/stockbreeding industry¹³. The Employment Service under the Ministry of

⁸ See <https://e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/2a99ca9094de11e4bb3bb9baf4d4bfd1> in LT

⁹ See <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Study/SitePages/Home.aspx?ss=e3525251-1754-404b-92d9-4bfbbed55b33b> in EN

¹⁰ See https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/span-control-can-you-handle-5000-relationships-ilija-jovanoski/?trk=pulse-article_more-articles_related-content-card in EN

¹¹ See <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/darbo-rinka-lietuvoje-2021/darbo-uzmokestis-darbo-sanaudos-ir-streikai/darbuotoju-skaicius> in LT

¹² See [https://www.cvmarket.lt/joboffers.php?track=index_click_job_search&op=search&search_location=landingpage&ga_track=homepage&dummy_categories=-1&search\[keyword\]=&mobile_search\[keyword\]=&tmp_city=&tmp_cat=&tmp_city=&tmp_category=&search\[keyword\]=&search\[expires_days\]=&search\[job_lang\]=&search\[salary\]=&search\[job_salary\]=3](https://www.cvmarket.lt/joboffers.php?track=index_click_job_search&op=search&search_location=landingpage&ga_track=homepage&dummy_categories=-1&search[keyword]=&mobile_search[keyword]=&tmp_city=&tmp_cat=&tmp_city=&tmp_category=&search[keyword]=&search[expires_days]=&search[job_lang]=&search[salary]=&search[job_salary]=3) in EN and LT

¹³ See https://www.cvmarket.lt/joboffers.php?track=index_click_job_search&op=search&search_location=landingpag

Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania has registered 107 job vacancies for directors of organizations, 300 – for office managers, 340 – in agriculture/forestry/fisheries industry¹⁴. According to the barometer of employment opportunities created by the Employment Service, it is the easiest to get a job as construction and production managers¹⁵.

According to the Lithuanian Employment Service¹⁶ data, graduates of Management 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.

The analysis of trends in labour market shows worldwide rising demand for managers in the future. According to business technology news website zdnet.com, in 2020-2030 projected job growth for managerial position is 8%¹⁷. Similarly, the National Skills Commission of Australian Government forecasts that future growth of general managers demand is 9.6% (main industries are manufacturing (13.5%), health care and social assistance (10.8), professional, scientific, and technical services (9.6), construction (7.1) and other industries¹⁸). Farm manager's, food and beverage manager's average salary falls into highest-paid managers jobs, while the chief executive officer (CEO) salary is the highest – 109,906 dollars per year¹⁹.

The demand growth rate could be even higher: 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 level²⁰. It indicates that in 2018-2022 the highest demand is in managerial positions: 12,854 (9.8%) new managers are needed to fill job vacancies in Lithuania. A number of organizations report that they cannot find candidates for executive positions for several years²¹. The shortage of qualified staff in management is already evident for CEOs of the Lithuanian companies²².

Recently a very rapid growth of start-ups has been observed in Lithuania^{23 24}. The great potential of the Lithuanian economy and untapped opportunities can be seen in this area. The Lithuanian Department of Statistics²⁵ indicates that there were 93,059 enterprises at the beginning of 2022 with at least the same amount of CEOs positions. Based on continuing FDI flows and GDP growth tendencies, the number of available working places shall keep

[e&ga_track=homepage&dummy_categories=-1&search\[keyword\]=&mobile_search\[keyword\]=&tmp_city=&tmp_cat=&tmp_city=&tmp_category=&search\[keyword\]=&search\[expires_days\]=&search\[job_lang\]=&search\[salary\]=&search\[job_salary\]=3](#) in EN and LT

¹⁴ See <https://www.ldb.lt/ldbportal/pages/servicesforemployees.aspx?lang=lt> in LT

¹⁵ See <https://uzt.lt/data/public/uploads/2022/06/bar-2022-lietuva.pdf> in LT

¹⁶ See <https://uzt.lt/darbo-rinka/paklausios-profesijos/90> in LT

¹⁷ See <https://www.zdnet.com/education/business-management/business-management-degree/> in EN

¹⁸ See <https://labourmarketinsights.gov.au/occupation-profile/general-managers?occupationCode=1112> in EN

¹⁹ See <https://www.indeed.com/career-advice/finding-a-job/highest-paid-manager-jobs> in EN

²⁰ See <https://www.vz.lt/verslo-valdymas/personalo-valdymas/2019/06/07/lietuvos-darbo-rinka-2022-aisiais-kokiu-zmoniu-reikes-labiausiai> in LT

²¹ See <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/1603319/35-istaigos-be-galvu-kai-kurios-vadovu-iesko-jau-7-metus-kaltina-mazas-algas-ikyrus-politikus-ir-uzsisedejusius-tarnautojus> in LT

²² See <https://www.kurstoti.lt/s/10332/ateities-profesijos-link-kur-juda-lietuvos-ir-ne-tik-darbo-rinka> in LT

²³ See <https://massmedia.lt/tag/startuoliai/> in LT

²⁴ See <https://kauno.diena.lt/naujienos/verslas/ekonomika/darbo-rinka-kokiu-gebejimu-turinciu-specialistu-iesko-darbdaviai-922512> in LT

²⁵ See <https://osp.stat.gov.lt/statistiniu-rodikliu-analize?hash=46660eeb-aebf-4114-ada6-c8cde2649c05#/> in LT

growing²⁶. The State Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030”²⁷ 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 management specialists, these numbers show that there is and will be a demand for management specialists 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 2018-2028²⁸.

This shows that more and more jobs in Lithuania will be created for executives, office managers and qualified management specialists, including agriculture and food sectors, and priority will be given to those who have acquired this qualification.

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 (see more in section 1.4.), which meet the expected most needed competencies and skills in the future labour market provided by World Economic Forum²⁹, Forbes³⁰, and International Labour Organization³¹.

STRATA 2020³² “Study on Human Capital in Lithuania” aims to provide information that is important for making personal decisions about employment or career. 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 Lithuanian Employment Service's 2020 data³³, 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

²⁶ See <https://tradingeconomics.com/lithuania/gdp-growth> in EN

²⁷ See https://lrv.lt/uploads/main/documents/files/EN_version/Useful_information/lithuania2030.pdf in EN

²⁸ See <https://www.onetonline.org/find/quick?s=manager> in EN

²⁹ See <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/10/top-10-work-skills-of-tomorrow-how-long-it-takes-to-learn-them/> in EN

³⁰ See <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2019/03/22/seven-key-competencies-to-develop-future-leaders/?sh=48aea8877223> in EN

³¹ See <https://www.ilo.org/skills/areas/skills-training-for-poverty-reduction/lang--en/index.htm> in EN

³² See <https://strata.gov.lt/images/tyrimai/2020-metai/zmogiskojo-kapitalo-politika/20200511-zmogiskasis-kapitalas-Lietuvoje.pdf> in LT

³³ See <https://uzt.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Lietuvos-u%C5%BEimtumo-2020-m.-tendencijos-2021-02-19.pdf> in LT

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 Culture" or "Strategic Innovations", "Organizational Design", "Strategic Human Resource Management in Business" in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme, etc.

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 decline³⁴.

The National Education Strategy for 2013-2022³⁵ 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 *Corporate Strategic Management* study programmes integrating *Artes Liberales* in the field of Management.

Management 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 Management aim for such learning outcomes as, for example, in the study programme *International Executive MBA*: "3. Confidently make decisions that promote an organization's overall objectives in light of its evolving environment, critically integrating relevant information and insights from varied sources regarding management practices as well as social and technological trends".

The OECD Learning Compass 2030³⁶, 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 leadership. 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. This relevant competence is covered in most of the learning outcomes of social and personal abilities blocks of Management field study programmes.

According to McKinsey, the pressure for skilled managers will increase³⁷. 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

³⁴ See <https://blog.google/around-the-globe/google-europe/protecting-europes-workers-the-urgent-need-for-skills/> in EN

³⁵ See <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.463390> in LT

³⁶ See https://www.oecd.org/education/2030-project/contact/OECD_Learning_Compass_2030_Concept_Note_Series.pdf in EN

³⁷ See <https://www.getsmarter.com/blog/career-advice/the-most-in-demand-skills-for-managers/> in EN

artificial intelligence into the labour market. Research³⁸ has shown that the demand for skills such 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 Management field study programmes develops social and personal abilities of future employees.

Forbes³⁹ predicts that successful employees in the changing environment of the future, will need the competencies, which are necessary to develop in Management 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 Management studies are formed, such as in the *Corporate Strategic Management* programme: “4. To integrate and apply the relevant methods of leadership and diverse fields of management by taking into account the level of environmental dynamism and complexity”. A number of courses are provided because of critical factors in employee’s life satisfaction⁴⁰: for example, for resilience – such as “Business Strategy and Development”, for imagination and curiosity – “Creative Business Decisions”, for action - “Organizational Design” in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme, for relationship management – “Transformational Leadership”, for openness – “Corporate Social Responsibility” in *International Executive MBA* study programme, etc. Previous examples also adhere named 7 skills for a successful management career⁴¹: interpersonal skills, communication and motivation, organisation and delegation, forward planning and strategic thinking, problem solving and decision-making. The Future of Jobs report argues the additional necessity of the following trending skills⁴²: analytical thinking and innovation, active learning and learning strategies, complex problem-solving skills, critical thinking and analysis, resilience, stress tolerance, and flexibility, creativity, originality, and initiative, leadership and social influence. The above, among others, are all management skills leaders and executives harness for effective productivity the need for adaptability⁴³. Such qualities development is included in personal abilities of Management field study programmes, for example, in *Agricultural Business Management*: “9. To independently assess the needs for further training and professional development, demonstrate the skills of critical, creative, and strategic thinking, socially responsible and proactive conduct in the area of agricultural business.”

Managers will have to grapple with new challenges, conflicts, and opportunities that emerge.⁴⁴ In order to remain relevant, managers will need to be aware of the latest developments and embrace change to anticipate market movements and internal business dynamics. Manager became “leader of people” and “leader of work.” Ongoing service as a

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

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.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/the-boss-factor-making-the-world-a-better-place-through-workplace-relationships> in EN

⁴¹ See <https://www.prospects.ac.uk/jobs-and-work-experience/job-sectors/business-consulting-and-management/7-skills-for-a-successful-management-career#problem-solving-and-decisionmaking> in EN

⁴² See https://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Future_of_Jobs_2020.pdf in EN

⁴³ See <https://www.fastcompany.com/40451582/7-skills-managers-will-need-in-2025> in EN

⁴⁴ See <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/managers-will-need-these-7-skills-by-2025/> in EN

manager is tightly connected to the continued growth and engagement of your people⁴⁵. Despite the emphasis and shift toward a digital, automated workplace, managers still need to remain strategic and innovative in their leadership style⁴⁶; they will also need to understand their team more than ever as workplace changes continue to increase. It's precisely because of the technological pace that creative problem-solving skills, listening, effective communication, and time management will remain top management soft skills for the future. Emotional intelligence can vastly help managers to navigate the organizational landscape.⁴⁷ Those abilities are raised in social abilities block of every study programme in Management field. For example, in *Agricultural Business Management*: 8. "Effectively communicate and work in a team, undertake leadership, share the most recent knowledge in the area of agricultural business, cooperate and participate in discussions with stakeholder groups in the search for effective agricultural business development solutions in line with the sustainable development principles and different interests of the groups of society and by following the principles of professional ethics".

Execution of niche studies, research and innovations in Management field are the key factors enabling uninterrupted and efficient transitioning to sustainable and inclusive healthy food systems covering the stages from the primary production all the way down to consumption⁴⁸.

Agriculture which contributes by about 2.8% to the GDP, has always been and will remain one of the pillars of the Lithuanian economy, and its strengthening shall be one of the key priorities⁴⁹. According to the experts, the breakthrough in the agricultural sector has been determined by the growing global demand for food, geopolitical situation that is difficult to predict, rapid development of technological innovations, changing climate, demographic changes, and the aspiration to implement the European Green Deal goals⁵⁰ in this context.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations (2015)⁵¹ emphasizes, *inter alia*, the importance of sustainable, ubiquitous economic growth and promotion of innovations, assurance of sustainable consumption and production models, fight against the climate change and its consequences, sustainable use of all natural resources in agricultural and other sectors. The EU growth strategy "The European Green Deal" (2009)⁵² emphasizes the role of climate-neutral, sustainable, efficient, and equitable economic transformation and development by disassociating economic growth from the use of resources. The European Green Deal aims at creating a healthier and more sustainable food system, promoting efficient use of resources by transitioning to circular economy, restoring the biodiversity, and reducing the pollution. This primarily requires investing into environmentally friendly technologies, implementation of innovations, and reduction of the dependence on fossil fuel. These changes and aspirations have determined the need for new knowledge and abilities.

⁴⁵ See <https://hbr.org/2022/03/managers-cant-do-it-all> in EN

⁴⁶ See <https://www.entrepreneur.com/leadership/6-essential-leadership-skills-that-drive-success/375281> in EN

⁴⁷ See <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbescoachescouncil/2021/01/05/seven-traits-of-an-emotionally-intelligent-leader/?sh=873dbe27f210> in EN

⁴⁸ See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2018:0673:FIN:LT:PDF> in LT

⁴⁹ See <https://www.vz.lt/agroverslas2023/2022/05/25/tvaraus-ir-efektyvus-zemes-ukio-link-svarbiausi-pokyciai-lietuvoje-jau-isibegejo#ixzz7hZp7Htn6> in LT

⁵⁰ See <https://www.vz.lt/agroverslas2023/2022/05/26/vdu-zemes-ukio-akademija-priima-issuki-rengti-profesionalus-agrosektoriui--perspektyviausiai-ateities-veiklos-sriciai#ixzz7hZpirXki> in LT

⁵¹ See https://www.un.org/pga/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2015/08/120815_outcome-document-of-Summit-for-adoption-of-the-post-2015-development-agenda.pdf in EN

⁵² See <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LT/TXT/?uri=COM:2019:640:FIN> in EN

According to the forecasts by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, the global population will be 9.7 billion by 2050⁵³. In order to meet the demand for food and biofuel, in 2050 agriculture will have to produce about 50% more food, feed, and raw materials for biofuel than in 2012. According to the results of the macroeconomic indicator analysis of the Lithuanian economy, the total added value created by agriculture including the food subsector was growing consistently and increased by 14.5%⁵⁴ in the period 2014–2019. The importance of food systems is also reflected in the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development of the United Nations⁵⁵ and Lithuania's Progress Strategy “Lithuania 2030” which provide for assurance of a flexible farming practice that increases the production and safeguards the ecosystems; sustainable food production systems; sufficient amount of safe food; and sustainable economic growth. Key changes of the existing food systems by transformation thereof into more sustainable ones and recognition of “the inextricable links between healthy people, healthy societies and a healthy planet” have been provided for in the EU Farm to Fork Strategy⁵⁶. The aim and learning outcomes of *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-Food Business Management* study programmes are prepared adhering those demands in markets.

The analysis of the information provided by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations regarding the prospects of the agricultural sector on a global scale reveals that global overproduction of food is not expected and the demand for sustainable agricultural productivity and innovation will increase⁵⁷. Among the 17th Sustainable Development Goals, approved by the members of United Nations, the second one is pointed as “Zero hunger”. There are no doubts that agri-food business sector development has crucial role for the global humans’ needs satisfaction and therefore it is foreseen increasing demand for the specialist, who would be able to assure successful progress in this sector.

The estimated demands for the specialists and qualified staff in the agriculture and related sector have been considered comprehensively in the research study commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania: “Estimated Demand for the Specialists and Qualified Staff in Agriculture and Rural Development and Meeting thereof in a Quality Manner by Interaction among the Higher Education and Vocational Training Institutions” (2020, Contract No. MT-20-17, team lead prof. dr. R. Dapkus). According to the study conducted, to satisfy the estimated demand for specialists in agriculture and rural development in 2025–2028, 1.3 thousand graduates from agriculture-related study and training programmes would need to be trained annually in the period 2021–2024 by admitting 1,623 students and pupils annually on average, of which 202 – to the graduate programmes, 492 – university undergraduate programmes.

BOVA UN - the Baltic Forestry, Veterinary and Agricultural University Network (a connecting network of universities offering the higher education in all study cycles in the fields of Agriculture, Forestry, Veterinary and other related sciences; established in 1996), during its activities has observed the agri-food business sector progress in Baltic States and lagging situation in specialists' preparation for that sector across all participating countries⁵⁸. Therefore, there was raised an initiative to create international joint second cycle study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* in the three Baltic States, in order to provide

⁵³ <http://www.fao.org/3/i6583e/i6583e.pdf> in EN

⁵⁴ See <https://www.laei.lt/?mt=leidiniai&straipsnis=1817&metai=2020> in LT

⁵⁵ See <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/> in EN.

⁵⁶ See <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2020/LT/COM-2020-381-F1-LT-MAIN-PART-1.PDF> in EN

⁵⁷ See <http://www.fao.org/3/a-i6583e.pdf> in EN

⁵⁸ See <https://www.bova-university.org/> in EN

students with opportunities to acquire relevant knowledge demanded by labour market on specific features of agriculture, agri-food industries, bioeconomy development and international business management in the Baltic States.

In 2017, a survey of potential employers was carried out in Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia to find out the views of agri-food entrepreneurs on the need for a joint programme. The survey was carried out by researchers from all three universities involved in the development of the programme, in cooperation with their social partners. The results of the study were used to prepare the rationale for the study programme, which was submitted to the Lithuanian, Latvian and Estonian authorities that accredited the programme in each of these countries. The survey included 62 representatives of companies, cooperatives, and the public sector organizations, performing business activities not only in the Baltic States, but also in other EU members and the third countries. One half of the respondents considered that there was a shortage of professional and highly qualified managers in the agricultural production and food processing sector and the demand for such managers might increase in the future (54% of respondents). Moreover, 87% revealed that they would be willing to hire graduates of the programme *Agri-Food Business Management* in the future, but 13% of respondents indicated that they would not be interested, which may be explained by the fact that sole traders and public sector managers also were among the respondents in the survey. The respondents selected the most important skills which are necessary for managers of agri-food companies as understanding of economics and politics of agriculture and food processing and supply and their practical application, ability to assess agri-business environment, to organize and manage supply chains and procurement, forecast the situation in the agri-food business and to organize international co-working and leadership. For that reason, those abilities are installed into the learning outcomes of both *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-Food Business Management* study programmes. For example, special skills of study programme *Agri-Food Business Management*: “3. To make science-based, innovative, value-creating decisions in agri-food business management and to evaluate investments into formation of corporate financial policy, as well as to understand the role of innovation and manage innovation process within their organization, also to design management and marketing strategies for improvement of competitive position of their organisation on the global marketplace”.

Demand of *Agri-Food Business Management* specialists also was evaluated at each partner institution. For example, it is set as a priority in the Development Strategy of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies⁵⁹. In Lithuania demand of such specialists was disclosed even by two scientific works, ordered by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania⁶⁰.

Therefore, study programmes in Management 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

⁵⁹ See <https://www.ltu.lv/index.php/lv/strategija> in LV

⁶⁰ See

https://zum.lrv.lt/uploads/zum/documents/files/LT_versija/Veiklos_sritys/Mokslas_mokymas_ir_konsultavimas/Moksliniu_tyrimu_ir_taikomosios_veiklos_darbu_galutines_ataskaitos/aigiamojiLRTISpec_poreikis2012galutine.pdf and <https://zum.lrv.lt/uploads/zum/documents/files/2016%20Specialistu%20poreikis%20II.pdf> in LT

shall be able to find their places in labour market for decades. The learning outcomes of the second cycle study programmes in Management field (see 1.4.) concentrate on the competencies of management professionals, as well as on the future competencies, that are the most promising in the future, therefore, relevant for students in Management field⁶¹.

The aim of the second cycle study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* is to educate the business and management professionals of high qualification and wide profile, who would possess a systemic approach to managing organizations in complex dynamic business environments and be capable of addressing their strategic challenges through knowledge and skilful adaptation of innovative theoretical concepts and good organizational practices.

Graduates of *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme will be equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills for a successful career in business development, management consulting or general management positions in business organizations of all types and sizes. The programme develops the skills to diagnose business problems and to conceive and implement new strategic initiatives in business contexts ranging from multinational corporations to start-ups and small-medium enterprises. It is our objective that upon graduation students possess the strategic growth-oriented mindset that is complemented with necessary analytical and organizational competences for implementing the strategic initiatives in diverse cultural and industrial environments, while at the same time observing the principles of corporate ethics and social responsibility. Graduates of the *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme can work as managers and consultants of the private and public sector organizations, the founders and developers of start-ups and other high growth ventures or continue their academic career on the PhD level.

The aim of the second cycle study programme *International Executive MBA* is to prepare managers and entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to successfully and responsibly lead organisations in a dynamic international marketplace, creating value for all stakeholders.

The graduates of the *International Executive MBA* programme will be able to work as management practitioners who can excel as executives and/or entrepreneurs in a global environment enabling advancement in a personal development of self-reflection, values, responsibility, cross-cultural awareness and personal leadership style, applying knowledge of contemporary international business, management and organisation theory, in areas of communication, team-building, change management or networking. The graduates have the possibility to continue further education in the PhD studies as well.

The aim of the second cycle study programme *Agricultural Business Management* is to prepare competitive specialists in agricultural business management able to develop, implement, and manage the innovative processes at the agricultural business and related organizations, develop businesses under the conditions of increasing uncertainty, globalization, and climate change, perform economic and managerial assessment of the conditions, modes and forms of operation of business entities, of the developed structures, processes, and the measures employed, and to conduct research in the field of agricultural business.

⁶¹ 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 graduates of *Agricultural Business Management* programme will be eligible to work as specialists and managers of different managerial areas at agricultural business companies and related enterprises; internal and external consultants on agricultural business establishment and development at consultancy companies; experts at the national and international organizations uniting agricultural business organizations; engage in scientific research and pedagogical work at the universities, universities of applied sciences, and vocational training schools, create and develop private business in the area of agriculture and/or infrastructure; resume the studies and conduct research during the doctoral studies at the Lithuanian or foreign universities.

The aim of the international joint second cycle study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* is to prepare competitive specialists with good theoretical knowledge and practical skills in agri-food industry and entrepreneurship, as well as with leadership skills and critical thinking for a successful international career in leading agri-food companies and organisations, including the ability to carry out research, in order to pursue a career as a scientist.

The programme is designed to prepare professionals capable of working in fields related to the food supply chain and to provide graduate students with an integrated set of theoretical knowledge and practical competences, enhancement of leadership skills and critical thinking ability with the ultimate goal of preparing the graduates for international careers in research and management of agricultural and food industry organizations. Students will gain the knowledge and skills to analyse and critically assess business entities behaviour and business environment, develop, and implement business plans, predict, and evaluate business processes and results, analyse, evaluate, provide economic and financial justification for strategic business decisions alternatives, analyse, and forecast the situation of potential markets, business organisation, initiate and innovate.

Graduates of study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* are welcomed by the private business entities and farms, public institutions forming and governing policies in agricultural and food sectors and continue their studies on the PhD level. The obtained knowledge and skills will guarantee successful employment and career prospects nationally and internationally in agricultural, food industry and other fields of economic activity directly related to agriculture and processing industry, retail/wholesale or other businesses and their infrastructure companies, business consulting organizations, agricultural businesses supporting financial institutions and agencies, as well as the ability to create and develop personal business.

VMU offers four second cycle study programmes in Management study field, yet they all have their unique features and target somewhat different segments.

The second cycle study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* educates the qualified business and management professionals equipped with a systemic approach to managing organizations in complex dynamic business environments. The programme has a distinctive profile among other second cycle programmes of VMU as it is the full-time (non-executive) second cycle programme implemented in Lithuanian language that provides students with the horizontal management competences (i.e., other programmes being focused on more sectoral business management areas related to agriculture or food industries). The general rationale behind having the *Corporate Strategic Management* programme at VMU is that students and external stakeholders stress the importance of strategy dimension in modern graduate business education (e.g., systemic understanding of organizational processes in dynamic environment, strategic, critical, creative thinking and

decision making). Strategy-related focus is very much in line with the deepening and broadening nature of second cycle study programmes. Strategy-related second cycle study programmes can be found in most of the world's leading universities and business schools. In many cases, programmes related to strategic management, indicate the University-level studies in business and management (i.e., they are rarely found in the non-University institutions of higher education), which complement the strategic profile and mission of VMU. Programme is also very much in line with the distinctive *Artes Liberales* philosophy of VMU, mostly through the choice of electives. *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme builds upon and integrates the diverse competences of teachers at Faculty of Economics and Management, as well as those of its external professional network. Whereas the general second cycle programmes in study field group of business and management have seen a dramatic proliferation across the Lithuanian institutions of higher education (including both universities and colleges that almost all have generalist business management programmes), the strategy-related programmes are not that widely spread due to the higher and more specific competence requirements. In this way, *Corporate Strategic Management* programme has a more distinctive competitive profile and identity in the study market.

Therefore, *Corporate Strategic Management* programme in no way replicates or competes with another graduate management programme provided in English – *International Executive MBA*, delivered in Vilnius by BMI – which is strictly limited to the segment of high-level executives with adequate professional experience and positioned as practice oriented lifelong learning programme for working people with study schedule and study methods adapted to their needs. *International Executive MBA* programme is designed for experienced managers who need to broaden their knowledge to advance professionally while avoiding career disruption, still providing international practice and experience exchange by professors from leading business schools worldwide.

Two Management field second-cycle study programmes are of niche type: *Agricultural Business Management* and the international joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management*. These study programmes are focused on different market segments. The international joint study programme provides integrated theoretical knowledge and practical abilities for the purpose of understanding the overall agricultural and food product market of the Baltic countries (Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia) and management of agricultural and food industry organisations. The language of instruction is English for full-time studies. The international joint master study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* is closely related to the priorities set by the European Union, i.e., to ensure economically viable food production and a stable food supply while respecting food safety requirements with the focus on rural economy, animal welfare, social and environmental issues. To address these priorities, the study programme provides students with in-depth knowledge, extended skills, and practical competences in the field of agriculture, food processing and business management. The language of instruction of study programme *Agricultural Business Management* is Lithuanian for part-time studies and the programme is implemented only in VMU.

VMU community and members of all SPC's see the clear need for all the Management field study programmes now and in the future. Such opinion is also supported by numbers of the entrants over the last few years (see more details in 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 Strategy⁶² 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, 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 Management 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 aims and learning outcomes of the field study 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 Management, 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 Management 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 *International Executive MBA*: "6. Develop habits of critical thinking and creativity in order to innovate for business development and respond with agility to changing business circumstances.", the strategic task 2.4.4. "Search for innovative forms of such cooperation and implementation initiatives" correlates with the learning outcome of *Corporate Strategic Management* programme: "1. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of advanced theories, concepts and methods in the contemporary areas of strategic management, leadership, organization and business development, and their application in diverse organizational contexts to ensure sustainable long-term growth.", 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 *Corporate Strategic Management*: "9. To choose the appropriate forms of leadership, motivation, and communication in different organizational and cultural environments", 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 *International Executive MBA* programme: "4. Apply ethical and responsible practices in business activities and relationships, committed to the generation of sustainable value for organisations, society at

⁶² See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/VDU-strategic-plan-for-2021-2027.pdf> in EN

large and the global economy.”, 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 *Agricultural Business*: “7. Design the structures and processes of the agricultural business organizations, manage the organizational changes, and assume responsibility for the results in view of the factors of the environment of the agricultural business organizations.”. In this way, conducting of the study programmes in the field of Management 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” and 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 Management are taught in both Lithuanian (*Corporate Strategic Management* and *Agricultural Business Management* study programmes) and English (*International Executive MBA* and *Agri-Food Business Management* study programmes), 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 second cycle 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 Management 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 Management 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 study programmes in Management field, 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 national legal acts and institutional documents, of which VMU documents are made public on VMU website in Lithuanian⁶³ and English⁶⁴.

The aims and intended learning outcomes of the programmes are developed in view of the legal acts specified and have been reviewed and amended according to the Descriptor of the Study Field of Management⁶⁵.

The curriculum designs of the second cycle study programmes in Management field are presented in Annex 1.

The volume of study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* is 120 ECTS, duration is two years in full-time studies, four semesters (15 weeks per each semester). 11 compulsory courses (66 ECTS), 1 Term Paper (6 ECTS), and Final Master Thesis (30 ECTS) compose 102 ECTS in Management field, and 3 elective courses are of another study field (one course from the three groups of elective study courses each; 18 ECTS in sum) (see Table 1).

The volume of study programme *International Executive MBA* is 90 ECTS, duration is one and a half years in full-time studies, three semesters (15 weeks per each semester). All 90 ECTS are of Management field (13 compulsory courses (54 ECTS), 2 elective courses (6 ECTS), and 30 ECTS for Final Master Thesis).

The volume of *Agricultural Business Management* study programme is 120 ECT, duration is three years in part-time studies, six semesters (15 weeks per each semester). 102 ECTS are of Management field (12 compulsory courses (60 ECTS), 1 Term Paper (6 ECTS), 1 Applied Research (6 ECTS), and 30 ECTS for Final Master Thesis); and 18 ECTS - of another study field (2 compulsory courses (12 ECTS) and 1 elective course (6 ECTS) from two in choice).

The volume of the international joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* is 120 ECTS, duration is two years in full-time studies, four semesters (15 weeks per each semester). 90 ECTS are of Management field (8 compulsory courses (60 ECTS) and Final Master Thesis (30 ECTS)), and 30 ECTS are of another study field (4 compulsory courses).

Table 1. Second cycle study programmes *Corporate Strategic Management*, *International Executive MBA*, *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-Food Business Management* conformity to general requirements for master programmes

⁶³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/apie-vdu-kaune/svarbiausi-vdu-dokumentai/> in LT

⁶⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/important-documents/> in EN

⁶⁵ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/379_8e0ce0fbd4584b48f25dee44593c8da3.pdf in EN

Criteria	Legal requirements	In <i>Corporate Strategic Management</i> study programme	In <i>International Executive MBA</i> study programme	In <i>Agricultural Business Management</i> study programme	In <i>Agri-Food Business Management</i> study programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120 ECTS	90 ECTS	120 ECTS	120 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	102 ECTS	90 ECTS	102 ECTS	90 ECTS
ECTS for studies of other study field specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	18 ECTS	0 ECTS	18 ECTS	30 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS	30 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 10% of learning	38 %	27 %	25 %	38 %
Individual learning	No less than 50% of learning	62 %	73 %	75 %	62 %

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 the Provision of Studies⁶⁶, Descriptor of Study Cycles⁶⁷, and the other Lithuanian and European normative documents⁶⁸. The learning outcomes of all the second cycle study programmes in Management field correspond to the Level 7 of the European and national qualification framework. The study programmes' aims and learning outcomes assure that graduates in master level programmes will acquire second cycle level. At the same time, the programmes provided by VMU address to one of the main concepts of VMU system of studies - *Artes Liberales*, which promotes the interdisciplinary approach, free broad choice of elective courses in social science area by the students.

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

⁶⁶ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/397_27c925d5af23c3446c7ef51ca061ef2d.pdf in EN

⁶⁷ See https://www.skvc.lt/uploads/lawacts/docs/346_53c2f01ae1d71e0119694c2d9abf7a64.pdf in EN

⁶⁸ 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.

to VMU Study Regulations⁶⁹, 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. In full-time studies, one year of 60 ECTS corresponds to 1600 student work hours. Depending on the credits, the workload hours are divided: 3 ECTS – 30 contact hours and 50 of individual work (80 hours in total), 4 ECTS – 45 contact hours and 62 of individual work (107 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 7,5 ECTS – 75 contact hours (45 academic hours of lectures and 30 academic hours of seminars dedicated to student discussions, presentations, group work, etc.) and 125 of individual work (200 hours in total). 30 ECTS of Final Master Thesis - of 800 academic hours (20 hours of contact and 780 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 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 Management 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: Master’s – 30 ECTS.

⁶⁹ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Study_Regulations-2021-SEN-N-20.pdf in EN

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 Framework⁷⁰, as well as Descriptor of Study Cycles and the Descriptor of the Study Field of Management: 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 Centre⁷¹. The intended learning outcomes of study programmes in Management study field are presented below.

To realize the aim of the second cycle *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme the following learning outcomes were composed, and study courses were matched as presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Coherence of the field study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the second cycle study programme <i>Corporate Strategic Management</i>		
To educate the management professionals of high qualification and wide profile, who would possess a systemic approach to managing organizations in complex dynamic business environments and be capable of addressing their strategic challenges through knowledge and skilful adaptation of innovative theoretical concepts and good organizational practices.		
Description of learning outcomes of each study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the Programme	Study courses of the Programme
Knowledge and its application	1. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of advanced theories, concepts and methods in the contemporary areas of strategic management, leadership, organization and business development, and their application in diverse organizational contexts to ensure sustainable long-term growth.	Contemporary Organization Theories Organizational Culture Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Organizational Design Project Management Strategic Human Resource Management Business Intelligence Research Paper Creative Business Decisions Leadership and Managerial Work Final Master Thesis
Research skills	2. To design and carry out quantitative and qualitative research in management while	Scientific Research Methodology Organizational Culture Organizational Design

⁷⁰ See <http://ehea.info/page-qualification-frameworks> in EN

⁷¹ See http://ec.europa.eu/epsc/sites/epsc/files/strategic_note_issue_13.pdf in EN

	providing the research-based strategic solutions for organizations.	Business Intelligence Research Paper Final Master Thesis
Special abilities	3. To assess and predict the changes, trends, and uncertainties of complex organizational environment in the managerial decision making and development of corporate strategy;	Contemporary Organization Theories Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Business Intelligence Research Paper Creative Business Decisions Final Master Thesis
	4. To integrate and apply the relevant methods of leadership and diverse fields of management by taking into account the level of environmental dynamism and complexity;	Organizational Culture Business Strategy and Development Organizational Design Project Management Strategic Human Resource Management Business Intelligence Research Paper Final Master Thesis
	5. To develop and implement corporate strategies, based on innovative value propositions and business models, in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage;	Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Business Intelligence Research Paper Creative Business Decisions Final Master Thesis
	6. To apply and adapt in flexible and creative manner the theories of contemporary management in the context of strategy development and implementation;	Contemporary Organization Theories Organizational Culture Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Organizational Design Project Management Strategic Human Resource Management Research Paper Leadership And Managerial Work Final Master Thesis
	7. To (re)design organizational systems, structures and processes for the implementation of chosen strategies taking into account the organizational environment;	Organizational Culture Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Organizational Design Project Management Strategic Human Resource Management Business Intelligence Research Paper Leadership And Managerial Work Final Master Thesis

Social abilities	8. To adopt the principles of ethics and social responsibility while implementing the organizational development and strategic management solutions.	Contemporary Organization Theories Organizational Culture Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Project Management Strategic Human Resource Management Business Intelligence Leadership And Managerial Work Final Master Thesis
	9. To choose the appropriate forms of leadership, motivation, and communication in different organizational and cultural environments.	Contemporary Organization Theories Organizational Culture Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Organizational Design Strategic Human Resource Management Business Intelligence Creative Business Decisions Leadership And Managerial Work Final Master Thesis
Personal abilities	10. To apply the skills and methods in individual and organizational learning by integrating in innovative ways the professional field knowledge with strategic, critical and creative thinking, information and knowledge management skills, and take responsibility for the decisions made and their impact on society and the environment.	Contemporary Organization Theories Strategic Innovation Business Strategy and Development Organizational Design Strategic Human Resource Management Business Intelligence Creative Business Decisions Leadership And Managerial Work Final Master Thesis

To pursue the aim of the second cycle study programme of *International Executive MBA*, learning outcomes have been formulated and study courses delivered in order to achieve the aims as provided in Table 3:

Table 3. Coherence of the field study programme *International Executive MBA* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the second cycle study programme <i>International Executive MBA</i>		
To prepare managers and entrepreneurs with the knowledge, skills and attitudes required to successfully and responsibly lead organisations in a dynamic international marketplace, creating value for all stakeholders		
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. To demonstrate mastery of all the core business disciplines at a level sufficient for a general manager to competently direct the work of functional units and be able to connect and integrate them in a comprehensive view of the firm.	Financial Accounting Economic, Monetary and Geopolitical Environment Entrepreneurial Finance Business Performance Management Strategic Marketing Doing Business in EU Fintech/Biotech Start-Up Ecosystems Negotiations Skills Leading Effective Sales Corporate Governance & Legal Environment Strategies for Value Creation Entrepreneurship and New Business Models Digital Transformation Transformational Leadership Corporate Social Responsibility Final Master Thesis
Research abilities	2. To develop scientific and applied research on the changing factors and trends of the internal and external business environment at global extent, 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	Financial Accounting Economic, Monetary and Geopolitical Environment Entrepreneurial Finance Business Performance Management Doing Business in EU Fintech/Biotech Start-Up Ecosystems Leading Effective Sales Corporate Governance & Legal Environment Real-Life Group Project 1: Finance Analysis and Company Valuation Final Master Thesis
Special abilities	3. To confidently make decisions that promote an organization's overall objectives in light of its evolving environment, critically integrating relevant information and insights from varied sources regarding management practices as well as social and technological trends.	Entrepreneurial Finance Business Performance Management Strategic Marketing Doing Business in EU Fintech/Biotech Start-Up Ecosystems Negotiations Skills Leading Effective Sales Corporate Governance & Legal Environment Strategies for Value Creation Entrepreneurship and New Business Models Digital Transformation Transformational Leadership Corporate Social Responsibility Real-Life Group Project 1: Finance Analysis and Company Valuation Real-Life Group Project 2: New Venture Business Plan

		International Study Module Final Master Thesis
	4. To apply contemporary management know-how to overcome international business challenges and profit from opportunities, also suitably taking into account the relevant geographical, socio-economic and cultural contexts.	Economic, Monetary and Geopolitical Environment Entrepreneurial Finance Business Performance Management Strategic Marketing Doing Business in EU Fintech/Biotech Start-Up Ecosystems Negotiations Skills Leading Effective Sales Corporate Governance & Legal Environment Strategies for Value Creation Entrepreneurship and New Business Models Digital Transformation Transformational Leadership Corporate Social Responsibility Real-Life Group Project 1: Finance Analysis and Company Valuation Real-Life Group Project 2: New Venture Business Plan International Study Module Final Master Thesis
	5. To apply ethical and responsible practices in business activities and relationships, committed to the generation of sustainable value for organisations, society at large and the global economy.	Financial Accounting Economic, Monetary and Geopolitical Environment Entrepreneurial Finance Business Performance Management Strategic Marketing Doing Business in EU Fintech/Biotech Start-Up Ecosystems Negotiations Skills Leading Effective Sales Corporate Governance & Legal Environment Strategies for Value Creation Entrepreneurship and New Business Models Digital Transformation Transformational Leadership Corporate Social Responsibility Final Master Thesis
Social abilities	6. To lead diverse teams and individuals effectively as a senior manager in a dynamic, multicultural, digital and open world in ethical and socially responsible way.	All study courses

Personal abilities	7. To develop habits of critical thinking and creativity in order to innovate for agri-food business development and respond with agility to changing business circumstances.	All study courses
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To realize the aim of the second cycle study programme *Agricultural Business Management* the learning outcomes were composed as presented in Table 4:

Table 4. Coherence of the field study programme *Agricultural Business Management* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the second cycle study programme <i>Agricultural Business Management</i>		
To prepare competitive specialists in agricultural business management able to develop, implement, and manage the innovative processes at the agricultural business and related organizations, develop businesses under the conditions of increasing uncertainty, globalization, and climate change, perform economic and managerial assessment of the conditions, modes and forms of operation of business entities, of the developed structures, processes, and the measures employed, and to conduct research in the field of agricultural business.		
Description of learning outcomes of each study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the Programme	Study courses of the Programme
Knowledge and its application	1. To explain the principles and paradigms of sustainable business development, and specifics of agricultural business, and apply this knowledge systematically to the assessment and solution of practical issues in agricultural business under the conditions of uncertainty, globalization, and climate change.	Agricultural Economics and Sustainable Development, Agricultural Business Environment and its Evaluation, Environmental Management, Management Decisions Modelling, Sustainable Business and Social Innovations, Agriculture and Food Marketing Strategies, Term paper in Agricultural Master's Final Thesis,
	2. To explain and creatively apply contemporary organizational theories; resource, business processes, and innovation management systems; and design methods when proposing strategic and tactical solutions of	Agricultural Business Strategic Management, Sustainable Business and Social Innovations, Business Project Management Finance and Investment Management

	development of the agricultural business organizations.	Business Consultation Agricultural Business Supply Chain Management Agricultural Production Process Management Human Resource Management Applied Econometrics Master's Final Thesis
Research skills	3. To apply diverse social research methods, justify the reasonableness, applicability and limitations thereof in conduction of empirical studies, and substantiation of the solutions in agricultural business development on the basis of the principles of development of research methodology.	Applied Research Master's Final Thesis Scientific Research Methodology Agricultural Business Environment and its Evaluation Agriculture and Food Marketing Strategies Term paper in Agricultural Business Strategic Management
	4. To plan, organize, and conduct applied research, systematize and interpret the research findings intended for the identification of issues in an agricultural business and its management, market research, substantiation, and implementation of the management solutions and innovations.	Applied Research Master's Final Thesis Term paper in Agricultural Business Strategic Management Scientific Research Methodology
Special abilities	5. To perform an integrated assessment of the uncertainties of an agricultural business environment, to perform the economic and managerial assessment of the operating conditions of agricultural business entities and applied measures in view of the long-term global economic development scenarios and sustainable development goals.	Agricultural Business Environment and its Evaluation Agricultural Economics and Sustainable Development Agricultural Business Strategic Management Applied Econometrics Finance and Investment Management Master's Final Thesis Term paper in Agricultural Business Strategic
	6. To make science-based, innovative, value-creating decisions in agricultural and associated business area management, develop the development strategies of the agricultural business organizations by integrating the most recent knowledge in diverse functional business areas	Agricultural Economics and Sustainable Development Sustainable Business and Social Innovations Agricultural Business Strategic Management Management Decisions Modelling Finance and Investment Management Business Consultation

		Applied Econometrics Master's Final Thesis
	7. To design the structures and processes of the agricultural business organizations, manage the organizational changes, and assume responsibility for the results in view of the factors of the environment of the agricultural business organizations.	Business Project Management Agricultural Production Process Management Environmental Management Human Resource Management Agricultural Business Supply Chain Management Master's Final Thesis
Social abilities	8. To communicate effectively and work in a team, undertake leadership, share the most recent knowledge in the area of agricultural business, cooperate and participate in discussions with stakeholder groups in the search for effective agricultural business development solutions in line with the sustainable development principles and different interests of the groups of society and by following the principles of professional ethics.	All study courses
Personal abilities	9. To assess independently the needs for further training and professional development, demonstrate the skills of critical, creative, and strategic thinking, socially responsible and proactive conduct in the area of agricultural business.	All study courses

To realize the second cycle study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* aim, learning outcomes and study courses were composed as presented in Table 5:

Table 5. Coherence of the field study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* aims and intended learning outcomes with the programme courses

The aim of the second cycle study programme <i>Agri-Food Business Management</i>
To prepare competitive specialists with good theoretical knowledge and practical skills in agri-food industry and entrepreneurship, as well as with leadership skills and critical thinking for a successful international career in leading agri-food companies and

organisations, including the ability to carry out research, in order to pursue a career as a scientist.

Description of learning outcomes of each study cycle	Intended learning outcomes of the Programme	Study courses of the Programme
Knowledge and its application	1. To explain the principles and paradigms of agri-food business development and to demonstrate knowledge in contemporary theory and techniques of economics and business administration as well as in-depth knowledge of agricultural and food industries value chains management.	Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects Agricultural Economics and Policy Cooperative Management Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Financial Management Innovation of Food System Integrated marketing communication in agribusiness International Marketing in Agri-Food Business Managerial Accounting and Control Operations and Supply-Chain Management in Agribusiness Research Methods Strategic Management of Agribusiness Final Master Thesis
Research skills	2. To identify gaps in existing knowledge, products and services and to design a research plan, organize and conduct applied research, systematize and interpret the research findings intended for the agri-food business development.	Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects Agricultural Economics and Policy Financial Management Innovation of Food System Managerial Accounting and Control Operations and Supply-Chain Management in Agribusiness Research Methods Strategic Management of Agribusiness Final Master Thesis
Special abilities	3. To make science-based, innovative, value-creating decisions in agri-food business management and to evaluate investments into formation of corporate financial policy, as well as to understand the role of innovation and manage innovation process within their organization, also to design management and	Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects Agricultural Economics and Policy Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Financial Management Integrated marketing communication in agribusiness International Marketing in Agri-Food Business Operations and Supply-Chain Management in Agribusiness

	marketing strategies for improvement of competitive position of their organisation on the global marketplace.	Resource Development Strategic Management of Agribusiness Final Master Thesis
Social abilities	4. To demonstrate effective communication and networking skills in modern society and to organize and participate in joint decision-making process, also effectively represent organisation in business negotiations by following the principles of professional ethics.	Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Innovation of Food System Managerial Accounting and Control Operations and Supply-Chain Management in Agribusiness Final Master Thesis
Personal abilities	5. To demonstrate the skills of critical, creative, strategic thinking and decision making, leadership and management in the context of global marketplace, complex organisations and multinational teams, also to use information and communication technologies in personal development and everyday business.	Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Innovation of Food System Integrated marketing communication in agribusiness International Marketing in Agri-Food Business Managerial Accounting and Control Operations and Supply-Chain Management in Agribusiness Strategic Management of Agribusiness Final Master Thesis
	6. To recognize cultural diversity, its challenges and opportunities in conducting business, to demonstrate understanding of global issues in the context of agri-food business concerning social, economic, political and environmental issues.	Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects Agricultural Economics and Policy Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development Operations and Supply-Chain Management in Agribusiness Strategic Management of Agribusiness Final Master Thesis

The learning outcomes of the study programme are formulated according to the aim of study programme and include all components of the aim. The outcomes of the study courses are compatible with the outcomes of the study programme: a) The outcome of the study course shall cover the same or a narrower object comparing to the outcome of the programme; b) The outcome of the study course shall define the ability of the same or minor (but not greater) complexity as the outcome of the study programme. Study topics are formed on the basis of learning outcomes - they include the objects that are included in the

learning outcomes. Study methods shall be compatible with learning outcomes as well as assessment methods shall be compatible with study methods.

An individual study course usually having links with more than one learning outcome of the programme. Learning outcomes of study programmes are interrelated and supplement each other, as each course is linked to a few learning outcomes of study programme. 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 second cycles study programmes.

All course descriptions are prepared according to the uniform VMU requirements – Description of Procedure for Study Course Attestation⁷². All courses should be renewed and confirmed by SPC at least every three years. For example, the latest attestation of all the courses in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme took place in Spring, 2022.

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 that 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 second cycle study programmes in the field of Management use Problem-Based Learning techniques based on full case studies or just some episodes of the method. Teachers 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 learning outcomes are also achieved through consultations. All teachers devote scheduled and extra time to the individual student consultations (which is 10 academic hours per semester for full time employed teachers). During these consultations each of the students, personally or in group, have 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, teachers in Management field study courses 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.

⁷² See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/VMU-Procedure-for-Study-QA_June-02-2021-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 Management field are linked to study methods and leads to achievement of learning outcomes of the study 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 6 below shows an example of the links among the learning outcomes of the study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* and the learning outcomes, study methods and assessment methods of study course “Organizational Culture”, as presented in all study course descriptions at VMU.

Links between study programme learning outcomes, course learning 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 Management 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.

Table 6. Example of links among learning outcomes of the study programme of *Corporate Strategic Management* and learning outcomes, study and assessment methods of study course of “Organizational Culture”:

Learning outcomes of the study programme of <i>Corporate Strategic Management</i>	Learning outcomes of the study course	Study methods of the study course	Assessment methods of the study course
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1. To demonstrate knowledge and understanding of advanced theories, concepts and methods in the contemporary areas of strategic management, leadership, organization and business development, and their application in diverse organizational contexts.	1) Demonstrate an understanding of the concept of organizational culture, explaining the problems of organizational culture.	Providing information, interpretation, illustration, by means of visual material; formulation and interpretation of problematic	Written survey (during the exam); assessment of practical tasks, assessment of individual task (written work); assessment of performance and oral presentation of seminar tasks; assessment of preparation of independent work and final written and oral presentation
2. To design and carry out social research by adopting the quantitative and qualitative methods of strategic and organizational analysis.	2) Evaluate the main elements of organizational culture, by analysing them in order to find out the need for cultural changes;	examples and questions; moderation of the discussion; consulting; case	
4. To apply the relevant management methods in major fields of management for the assessment of changing business environment.	3) To form a set of appropriate elements of organizational culture, based on the business environment conditions.	interpretation and case study moderation. Information in educational, scientific	
6. To apply and adapt in flexible and creative manner the theories of contemporary management in the context of strategy development and implementation.	4) To choose an appropriate type and form of organizational culture development in accordance with the organization's strategic management directions and the preconditions for their successful implementation.	literature, periodicals, etc.; analysis of problematic examples and questions; performance of practical tasks;	
7. To (re)design organizational systems, structures, and processes for the implementation of chosen strategies taking into account the organizational environment.	5) Design and implement changes in an organizational culture by exploring its cultural problems.	independent performance of a individual task (written work); case analysis; consulting; discussion, self-reflexion.	
8. To reconcile the strategic management and organization development with the principles of business ethics and corporate social responsibility.	6) To apply the orientations of ethical, responsible and attractive culture in the development of modern forms of organizational culture.		

9. To choose the appropriate forms of leadership, motivation, and communication in different organizational and cultural environments.	7) Design an appropriate organizational culture relationship with employees in a particular organization, accompanied by an appropriate leadership style and activities.		
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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 Management field to prepare managers capable independently or in team to make relevant and creative decisions and 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 plans of the study programmes of the analysed study field are presented and the consistency of the study courses is illustrated in Annex 1.

The design of *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme, its curriculum and course structure was based on the overview of graduate strategy-related programmes at some of the world's leading universities and business schools (e.g. Paris HEC and its "Strategic Management" Master programme; Copenhagen Business School and its "Strategy, Organisation and Leadership" Master programme; Norwegian School of Economics (NHH) and its "Strategy and Management" Master programme). We also took inputs from other leading business programmes in the Baltic-Nordic region (e.g. Lund university's "Master of International Strategic Management", Aalto university's "Master of Strategy").

All courses of the *Corporate Strategic Management* programme fall into three conceptual blocks. The first block is of *core knowledge and skills in business strategy and strategic analysis*. These courses (e.g., "Business Strategy and Development", "Strategic Innovation", "Business Intelligence", "Contemporary Organization Theories") provide students with fundamental understanding of the strategy-related concepts, analytical tools, and methods. The core strategy courses are provided during the first academic year, especially the first semester. The second block is devoted for *organization management and leadership in dynamic business environments*. Courses of this block provide students with conceptual and practical competence in organization management, i.e. various aspects of strategy implementation on the organizational level ("Organizational Design", "Project Management", "Organizational Culture"), as well as some important transferrable competences related to leadership in diverse organizational environments (e.g. "Creative

Business Decisions”, “Leadership and Managerial Work”, “Interpersonal and Cross-Cultural Communication”, “Corporate Reputation Management”, “Business Ethics”, etc.). Many of these courses are provided during the second and third semesters. The third block consist of *faculty-level elective graduate courses* from three different categories: 1) Personal skills and abilities; 2) Management skills and abilities; and 3) Sustainable development (see Annex 1 for detailed list of courses). The same list of elective courses is provided to all students of FEM VMU second cycle programmes. In 2018, the FEM implemented structural changes in the curricula of all 5 state-funded study programmes (with approval of SPC and the FEM Council). All compulsory study courses in the study field of the study programme are mostly taught in the first year of studies, while elective study courses are concentrated in the third semester. This enables the students to have a mobility "window" in the third semester (for *Erasmus+* exchange or double degree studies). Students who do not go on exchange programmes have an opportunity to choose the studies based on the *Artes Liberales* principles with the possibility to choose the study courses in Lithuanian or English together with students from other second cycle study programmes at FEM. The groups of elective courses and the study courses comprising the groups have been formed and are constantly updated on the basis of new scientific and practical achievements and groups of knowledge, skills and abilities identified by the social partners. The topics in elective study courses range from personal leadership strategies, mobbing, personal finance management, artificial intelligence solutions in business organizations to sharing economics, business ethics, sustainable real estate development, and more. They focus on equipping graduates with various transferrable skills. Discussions with students have shown that some graduates are more oriented towards acquisition of “soft” organizational competences (e.g., HRM, leadership), while others show more interest in “hard” business- and technology-related skills (e.g., finance, audit, artificial intelligence). The proposed electives adhere *Artes Liberales* philosophy and allow for such flexibility, which is quite a common approach in similar programmes across the world.

Thus, during the first semester of *Corporate Strategic Management* programme, the students are provided with core concepts and methods in corporate strategic management. They also acquire the necessary research competences thanks to the compulsory “Scientific research methodology” course. During the second semester, they continue their studies in strategy-related core courses, but, at the same time, they gradually start acquiring the organizational management methods and tools for strategy implementation. They also conduct research by combining the different organizational and strategy perspectives in the Research Paper that they have to defend at the end of the first year of studies. During the third semester, students focus largely on acquiring the transferrable business and management competences through two remaining programme courses (“Leadership and Managerial Work”, “Creative Business Decisions”) as well as three electives they can freely choose from the courses provided at the faculty level based on their individual preferences.

During the fourth semester, students prepare the Final Master Thesis, which is based on independent scientific/applied research. The quality of Final Master Thesis relies on the entire *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme: not only the core courses, but especially on gradual acquisition of research competence through “Scientific Research Methodology” and “Term Paper”. The choice of topic area for the Final Master Thesis is not limited to systemic analysis of corporate strategies but can touch a variety of related aspects (e.g., organizational design, business models). Students can choose the Final Master Thesis topic from any core course of the programme. While preparing the thesis, students demonstrate the ability 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 certain strategic and organizational problems, as well as the 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.

Study plan of the second cycle study programme *International Executive MBA* is presented in Annex 1. *International Executive MBA* curriculum first covers and then integrates the main functional areas of a company, with many opportunities for practical application and international experiences along the way. It starts and ends with seminars on skills, and it follows up all the coursework with an individual capstone in the form of the Final Master Thesis.

The programme opens with two soft skills seminars on "Executive Presence" and "Leadership: Starting with yourself". They allow participants to assess themselves in key managerial skills, while learning tactics and setting goals for personal growth in those skills throughout the full programme. These seminars are also an excellent, enjoyable way for the members of each new cohort to quickly get acquainted.

The opening block further puts new *International Executive MBA* students through an extensive business simulation game in "Business Game: Challenges and Opportunities". It acquaints them, in a highly engaging way, with a company's internal workings and external environment, while also introducing them to many key management concepts in financial accounting, management accounting, supply chain management, etc.

The study courses start with initial emphasis on the general business area of finance, beginning from accounting course "Financial Accounting", then covering finance courses "Entrepreneurial Finance", "Business Performance Management", and "Economic, Monetary and Geopolitical Environment", ending up with "Real-Life Group Project 1: Finance Analysis and Company Valuation".

As well, in the first semester, according to their needs and projected career, students choose two elective courses from a list that includes "Doing Business in EU", "Fintech/Biotech Start-Up Ecosystems", "Negotiation Skills", "Leading Effective Sales" and "Corporate Governance and Legal Environment".

Afterwards, strategy and entrepreneurship focused courses are delivered: "Strategies for Value Creation", "Strategic Marketing", "Entrepreneurship and New Business Models", ending up with "Real-Life Group Project 2: New Venture Business Plan" for realization of ideas from previous topics.

The closing block, mirroring the initial soft skills and modern trends in Management field content is delivered in courses "Transformational Leadership" and "Corporate Social Responsibility". A relatively new "Digital Transformation" study course on the modern technology aspects of business is offered as well.

As the programme progresses, those business basics are integrated, with a shift to transversal executive issues in courses on strategy, business planning, and innovation management.

The courses on contemporary management theory and best practices, which involve about 50 case studies, are complemented by three real-life projects where participants work

in small groups to apply learning to a relevant situation at a company where one of them works.

In addition, in the middle of studies, "International Study Module" means a visit to a partner university for students. This provides an international and multicultural experience for all the participants, who attend lectures and interact with international counterparts as well as making site visits to companies (see 3.3. for details).

Finally, participants prepare and defend an *International Executive MBA* Final Master Thesis, building on current theory to solve a specific management problem faced by a company, organization, or industry. The choice of topic area for the Final Master Thesis can touch a variety of companies' and businesses' management aspects.

The study programme is organized in cycles, i.e., at one time students have only one course.

The Management field programmes are characterized by interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary; hence, the students of the second-cycle study programme *Agricultural Business Management* attend various courses related to the areas of marketing, human resource management, finance, business, and economics. The consistency of the study programme courses is presented in Annex 1.

Compulsory course "Agricultural Business Environment and its Evaluation" in the field of Management shall be completed during the first semester. Two study courses of other study fields are executed during the same semester: "Scientific Research Methodology" and "Agricultural Economics and Sustainable Development". These courses provide fundamental knowledge as graduates of different first cycle study programmes enter the programme. "Scientific Research Methodology" is the first semester study course that cultivates the research skills, as it forms the foundations for performance of diverse independent (individual and group) assignments.

In the second semester students attend the following compulsory courses of the Management study field: "Agricultural Business Strategic Management", "Management Decisions Modelling", and "Agriculture and Food Marketing Strategies". These study courses are intended to acquaint the students with the contemporary concepts of business strategic management and with the decision-making instruments. They are provided with integrated knowledge and abilities in the area of agricultural business strategy development. These study courses are coherent with each other to make sure that the students are able to make value added agricultural business development decisions.

In the third semester, the following two compulsory courses of the field are executed: "Human Resource Management" and "Sustainable Business and Social Innovations". They are intended to enhance the knowledge and skills in the respective areas of activity of an agricultural business company. Managerial work requires knowledge and abilities in the area of human resource management, understanding, and application of the principles of sustainable agricultural business development. During this semester, students choose one of the two possible elective courses: "Business Consultation" or "Applied Econometrics". Having chosen the course of "Applied Econometrics", students have the opportunity to enhance their knowledge, develop analytical skills, and master the methods necessary for economic indicator forecasting and making of economically reasonable decisions. The course "Business Consultation" is intended to develop the prospective consultants' abilities to solve specific issues of development of agricultural business organizations by applying traditional and innovative consultation methods.

In the fourth semester, students attend three compulsory courses in the management study field. The course “Finance and Investment Management” is intended to develop the student’s ability to make strategic and tactical decisions in finance and investment management based on the financial theories, models, and instruments in the constantly changing environment. “Agricultural Production Process Management” is aimed to enhance knowledge and gain the abilities in design and management of agricultural production processes. In the second year, students choose the thematic field of their Final Master Thesis. The “Term Paper in Agricultural Business Strategic Management” is closely linked to the topic of the Final Master Thesis and helps the student accumulate comprehensive knowledge on the phenomenon investigated. The term paper – individual student's written work, which should reflect real agricultural business case analysis, systematic business / organizational development planning results.

In the fifth semester, two compulsory courses of the field are executed. “Agricultural Business Supply Chain Management” is intended to enhance the knowledge in the area of supply chain management and develop the ability to identify the problems and eliminate inefficient processes in the agricultural and food supply chain. “Applied Research” is intended to consolidate the students’ skills of analytical and systematic thinking and work in the areas of research and practical decisions of the development of an agricultural business and organization by applying the appropriate research methods and procedures. This is the student’s individual written assignment, the results of which are presented orally at the Defence Commission. The aim of the defence procedure is not only assessment of the student's research work, but also provide feedback on the conducted research, give recommendations on further development of the selected topic. In this semester, students may choose one of the two alternatives: “Environmental Management” or “Business Project Management”. The alternatives enable students to enhance the knowledge and develop the abilities in the areas relevant to their work activity.

The students complete the studies with the Final Master Thesis prepared by application of contemporary research methods, provision, and substantiation of the solutions to practical issues of agricultural business (see 1.7 for details).

The study courses of the study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* are grouped into twelve successive study modules, which combine lectures in classrooms and practical application of theories and research findings of agri-business management in practice during field trips to agri-food companies, as well as in practical classes in the university’s scientific laboratories. Such a format of the study process provides in-depth and extended knowledge in the social sciences and agri-food business management profiled in agricultural and food production, as well as scientific and research skills relevant to the academic second cycle to applicants who are graduates of the bachelor’s degree programme of any field.

“The Research” module is designed to strengthen students’ research capacity by providing advanced knowledge on research methods and understanding of scientific and interdisciplinary research. At the end of their studies, students choose a topic of their master’s thesis by themselves depending on their scientific and professional interests. Usually supervisors (appointed by the university, which enrolled these students) help students to select a topic which is in line with agricultural and food science development trends. Also, students may choose the topic which has not been studied previously but touches upon

aspects of international agri-food business in another country, climate zone or region of the world.

The modules “Bioeconomics”, “Leadership”, are implemented in Estonian University of Life Sciences during the first semester and include study courses “Agricultural Economics and Policy”, “Research Methods”, “Corporate Culture and Human Resource Development”, “Cooperative Management”. They are compulsory courses which, in accordance with the study programme’s aim, provide theoretical knowledge and its approbation in the agri-food sector and business management field, ensure the acquisition of specialized knowledge of the latest findings and modern research methods in bioeconomy and provide an in-depth understanding of agri-food value chains and conditions for their economically feasible and sustainable development. The module “Bioeconomics” develops students’ ability to integrate knowledge of multidisciplinary fields in further scientific and practical research activities and elaboration of their master’s thesis, while the module “Leadership” promotes understanding of the system of human resources management and develops management skills.

The modules “Strategies”, “Finances”, are implemented in VMU in the second semester, and they include compulsory study courses “Strategic Management of Agribusiness”, “Managerial Accounting and Control”, “Finance Management” and study course “Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects”. These study courses focus on improvement of students’ soft skills which are important for business management to evaluate and financially justify alternatives to strategic business decisions and development of students’ professional skills to independently analyse, plan, and manage agri-food business functions in the primary and secondary sectors, and ability to critically evaluate investment projects in food production and in agriculture.

Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technologies is responsible for implementing study courses which are included in the modules “Operations” and “Marketing” during the third semester. The compulsory study course “Integrated Marketing Communication in Agri-food Business” is included in the module “Marketing”. The aim of this course is to provide students with extended theoretical knowledge on the latest theoretical aspects of marketing and current issues in integrated marketing communication, focusing on the specific features of marketing of agri-food products and the public relations of companies. Thus, the study course corresponds with the aim and enabling tasks of the study programme as it provides both theoretical and practical knowledge in marketing that enhances students’ creativity and leadership in the promotion of products using modern methods as well as the ability to maintain public relations with various target audiences.

The fourth semester is dedicated to the Final Master Thesis and take place at the admitting University.

Agri-Food Business Management is second cycle study programme; therefore, the development of research skills and competences is an essential part of the study content based on the analysis of individual problems of agricultural production, food industry and business management as well as the interaction of common problems in these three sectors. As academic staff members from different universities are involved in the implementation of *Agri-food Business Management*, the content of study courses is being updated regularly following the latest research findings and results obtained from research projects related to this study programme. For example, the study course “Innovation of Food System” in the framework of “Operations” module incorporates the latest research findings on food safety aspects, research on new products of plant and animal origin and their nutritional value, research on biologically active substances in raw materials for food and products. The

academic staff members involved in teaching of the study course “Operations and Supply-chain Management in Agribusiness” have participated in several international research projects which analysed basic agricultural resources through environmentally friendly technologies. “Bioeconomics” and “Marketing” modules include the information on the latest research findings regarding the economics of sustainable bio-resources, sustainable development opportunities of territories, the efficiency of production processes and the competitiveness of companies.

Therefore, the content of the programme ensures interdisciplinary approach that combines three closely related areas of science: agriculture, food industry and business management and the programme is in compliance with the common economic development directions of the EU.

The learning outcomes, courses, consistency of the study plan, compliance with the goals set for the Management study field and the second study cycle are constantly reviewed and improved, taking into account the suggestions of the stakeholders (see part 7 for 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 Submission of an Individual Study Schedule at VMU⁷³.

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 Description of Procedure for Organization of Minor Studies⁷⁴. Upon completion of Minor studies, the student is issued a certificate testifying the completion of a Minor study programme⁷⁵. No students completed minor studies during the evaluated period, perhaps due to the shorter duration of studies in the second cycle and student’s deliberate choice to specialize in particular study field.

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 university⁷⁶. Students of the second cycle study programmes can choose to enhance their foreign language skills by choosing them in addition to the study semester volume of 30 ECTS provided for in the programme. No students studied foreign languages during the evaluated period.

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

⁷³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/vdu-individualaus-studiju-grafiko-teikimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

⁷⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/VMU-DESCRIPTION-OF-PROCEDURE-FOR-ORGANIZATION-OF-MINOR-STUDIES.pdf> in EN

⁷⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/degree-studies/possibilities/> in EN

⁷⁶ See <http://uki.vdu.lt/courses/semester-courses/> in EN

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 elective course groups (see 1.5 for details) 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 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 provided with possibility to choose topics of group or individual tasks and written assignments.

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 Preparation and Defence of Final Theses⁷⁷, 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. They prepare methodological guidelines. In accordance with a specific study programme, they set the requirements for Final Theses, their preparation, defence, and special evaluation criteria.

Students can defend their Final Master Theses after completing the study programme courses. Final Master Theses are defended at the end of the last semester. If the thesis is evaluated negatively, the student may re-defend the Final Master 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 second cycle the Final Master Thesis in study programmes are based on the analysis, synthesis, and critical evaluation of research papers relevant to the topic of the chosen field of Management; the student's independent research, the ability to analyse and interpret their results, to provide solutions for organizations and to formulate research conclusions.

Final Thesis of each study programme of Management study field is related with all learning outcomes of the particular study programme (see Annex 2). Students have to demonstrate the abilities to discuss the selected management 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 management phenomena, also they are able to assess the tendencies and peculiarities of modern management environment, as well as different business contexts and their impact for management problems and solutions (links to the research skills-based learning outcomes of the study programmes). Students should be able to adjust and to apply research-based knowledge of management areas, critically evaluate management results in the context of organizational strategy, apply research results, planning management 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

⁷⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/baigiamuju-darbu-tvarkos-aprasas-eng-skelbimui-2022-10.pdf> in EN

audience on management 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 Management field terminology.

The course matters of Final Master Thesis of study programmes are reviewed and published by the SPC on an annual basis, one semester before the start of preparation of the Final Thesis. Students choose a course matter that matches their field of interest and then formulate a specific topic. The vast majority of course matters and topics are in Management field, but students are also encouraged to choose interdisciplinary course matters. The Final Thesis can focus on the empirical research or applied problem solving. Its content and purpose depend on the choice of problem. The Procedure provides for both types of preparation of the Final Thesis. Having chosen the empirical research-oriented Final Thesis, students formulate a scientific problem, perform an analysis of the scientific literature and the results of previous empirical research, apply research methodology, conduct empirical research, and present a discussion of their results. Having chosen the Final Thesis oriented on the applied problem solving, the students formulate a practical problem, perform an innovation practice in an organization, identify the need for management innovation, develop methodological tools for implementation of this innovation, and evaluate the impact of innovation on the organization and its owners. Both types of the Final Thesis are defended in public, and students are encouraged to present the research results to the public at a scientific conference or by publishing a scientific article (see in detail below).

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.

During the 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 Theses corresponds to the content of studies in Management field (see examples in Annex 2). The topics of the Final Theses of the study field programmes are similar, but they also have specific characteristics. The students often choose the topics of the Final Theses under the programme according to the topics of the courses studied, the relevant issues of the period, or in relation to the research papers written earlier during the studies. The choice of the topics of the Final Theses is determined by the attractiveness of presentation of modern approaches to the course matter by the teachers, practical challenges faced at their work / companies, or the topics commissioned by the social partners (see examples in Annex 2).

All Final Theses are screened for plagiarism according to the VMU Senate Resolution of 25 June 2015 No. 4-20 "On Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works"⁷⁸ using the VMU approved plagiarism detection software. The results of the plagiarism examination are documented in the minutes of the Plagiarism Prevention Commission, which indicates the number of matches in each student's Final Thesis, the conclusions of the Commission on the matches and decisions on which theses are considered to contain plagiarism and are not recommended for public defence. No cases of plagiarism were detected in these study programmes during the self evaluation period.

Upon receipt of the recommendation by the Dean of the Faculty, the Rector or the Chancellor approves the Commission for the Public Defence of the Final Thesis, which consists of competent specialists in Management field (4 researchers and 1 social partner-practitioner representing another institution). In order to achieve transparency and objectivity, the procedure of defence of the Final Theses is highly formalized in the VMU documents and accessible to the students in the *Moodle* environment and on the VMU website.

The Qualification Committee for the Public Defence of Final Theses of the international joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* is formed by all three-partner universities from their competent specialists of the Management study field. In study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* defence procedure is agreed to be run by every university in turn (however, because of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions all defence procedures have been organized by Latvian colleagues via TEAMS). The list of final theses in *Agri-Food Business Management* study programme contains only theses of students, admitted to studies at VMU.

According to the General Order on the Preparation and Defence of the Final Theses, the interim review of the preparation of the Final Thesis is conducted for the purpose of quality assurance of the Final Thesis. Upon the receipt of the recommendation by the Head of the unit, the Deans of the Faculties approve the Attestation Commission of the Final Master Thesis consisting of three teachers who have the duty to review and evaluate the Final Theses. The main function of the Attestation Commission of the Final Master Thesis is to assess whether all the mandatory requirements for structure, content, volume, and formatting have been met and to indicate any corrections necessary. The Attestation Commission does not provide feedback on the quality of the content of the Final Thesis. Expression of the opinion regarding the quality of the content at the stage of the interim assessment is the duty of the supervisor of the Final Thesis. Following the assessment by the Attestation Commission, the student may eliminate only the deficiencies specified by the Attestation Commission by the date indicated. The results of the assessment by the Commission are provided in the Certificate of Compliance that is issued to the student and Public Defence Commission. Following the receipt of a positive evaluation by the Attestation Commission, the thesis is handed over to the reviewer appointed by the Dean of the Faculty. The thesis is defended at the Final Theses Assessment Commission appointed by the order of the Rector or the Chancellor. The Commission conducts final assessment of the quality of the thesis, the second cycle studies student's research skills and knowledge.

In order to be eligible to defend their Final Thesis, students of second cycle study programmes have to present the results of their research in a conference or published them in a scientific journal. Annual conference "Young Scientist"⁷⁹ is organized annually at VMU Agriculture Academy for presentation of the students' research papers to the public, and the

⁷⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Plagiarism-prevention-VMU.pdf> in EN

⁷⁹ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/conference-young-scientist-2022/> in EN

FEM hosts the scientific conference of young researchers (doctoral and master's degree students) "Processes and Tendencies in the EU Economics, Finance and Business"⁸⁰. Graduates of the programmes also can participate in the conferences organized by other institutions of higher education.

Starting with 2017, students, who successfully complete all the study courses of the programme and defend their Final Master Thesis, are awarded Master's degree in Business Management, because of the Descriptor of Study Fields and Groups of Fields⁸¹. Graduates of the second cycle studies in the field of Management 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.

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

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Study aims, outcomes and content</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Corporate Strategic Management study programme		
1.	It is recommended to add some innovation-related learning outcomes to the study programme, mostly reflecting to the ongoing knowledge based and information driven needs of the society.	By the decision of SPC in 2018, changes were made to the earlier learning outcomes by adding a more pronounced knowledge economy dimension: "5. To develop and implement corporate strategies, based on innovative value propositions and knowledge-based business models, in order to achieve sustainable competitive advantage", "10. To apply the skills and methods in individual and organizational learning by integrating in innovative ways the professional field knowledge with strategic, critical and creative thinking, information and knowledge management skills, and take responsibility for the decisions made and their impact on society and the environment." The changes in the learning outcomes are reflected in the improved contents of innovation-related courses, as well as in a much wider availability of the elective courses related to innovation and ICT (see Annex 1 for details).
2.	The expert team suggests to pay more attention to equal division of credit points over the semesters	The Faculty-level decision has been made by FEM VMU to have an equal division of credit points over each semester (30 ECTS) in second cycle studies.
3.	Supervision of the balance between individual work and contact hours is recommended.	All the courses of second cycle full-time study programmes are in scope of 6 ECTS, totally 160 hours, of which 60 hours are contact hours and 100 hours are allocated for independent work. This has been made

⁸⁰ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/science-and-innovation/conferences/conference-for-masters-and-doctoral-students/> in EN

⁸¹ See <https://www.skvc.lt/default/en/quality-assurance/study-program-descriptions> in EN

		into a standard policy in the second cycle studies by VMU Rector's July 4, 2022 order no. 291 "On the Approval of the Description of the Work Accounting Procedure of VMU Teachers", which determines the working hours of contact and independent students according to the fields of study.
4.	The expert team suggests to offer courses containing learning outcomes about business law, IT and digital society, and additionally analytical economics and financial courses for those student who do not have background in these areas.	By the decision of FEM Academic Council in 2018, a list of elective courses provided at the faculty-level for the second cycle students has been dramatically extended. The elective courses include various IT and digital society-related aspects ("Digitization and Financial Technologies"; "Artificial Intelligence in Organization Management"), as well as economic and financial courses ("Audit and Assurance", "Sustainable Financing", "Behavioural and Experimental Economics"). These courses are made accessible to the graduate students without a particular professional background in the field, as they are the faculty-level electives and are attended by students with a great diversity of backgrounds.
5.	The expert team recommends adding more contemporary scientific articles to the reading materials.	All course descriptions have been updated by upgrading the reading materials and adding more contemporary books as well as scientific articles. The latest course descriptions have been officially approved by the SPC for the period of 2022.04.15 – 2025.02.01
International Executive MBA study programme		
1.	The SER is extensive and detailed, but there is a lack of true reflective evaluation in the end of area evaluations. Additionally, the learning outcomes need reviewing to reflect a more international outlook and also to show precisely what a student is expected to know and understand after completion of the programme or the module. These should be more clearly outcomes based.	<p>In this report the extensive self evaluation is provided after each area. In each evaluated area, the area's strengths and aspects to be improved are identified, and measures for their implementation are considered.</p> <p>The learning outcomes were developed by SPC and BMI Academic Council to reflect international aspect in 2nd learning outcome "Develop scientific and applied research on the changing factors and trends of the internal and external business environment at global extent...", 4th learning outcome - "...to overcome international business challenges and profit from opportunities...", 5th learning outcome - "...to the generation of sustainable value for organisations, society at large and the global economy..." and 6th learning outcome – "Lead diverse teams and individuals effectively as a senior manager in a dynamic, multicultural, digital and open world..."</p> <p>By the decision of BMI Academic Council, the learning outcomes were reformulated to be more measurable.</p>

<p>2. The curriculum overall should reflect more the 'international' of the programme's title. Some subject curricula are somewhat basic for the more experienced students and some prerequisites are vague and lacking in appropriate detail for some semester 1 subjects. These points need reviewing and action taken. The programme's descriptors are generally well produced but, in some cases, the curriculum content is merely listed, is very minimal, and lacks detail.</p>	<p>Notwithstanding several internationally orientated courses, as "Economic, Monetary and Geopolitical Environment" and the foreign partners university visit during "International Study Module", the international character of the Programme and international context of learning outcomes in the Programme is ensured by <i>International Executive MBA</i> pedagogy. In terms of faculty BMI has the highest rate in the region of international faculty: professors affiliated to leading international business schools. The teaching methods, case materials, textbooks, used in the programme, are 100% international.</p> <p>After the experts' recommendations received, the learning outcomes and content of the courses were adjusted to the second cycle level of studies (for example, "Strategic Marketing" or "Business Performance Management").</p> <p>The course descriptions were renewed accordingly. As well, more detailed information is available on BMI website and brochures for potential and starting studies students.</p>
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Agri-Food business management study programme

<p>1. Revise the Programme's objective and learning outcomes to highlight the specificities of the Programme in relation to agriculture and food business management.</p>	<p>A meeting of the Joint SPC for <i>Agri-Food Business Management</i> was organised to discuss the improvement of the content of the learning outcomes (2019-11-07; Protocol No 19-1).</p> <p>It was decided to pay particular attention to the formulation of the expected learning outcomes, highlighting the specificity of the programme in relation to agriculture and agri-food business management. It was also improved the course descriptions by adjusting the topics to be taught, the expected learning outcomes, the criteria for assessing learning outcomes and the teaching methods themselves, as well as updating the lists of recommended readings.</p>
<p>2. In order to ensure continuity and coherence between the different modules of the Programme, it is advisable to organise regular joint meetings of the lecturers who will teach in the Programme.</p>	<p>The meeting of the <i>Agri-food Business Management</i> Joint Study Programme Committee on 07-11-2019 in Jelgava was attended by some of the programme's teachers and representatives of the administration of all three universities (Minutes No 19-1).</p> <p>In addition to the organisational issues of the programme implementation, the meeting also discussed the updating of all study course descriptions and teaching issues.</p>

	<p>It was agreed that, in the case of the 4 study courses taught at each university, the teachers teaching them should coordinate both the examples given and the homework assignments.</p> <p>It is also envisaged that, where possible, students should start planning their thesis research from the first semester onwards, so as to gather and apply both scientific and practical information from the examples of each study course throughout the period of study for their thesis.</p> <p>Meetings and exchanges of experience between teachers teaching individual study courses and consultations on the continuity and coherence of the individual modules of the Programme takes place on regularly basis.</p>
7.	<p>Recommend the preparation of a general description of the preparation and defence of final theses, which clearly sets out the requirements for the final thesis and the criteria for its assessment.</p> <p>During the meeting of the joint study programme <i>Agri-food Business Management</i> SPC on 07-11-2019 in Jelgava discussed the regulation of the process of thesis preparation and thesis defence at each university (Minutes No 19-1).</p> <p>All partners exchanged the procedures applied in their respective universities and found that there were no significant differences in the procedures for the preparation and defence of Final Master Theses in all three universities, so it was decided to follow the procedures in force at the university where the student prepares his/her thesis.</p> <p>It was agreed to organise the public defence of the Final Master Thesis of the first year of admission in Jelgava in January 2021, with representatives of each university being delegated to the jury, so that any minor differences in the formatting of the theses themselves could be assessed in the aggregate (as the general requirements for the content, scope, etc. of the research are set out in the curriculum) of the Final Master Thesis preparation.</p>

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

Strengths

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

- The learning outcomes of the programmes in Management field are designed to cover and maintain balance between all the categories of the Bologna Qualifications Framework (knowledge and its application, research, special, social, and personal skills). The aims, learning outcomes and content of study programmes in Management 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, as well as the growth-oriented priorities of Lithuania and the EU in today's social, political, economic, and technological development.
- Management study programmes curriculum design and content, as well as teaching and learning methods enable the achievement of the study programmes aims and learning outcomes.
- The student-centred model in *Artes Liberales* tradition applied to the studies in Management 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

- Before each Autumn semester to revise the list of elective courses available to offer and to prepare for students in study programmes more specialized and interdisciplinary elective courses.

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 research in management integrates a wide range of thematic areas, such as strategic and operations management, entrepreneurship and innovation, marketing management, organization studies and human resource management (by FEM VMU). It also covers the narrower areas of business management research, especially in the specific contexts of agriculture and agri-food sectors (by FBD VMU). Research is carried out within these thematic areas, as well as in order to achieve cross-functional and often interdisciplinary synergy between the areas (both with each other and with other social sciences). This synergy is embedded 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 where research and studies are 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 research 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 Management field belong to the research stream S003 (Management). During the latest multiannual expert evaluation of research that took place in 2018 VMU was evaluated with three points. This is the highest score among the institutions participating in the largest Lithuanian Joint Doctoral Committee on Management (Vytautas Magnus University as lead institution, Mykolas Romeris University, Šiauliai University, Klaipėda University). The overall scientific potential of the unit (economics and management combined), expressed as the economic and social impact of the research, has also received the score of 3.

Based on the data of the annual comparative assessment (the results of formal assessment of the works in the fields of social sciences at the Lithuanian universities and research institutes), in 2018, the sum of assessment points for the VMU social science works was 2,288. Only VU scored more points that year (3,708). According to the results of the formal assessment of the works in the field of social sciences at the Lithuanian universities and research institutes, VMU scored 1,729 points in 2019. Only MRU (2,017), VGTU (2,026) and VU (4,249) received more points. According to the results of the formal assessment of the works in the field of social sciences at the Lithuanian universities and research institutes, VMU scored 2,662 points in 2020. More points were collected by VGTU (2,956), VU (5,250) and MRU (2,738). In 2020, the fields of Management and Economics collected the highest number of research points (550 in total: 340 in Management and 210 in Economics) in the context of other VMU social sciences (both in absolute numbers and on average per researcher).

VMU's Management field study programmes and research activities are currently implemented by two structural units - Faculty of Economics and Management (FEM) and Faculty of Bioeconomy Development (FBD) at Agriculture Academy of VMU. Therefore, we present the research activities of both faculties and their research teams, substantiating the competencies in the implemented programmes.

Financial resources are required for the implementation of research activities. A major part of the funding for research activities consists of salaries paid to the teachers (30%) for research activities. The departments and teachers of the departments are awarded bonuses for research results on the annual basis. These bonuses are used to fund the production of high-level publications, participation in scientific congresses and conferences, pursue professional development, etc. For teachers who have prepared and published Q1 and Q2 scientific articles the costs of editing services and the publication fee are reimbursed. The bonuses are paid to the teachers following the preparation of international applications and receipt of positive results of the application. VMU organizes competitions for the doctoral students to fund various research visits. The procedure for the promotion and funding of teachers' research activities is regulated by the following main internal documents of VMU: Description of the Procedure for Determination of the Remuneration of VMU Employees (Council Resolution, 27/05/2021, No. 5), Description of the Procedure for Awarding Research Grants to VMU for Scientific Dissemination (Rector's Order, 11/11/2021, No. 482), VMU Procedure for Provision of Incentives for the Scientific / Artistic Results of High Significance (Rector's Order, 02/12/2021, No. 528).

The VMU Science Foundation provides funds for the organization of student conferences and publication of scientific journals. Joint research by VMU-KTU-LSMU is published and funded by the state funds. The scientific events of the VMU Agriculture Academy are funded by the funds of the Lithuanian Rural Network. The teachers receive additional remuneration for research projects funded by various institutions and can also use part of the funds allocated to the projects at own discretion to enhance their research activities.

VMU employs some of the leading scientists and experts specializing in different areas of business management in Lithuania who also actively participate in the study process and integrate their research experience into various study courses. To mention just a few examples:

- 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, strategy, and organizational ecosystems.

- prof. dr. J. Vveinhardt leads the ranking of the most active researchers of VMU by the publication output (No. 1 among all social science researchers at the University) and is Lithuania's most cited researcher in the field of negative organizational behaviour (e.g., mobbing) and its management. She is a member of numerous management and research associations, to name just a few: Baltic Management Development Association (BMDA), Lithuanian Quality Management and Innovation Association (LKVIA), European Educational Research Association (EERA), World Educational Research Association (WERA). She is also the Managing Editor of "Organization Management: Systemic Research", and a member of editorial boards of over 20 international scientific journals.
- prof. dr. L. Pilelienė is the country's leading researcher and expert in neuromarketing applications in marketing management. 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 and management training projects implemented by VMU.
- assoc. prof. dr. R. Bendaravičienė, Dean of FEM VMU, is a member of Baltic Management Institute Board, a member of Blockchain Cybersecurity and Compliance Solutions research cluster, a regular participant of Eduniversal network events for management research and education.
- assoc. prof. dr. V. Žirgūtis - member of the Project Management Institute, member of the Confederation of Laboratories for Artificial Intelligence Research in Europe (CLAIRE), expert of Horizon Europe research projects.
- prof. dr. I. Bakanauskienė – editor-in-chief of international scientific journal "Problems and Perspectives in Management" (Scopus), member of the Lithuanian Association of Personnel Management Professionals, member of the Human Resources Commission of the Lithuanian Business Confederation.
- Assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažeraitė is a member of many international Horizon Europe 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 with a number of national awards as one of the most productive PhD students in research (defended her dissertation in 2020) in Lithuania. V. Grigaliūnaitė and A. Pažeraitė are sharing their research competence with graduate students of Management programmes by teaching course "Scientific research methodology".
- assoc. prof. dr. N. Klebanskaja is the research coordinator of the Baltic Institute of Management (VMU FEM is the founder of BMI; EPASS accreditation), an expert of the Administrative Science Association of Canada (ASAC);
- 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. Rūtėlionė is a member of the Consumer Research Association, the European Marketing Association, the European Manufacturing Research Association, and the American Marketing Association.
- assoc. prof. dr. J. Greblikaitė is a member of Regional Science Association International with a focus on the regional impacts of national or global processes of economic and social change.

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 2022 VMU had 22 PhD students in the field of Management - 14 FEM and 7 FBD. In addition, it is important to mention that during the period since the last evaluation as many as 4 international PhD students studied at VMU, when only five years ago only Lithuanians were researchers at FEM. At least one international PhD student joined the VMU management doctoral programme every year. According to the number of PhD students from foreign countries, VMU is one of the leaders in internationalization in Lithuania.

VMU Management research group (which includes experienced researchers and PhD students) were conducting research on PhD dissertation topics that reflect the latest trends in the field:

- "Increasing the strategic resilience of enterprise value chains: an ecosystem approach" (N. Budrys, prof. dr. G. Jucevičius);
- "Development of entrepreneurial ecosystem in the context of traditional industry" (L. Švipas, prof. dr. G. Jucevičius);
- "Development of sustainable and resilient supply networks in the context of small open economy" (I. Kurienė, assoc. prof. S. Staniulienė);
- „Improving the interactions of knowledge and innovation ecosystems by enabling their actors to transform knowledge into innovations" (P. Baltokas, assoc. prof. Staniulienė);
- "Solutions for the improvement of management culture by integrating the model of congruence of personal and organizational values into business organizations" (P. Foktas, prof. J. Vveinhardt);
- „Embedding the characteristics of attractive employer into organizational culture" (L. Barkauskė, prof. I. Bakanauskienė);
- "Improving the organizational resilience in the context of environmental changes through the development of positive psychological capital" (E. Savickaitė-Kazlauskė, doc. R. Bendaravičienė);
- „The impact of nepotism on organizational microclimate" (L. Petrauskaitė, prof. J. Vveinhardt);
- "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);
- "Artificial intelligence in individualizing value to the client" (N. Babayev, assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė);
- "Forming a brand image based on personal privacy in the music industry" (E. Gouitchche, prof. dr. L. Pilelienė);
- "Modelling 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). The 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 at VMU.
- "Smart tourism development experiences as heritage transformations in regions" (E. Zabulionienė, assoc. prof. dr. R. Pranskūnienė)
- "Development of high added value bio-business in rural areas" (J. Astrovienė, assoc. prof. dr. J. Greblkaitė)
- "The model for the integrated development management of the thematic villages" (I. Kazlauskienė, prof. dr. Vilma Atkočiūnienė)
- "Human resources management in the context of employee empowerment and engagement" (I. Vidrevičienė, prof. dr. S. Vaitkevičius)
- "Models of sustainable development of the agricultural and rural development administration system" (A. Prakapienė, prof. dr. J. Žukovskis).
- "Modeling the change of logistics activities to green logistics in the context of global changes" (L. Jefimovaitė, assoc. prof. dr. M. Vienažindienė)

New knowledge gained during the above-mentioned research is constantly integrated into the study process by updating existing study courses and introducing new ones (for more details, see 2.2.).

The research strategy is based on the 3 "I" Strategic Principles: *Interdisciplinarity*, *Internationality* and *Impact*. These strategic principles also apply to research conducted in the field of Management.

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 several departments. VMU currently has 56 research clusters in the humanities, social sciences, arts, science, and technology.

Management field at FEM VMU is represented by two horizontal research clusters - "Management Transformation for the Development of a Socially Sustainable Society and a Competitive State" and "Research on Marketing Management in a Modern Environment". The first research cluster promotes the integration of different disciplines, with a particular emphasis on general management research (research and innovation ecosystems, organizational culture, strategic management, entrepreneurial behaviour, human resource management in knowledge-based business organizations). The second cluster brings together the researchers focusing on marketing and marketing management solutions (research areas such as neuromarketing, brand management, value dimensions, organizational reputation and social responsibility, consumer behaviour and marketing communication trends). The boundaries of research clusters are quite flexible. Researchers can participate in several

clusters at the same time (depending on the research project). The collaboration across the disciplinary boundaries leads to an enhanced quality and upgrading of different study courses. For example, the research findings of cross-disciplinary project “Smart development of organizational knowledge ecosystems” are integrated into the second cycle Management field courses, such as “Strategic Innovations”, “Business Intelligence”, and “Organizational Design”.

Management researchers at FBD at Agriculture Academy of VMU (representing the study programmes *Agri-food Business Management* and *Agricultural Business Management*) are part of the departmental research groups (the merger of universities in 2019 allowed the Academy to keep its semi-independent internal structure). The main research topics of the Management field are the following: strategic development of agricultural and other bio-based business organizations; management of the sustainable business processes and resources in agricultural and other bio-based industries/organizations and bio-business management. The content of topics for the Final Master Thesis is formed according to the main research topics. For example, the master thesis “Distribution of agricultural products and food products through an electronic trading platform” or “Possibilities of forming groups of milk producers in Lithuania” (supervised by prof. dr. J. Žukovskis).

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 management and development. This concerns the post-Covid-19 issue, as well as the potential for new institutional synergy and the resources allocated to this area of research at EU level.

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 Management field and the interdisciplinary synergy of social sciences. The social dimension occupies an important place in the specialization of VMU FEM and FBD research 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 we present some examples. The research on neuromarketing applications in marketing management performed by prof. dr. L. Pilelienė and dr. V. Grigaliūnaitė, has a strong dimension in the science of psychology. Another example could be Horizon2020 project “Creation of a Center for Cultural and Creative Industries at the Interdisciplinary Junction of Arts, Culture, Education and ICT” with an active participation of VMU FEM management researchers. Here, they worked together with researchers from other faculties of VMU in the fields of public communication, the arts and the creative industries. Besides, FEM VMU researchers - prof. dr. G. Jucevičius, assoc. prof. dr. S. Staniulienė, and dr. K. Grumadaitė – are implementing the Researcher Group Project “Smart development of organizational knowledge ecosystem”, which is funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (2020-2023). The research takes the perspective of the theory of complexity, which integrates the approaches of various social sciences, as well as ecological sciences, which are to the identity of VMU as research institution. More specifically, the research conducted in the project helped improve the contents of the study course “Business intelligence”, where decision making under complexity plays an important part. It should be noted that the interdisciplinary perspective of complexity is also applied in the research of

VMU FBD, that carries out management research in the context of sustainability and sustainable development. For example, FBD teachers-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. One of the results of the project – development of new business models for the operation. The results of the research are integrated into the topics of the study course “Agricultural Business Environment and its Evaluation”.

Developers and teachers implemented the Horizon 2020 project "Promoting a Sustainable Circular Bioeconomy in Central and Eastern Europe" (BIOEASTsUP). The project aimed to 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. The results of the project contributed to the content of the study course “Agricultural Economics and Sustainable Development”, enhancing the topic of “Agricultural sustainability assessment methodology”. VMU FBD has already started Horizon projects, focused on the interdisciplinary research “Accelerating circular bio-based solutions integration in European rural areas (BioRural)” and “Strengthening farm health and safety knowledge and innovation systems (SafeHabitus)”. The main objective of BioRural is to create a pan-European Rural Bioeconomy Network under which related stakeholders will cooperate to promote the currently available small-scale bio-based solutions in rural areas to increase the share of bioeconomy, giving increased value in such remote areas. It is expected that results will contribute to improvement of Management study programmes.

VMU is an associated member of Biobased-industries Consortium (BIC)⁸² (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. In addition, VMU also participates in other Biobased-industries initiative, called Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking (CBE JU)⁸³ connecting the partnership between European Union and the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC).

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.

Strong international profile 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 2019-2022 Management 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

⁸² See <https://biconsortium.eu/membership/associate-members> in EN

⁸³ See <https://www.bbi.europa.eu/about/cbe-ju-states-representatives-group> in EN

Politecnico du Porto (S. Staniulienė), University of Nicosia (L. Pilelienė), University of Foggia (A. Kyguolienė), West Pomeranian University of Technology (V. Grigaliūnaitė), University of Extremadura (D. Perkumienė), Eskişehir Osmanmangazi (Turkey) (R. Pranskūnienė), University of Foggia (J. Grėblikaitė), Białystok Technical University (Poland)(J. Vilkevičiūtė). 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 second cycle 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 *International 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. Researchers from 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 giving an elective course on experimental economics for all VMU FEM graduate students, Prof. P. Semal from Catholic University of Louvain - on 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) that are made accessible to the students of Management study programmes.

For its part, VMU FBD maintains institutional partnerships with foreign universities, such as the University of Extremadura (Spain), the University of Anadolu, Eskişehir Osmangazi University (ESOGU) (Turkey), the University of Foggia, University of Perugia (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 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, while the application to become a full member of EFMD network has been submitted in 2022 (more research-related synergies are provided in Section 2.2).

The growing internationality of management research and scientific journals. During 2019-2022 VMU's overall research publishing strategy focused more and more on quality parameters (i.e., giving 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 management science journals in Lithuania. Since 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% over 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 - VMU scientific journal in the fields of business and management - *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 management research. Both journals are open to the researchers from all over the world, and strongly encourage the geographical diversity of authors. Thus, although the VMU researchers representing the Management study programmes publish in the aforementioned institutional journals, even more importantly, the journals serve as important gateways to the international scientific partnerships.

Impact through applied research and partnerships with diverse stakeholders. The growing importance of applied research with practical implications. VMU gives great importance to applied research in the field of Management, which contributes to the solution of real-life problems and experiential learning of students (for more information, see 2.3.). VMU has a VMU Business Practice Centre⁸⁴ (established in 2014), which provides students with the opportunity for experiential learning through applied research and case studies. Many VMU researchers work as experts and consultants of this centre, thus directly contributing to managerial 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 organizations (e.g., *Volfas Engelman*, *Žalgiris*, 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 BMI and their 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).

In the future, the following priorities for further strengthening the scientific excellence in Management field are envisaged and will be supported with resources on the University and Faculty levels:

⁸⁴ See <https://minded.lt/about-us-2/#studentams> in EN

- 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 management research (using VMU research clusters and university funds to strengthen the research and economics research potential).

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 study courses. The research-related influences on the contents of study programmes are multifold.

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 content of study courses in Management study programmes:

- 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 study courses taught in the *Corporate Strategic Management* programme, justifying the various contexts of uncertainty in which firms and organizations operate. The research presented in the monograph allows teachers to present for students 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 courses “Strategic Innovation” and “Business Intelligence” by adding the complexity dimension that is often under-represented in management studies and practice. 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 Management field studies.
- The EU co-financed H2020 project “Cultural and Creative Innovation Competence Centre in Lithuania” (INNOCULT) contributed to the improvement of the competencies of VMU FEM teachers in the field of cultural and creative industries, which were included in the content of various study courses (e.g., “Creative Business Decisions”, “Project Management”).

- Assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė leads numerous research projects that provide valuable material for the “Scientific Research Methodology” study course. 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. Assoc. prof. dr. A. Pažėraitė and PhD student N. Babayev started to study destructive technologies and their influence on creating value for the consumer. The research project “Access to Housing for the Population and Measures to Increase the Availability of Housing” touched on sensitive issues for the public to deepen their knowledge about the development of research methodology and conduction of the research. 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. Generally, the design and findings of different research projects are used as good examples during the “Scientific Research Methodology” study course.
- Assoc. prof. dr. R. Legenzova conducted research and prepared publications in the areas of choice of accounting policy of companies, assessment of financial condition and performance and assessment 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 faculty-level elective study courses related to the financial management.

The study programmes in Management field and related research activities implemented by the VMU FBD also deserve a special mention. FBD teachers are the creators of the second cycle study programmes *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-food Business Management*, which is a joint study programme with Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies and Estonian University of Life Sciences. The faculty has a concentrated potential for researchers interested in management and trade issues. The implementation of the study programme of *Agricultural Business Management* has long-standing experience (starting in 1997), while the implementation of the study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* started in 2018 in cooperation with LLU and EMU universities (here the implementation of the II semester of the programme belongs to VMU).

Currently, this field of research is being developed and scientific papers on management are published by prof. dr. R. Drejeris, assoc. prof. dr. J. Greblikaite, assoc. prof. dr. V. Tamulienė, assoc. prof. dr. J. Zaleckienė, lect. dr. M. Samuolaitis, lect. dr. A. Čapienė and other faculty staff. Following the structural changes in ASU in 2018, and the establishment of FBD, most of the management research is related to the development of bio-based businesses and the topics of bio-based product supply chains, analysis of business processes. This is based on the important role of management in the development of the EU bioeconomy, especially in the agricultural, and, in particular, 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. The agri-food industry is one of the largest production sectors in the EU, requiring the sustainable approach during the production and distribution process. For this reason, in the second cycle study programme

Agricultural Business Management students study the study course “Agricultural Economics and Sustainable Development”. The projects implemented by the FBD, which allowed to improve the content of management programmes, should also be 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 *Agricultural Business Management* study courses (“Management Decision Modelling”, “Agricultural Business Strategic Management”).
- Programme developers and lecturers also participate in the research commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture "Methodological Recommendations for Project Innovation Assessment" (executors are assoc. prof. dr. R. Pakeltienė, 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 were included to the study course of “Agribusiness Planning and Evaluation of Investment Projects” and were analysed as the case studies.
- 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 various study courses of *Agri-Food Business Management* and *Agricultural Business Management* by enriching them with new examples of case studies, revealing the peculiarities of short supply chains and their impact on the local market. It should be mentioned that another European Innovation Partnership project "Improving the management of production and commercialization of high value-added products from berries in Lithuanian berry farms" currently implemented by assoc. prof. dr. Jolita Greblikaitė will also contribute to the content of the study courses of the above-mentioned programmes with practical examples.
- 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 outcomes of the project will contribute for the development of agri-business and will be also shared with students of *Agricultural Business Management* programme.

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 the course “Strategic Innovations” of *Corporate Strategic Management* programme.

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 enriches the study programmes in the field of Management. It also relies on the integration of the latest technological achievements into the research and study process. One example could 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 6.1. for more details). Another promising area of interdisciplinary potential is eSports. The ICT-based tools of Magnus eSports⁸⁵ (see 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 the students of business and management to access and integrate the latest financial data in science and study using ICT tools.

Teachers of FBD are also implementing different projects, dedicated to improvement of different students' skills. For example, the results of the project Erasmus + KA205 project RURALYOUTH „Empowering Rural Tourism through Entrepreneurship with Youth“ contributed to the content of “Management Decision Modelling” study course with different practical examples, where organisations in different partner countries created their own businesses. The Erasmus+ KA203 project SMARTRURAL „Towards smart rural tourism development in Europe“ analysed the concrete examples of tourism development, making the focus on being smart. These case studies expanded the content of “Management Decision Modelling” and “Agricultural Strategic Management” study courses with best practice example of smart management.

In conclusion, newest research and development achievements are being integrated constantly to the study courses of the field of Management.

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

Study programmes in Management field are developed based on the principle of unity of science and studies, which is particularly pronounced during the second cycle studies.

All second cycle study programmes in Management field are focused on equipping students with adequate research skills. For example, in the programme *Agricultural Business Management* coordinated by VMU FBD, the compulsory study courses “Term paper in Agricultural Business Strategic Management” and “Applied Research” were introduced (assoc. prof. dr. J. Zaleckienė). In these study courses students must submit their preliminary draft of a planned Final Master Thesis research. They are also provided with the necessary IT tools to analyse social statistics and develop their skills in working with key IT applications in research (SPSS, Gretl, STATA, etc.).

Students of the second cycle study programmes must prepare 1-2 research papers, during which they carry out theoretical and empirical research in the field of their interest (within the Management field) and are supervised by preliminary supervisors of the Final Master Thesis is (1 research paper in the programme *Agricultural Business Management* and 1 research paper in *Agri-Food Business Management*, 1 research paper in *Corporate Strategic Management*. Before being awarded the Master's degree, students must prepare the Final Master Thesis, in which they have to provide solutions to management problems based on theoretically and methodologically sound research. The presentation of research-based solutions in the Final Master thesis is the main difference compared to the thesis requirements on undergraduate level.

⁸⁵ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magnus-esport/> in LT

In 2019-2022, the students of Management field study programmes actively participated in the annual conference of young researchers (students) organized by FEM⁸⁶ (the 25th annual conference was held in 2022) and had the opportunity to publish their articles in the conference journal. The conference is made up of sections on Economics, Marketing, Finance and Organization management, with a fairly even distribution of participants. Every year there are around 70 participants from the first and second cycle study programmes in the conference with relatively equal shares of papers / presentations under each section. On average around 70-80 percent of the second cycle students in Management field participate in the student conferences. Peer-reviewed conference papers are later published in the conference journal⁸⁷.

Students of the second cycle study programmes in the field of Management *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-Food Business Management* coordinated by FBD actively participated in the annual conferences "Young Scientist" (all students of both study programmes), few students participated "Modern Management - Part of Cultural Policy" organized by FBD, a biannual scientific-practical conference "Strengthening the Competitiveness of Lithuanian Rural Areas"⁸⁸. All students have the opportunity to present research results, as well as to publish their research in these conferences' journals. VMU FBD annual students conference "Young Scientist" covers all topics of the faculty study programmes, giving the opportunity for all students to be involved in research activities. 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, re-examine their validity, and prepare for the final defence of their thesis (which usually takes place after 2-3 weeks). Bachelor students are given additional motivation to participate in the conferences by adding an additional point when entering some VMU second cycle programmes in the fields of Economics, Business, and Management. Most conference papers and articles are prepared in collaboration with their supervisors / researchers, which also helps to develop students' scientific competence and, in some cases, leads to joint publications in scientific journals (especially with PhD students). Some of the best PhD students in the field of management (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 activities is also encouraged. For example, prof. dr. J. Žukovskis has involved two second cycle students of *Agricultural Business Management* in his research projects. (For example, A. Vyšniauskaitė worked by the projects' activities about agricultural knowledge sharing platform. Here the student had these tasks: to collect the data and to integrate into the project information system, to participate in the survey and fill the database. G. Talačkaitė worked in the project about agricultural producers' groups. Here the student participated in the survey implementation, database filling, and preparation of report visualisation). assoc. prof dr. V. Tamulienė together with second cycle student I. Babenskienė made a presentation at international conference „9th International Scientific Conference Rural Development 2019: Research and Innovation for Bioeconomy September 26-28th, 2019, with the topic: "Possibilities of engagement of agricultural entities in advanced electronic services". Lect. dr.

⁸⁶ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/vmu-faculty-of-economics-and-management-organizes-young-scientists-conference/> in EN

⁸⁷ All conference materials are available on request

⁸⁸ See https://www.vdu.lt/cris/bitstream/20.500.12259/111999/3/ISSN2351-6909_2020_9.pdf in LT

J. Zaleckienė with second cycle student G. Meida participated in 7th International Scientific Conference “Trends in Regional Development in the EU Countries 2021”, with presentation „Factors affecting the development of farmers’ entrepreneurship“.

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).

They also have the opportunity to get involved in solving practical problems on the basis of applied research at the VMU Business Practice Centre. 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). Students participate in practical tasks and generate the solutions that are based on the field research.

Besides, the VMU Business Practice Centre acts as a platform for cooperation between the business and management researchers and students at all levels. At the centre, students are introduced to modern methods of business management and 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 students contribute to the enrichment of programmes in solving problems relevant to modern companies and involve students in applied 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.
- “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 aims 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 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 company.
- 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.

There is 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 the second cycle programmes.

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, assoc. prof. dr J. Zaleckienė, Head of SPC for the second cycle study programme of *Agricultural Business Management*, initiates and encourages students' research, involving the managerial decisions. In this context, three master students prepared the managerial strategies and decisions for Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service, JSC “Kauno grūdai”, included to their research, etc.

In conclusion, it could be stated that the second cycle students of Management field actively get involved to the scientific activities, which is substantiated by participation in scientific conferences and applied research projects.

In this area, there were no specific recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for any of second cycle study programmes in Management field.

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Links between science (art) and study activities</i>	
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Recognised research team in the field of Management with increasing international engagement and clear institutional identity. ➤ Close connections between the applied business management research and studies. The teachers prepare scientific publications and present findings in international conferences. The scientific results are integrated into the content of the courses of study programmes. ➤ VMU organizes scientific conferences and publishes peer reviewed scientific journals, which provides excellent opportunities for the students to engage in research and disseminate its findings. ➤ Strong emphasis on cross-disciplinary research in the novel areas of business and management, high level technical facilities for conducting state-of-the-art research. 	
Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encouraging an even more active participation of graduate students in the projects of applied research and preparation of scientific publications. The preparation of such publications may already start at the stage of research methodology related study courses. 	

3. Student admission and support

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

Admission requirements to second cycle study programmes in Management field are set in Rules for Admission of Students to VMU Full-time and Part-time Master's Studies in 2022⁸⁹ which are released annually by the Order of the VMU Rector. The admission scores are calculated depending on the study programme.

For *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme 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 Management, Business, Marketing, Economics, Finance, Accounting, Communication, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Public Administration (i.e., when Supplementary studies are not required), the admission scores are calculated:

$$K = 0.7 \times \text{weighted average of the grades of all study courses in the Bachelor's diploma supplement} + 0.3 \times \text{evaluation of bachelor thesis or final exam.}$$

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

⁸⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022-m-magistranturos-priemimo-taisykles-skelbimui-naujos.pdf> in LT

$K = 0.4 \times \text{weighted average of the grades of all study courses in the Bachelor's diploma supplement (excluding grades of Supplementary / Minor study courses)} + 0.3 \times \text{evaluation of bachelor thesis or final exam} + 0.3 \times \text{weighted average of Supplementary/ Minor study courses}.$

University's graduates of other fields of study and college (professional bachelor) graduates are admitted after completing Supplementary / Minor studies in Management, Marketing, Business. The scope of Supplementary studies is 40 credits.

For *International Executive MBA* study programme admission requirements are somewhat different. The fundamental admission requirement is a demonstrated potential for top-level management responsibilities in an international environment, including:

- a bachelor level university degree;
- 5 years of successful business experience at the managerial level;
- strong motivation and ambition with clear career and life objectives;
- vision for contributing to the development of one's company;
- enthusiasm and aptitudes for being a good team player;
- personal qualities, maturity and communication abilities;
- a good level of the English language.

The assessment of how well applicants meet these criteria is based on:

- a written application form with background data and essay questions;
- diploma of the previous university-level studies and its supplement;
- personal references and an employer recommendation;
- a test of written and spoken English;
- performance during an admissions interview.

BMI Admission Committee conducts the selection of candidates for studies. The commission consists of BMI Dean, BMI alumni (2-3 representatives) and BMI employees (2-3 representatives), who evaluate the suitability of the candidate in a 10-point system according to a special evaluation form based on the previously mentioned requirements and criteria. If the candidate scores an average between 8-10, he receives an invitation to start studies, if the score is between 6-8, he is placed on the waiting list, if less than 6, the candidate's score is considered too low to be invited to study.

The admission score into the second cycle study programme *Agricultural Business Management* 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, Tourism and recreation and Public administration is counted the following way:

$K = 0.6 \times \text{weighted average of the grades of all the study courses in the Bachelor's Diploma supplement} + 0.3 \times \text{grade of the Bachelor's Final Thesis} + 0.1^*$

*-for the graduates from programmes belonging to the related study fields at universities (studies in the fields of Management, Business, Marketing, Economics, Accounting, Finance, Tourism and recreation and Public administration); non-university graduates of the related fields of study who have completed the additional studies in the study field or have 1 year of professional experience in the field related to the studies.

An additional 0.5 is added to the competition score for those who have scientific publications or have participated in a scientific project or scientific conference.

For joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* the admission score is counted this way:

$K = 0.6 \times \text{weighted average of the grades of all study courses in the Bachelor's diploma supplement} + 0.3 \times \text{grade of the Bachelor's thesis} + 0.1 \times \text{Motivation letter}.$

Applicants to study in English must be proficient in English at a level of at least B2.

University's graduates of other fields of study and college (professional bachelor) graduates are admitted after completing the Minor in Business or Management or Supplementary studies. Bachelor's and professional bachelor's graduates of other study fields who have not completed the entire Supplementary studies programme may be admitted to studies provided that they will take the missing study courses during the first semester of master's studies. The Supplementary studies are not compulsory for the candidates who hold a professional bachelor's qualification degree and have at least one-year practical experience in business.

Admission to Supplementary studies is announced and carried out every year. More detailed information on the conditions of admission to Supplementary studies is published on the VMU website⁹⁰, Agriculture Academy⁹¹, FEM⁹² and FBD⁹³.

The admission procedure to studies in Management field differs to Lithuanian and international applicants. International applications and admissions at VMU are centralized and carried out by the International Cooperation Department⁹⁴. 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 Supplementary studies. The information about admission to studies in Management field can be found on VMU website⁹⁵ and DreamApply⁹⁶.

The information on admission requirements and procedures is provided on the VMU⁹⁷ and Faculties⁹⁸ websites, printed booklets, at the study fairs, etc.

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

⁹⁰ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/PAPILDOMUJU-STUDIJU-PROGRAMOS-APRASAS_SOV.pdf, https://zua.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Papildomosios-studijos_BPF_Zemes-ukio-verslo-vadyba.pdf, https://zua.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Papildomosios-studijos_BPF_Zemes-ukio-ir-maisto-verslu-vadyba.pdf in LT

⁹¹ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/studijos/papildomosios-studijos/> in LT

⁹² See <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/studies/master/> in EN

⁹³ See https://zua.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Papild_%C5%BDem%C4%97s-%C5%ABkio-verslo-vadyba.pdf in EN

⁹⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/> in EN.

⁹⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/degree-studies/> in EN

⁹⁶ See <https://vytautasmagnus.dreamapply.com/> in EN

⁹⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/studies/degree-studies/> in EN

⁹⁸ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/fakultetai/bioekonomikos-pletros-fakultetas/studijos/> in LT and <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/faculties/faculty-of-bioeconomy-development/studies/study-programmes/> in EN for FBD; <https://evf.vdu.lt/stojantiems/magistranturos-studijos/> in LT and <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/studies/master/> in EN for FEM

- Those interested in the study programmes can receive the necessary information at VMU Marketing and Communication Department⁹⁹.
- The applicants are also consulted on the admission and study process issues at the relevant university departments (Study Department, Academy, Faculties) during the admission hours¹⁰⁰. Consultations take place directly, by phone, e-mail, *Facebook*.

The second cycle study programmes in Management field are promoted among the prospective students in a variety of ways. One of the keyways to attract them is to keep the students studying the related first cycle programmes familiar with a wide range of Master's degree opportunities. For example, FEM students receive the general and sought information on the study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* during the meetings with final thesis supervisors, the head of SPC, heads of Undergraduate and Graduate studies, e-newsletters by email, on the faculty website, on *Moodle* page for the final theses and in the internal *Facebook* groups. Other VMU students are introduced to the information about the study programme through various channels on an annual basis: by sharing real or virtual study information booklets, visiting the physical premises of the faculty, for further acquaintance with the programme, the website of the FEM which has been optimized recently on the basis of the expert and student feedback gathered insights.

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.

VMU Agriculture Academy carries out various image-building projects in order to promote the study programmes and attract prospective students. One of the implemented projects "Knowledge Elevator" took place in the academic year 2020-2021 remotely (10 events) and directly (5 events). In spring 2022, remote event "The Best Investment is Knowledge" was organized, where the second cycle study programmes employment opportunities for graduates were presented, and the Deans of Faculties answered questions from the prospective students.

Facebook, *Instagram*, *LinkedIn* and *Google* search and video advertising campaigns also play an important role in the publicity of the second cycle studies. In addition, every year, FEM organizes on-site, virtual and hybrid information events related to the second cycle studies, during which, after presentation of the opportunities offered by the master's degree studies and, in particular, the study programme in Management field, the prospective students may ask for any information of interest to them in the Q&A format. For example, 2 direct and 1 remote meetings with the prospective students interested in the second cycle studies were organized in 2019, and 3 virtual meetings in 2020 and 2021 each. Faculties are also constantly involved in various common activities of the university (such as the Open

⁹⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/departments-and-subdivisions/marketing-and-communication-department/> in EN

¹⁰⁰ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/faculties/faculty-of-bioeconomy-development/about-faculty/structure-and-contacts/> in EN for FBD and <https://evf.vdu.lt/en/contacts/> in EN for FEM

Doors Day, for example, on April 26, 2022), which aim to promote the second cycle study programmes at VMU.

It should be noted, that before the pandemics, traditional national expos of the schools of higher education had been held 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 the VMU were moved online; this was also partially due to the fact that the physical means (leaflets, flyers, posters) became unpopular and on-site study fairs could not be organized (starting with the spring 2020).

Statistics on the submitted applications (Table 7) to the second cycle study programmes allow us to state that the interest of entrants in Management field is relatively stable. The general trend in the number of entrants is decreasing in Lithuania due to demographic, legal, social, and economic changes in the country. The number of graduates in first cycle studies is decreasing as well. Also, the cost of studies is rising rapidly, e.g., upon enrolment in the study programmes of the Management field 2022 compared to 2020 the annual tuition fee for full-time studies increased by 1144 Eur and for part-time studies increased by 763 Eur. That is a rise of as much as 38%. 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 7. The number of applicants to the second cycle study programmes in Management field

Study programme		2019			2020			2021			2022		
		1 st priority	Other priorities	Total	1 st priority	Other priorities	Total	1 st priority	Other priorities	Total	1 st priority	Other priorities	Total
Corporate Strategic Management	State	39	83	122	44	61	105	39	55	94	51	62	113
	Non-state	1	14	15	2	14	16	4	7	11	3	17	20
	Total	40	97	137	46	75	121	43	62	105	54	79	133
International Executive MBA	State	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Non-state	48	0	48	46	0	46	49	0	49	40	0	40
	Total	48	0	48	46	0	46	49	0	49	40	0	40
Agricultural Business Management	State	5	35	40	7	27	34	10	21	31	17	35	52
	Non-state	2	9	11	2	15	17	2	7	9	2	19	21
	Total	7	44	51	9	42	51	12	28	40	19	54	73
Agri-Food Business Management	State	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Non-state	7	9	16	7	8	15	6	5	11	18	51	69
	Total	7	9	16	7	8	15	6	5	11	18	51	69

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 and bachelor's degree 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.

The total number of applications to the second cycle study programmes (Table 7) is non-decreasing, which confirms the demand for study programmes in the field. This result shows that the growing demand for management 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 Management field.

The application (Table 7) and admission (Table 8) statistics indicate that the second cycle study programmes of Management field were popular during the period analysed and the number of entrants remains stable. We see a stable number of entrances to second cycle studies as a positive result because the total number of bachelor graduates and applicants to universities was decreasing dramatically lately and the costs of study were constantly increasing. *Corporate Strategic Management* programme had a quite stable admission numbers despite of pandemic situation and uncertainty if the in-person sessions will be held live or online. The *Agricultural Business Management* study programme is a niche programme, so the number of applicants is not very high. Entrants prefer state-funded places, the number of these places is limited (6-7 places per year), so there are not many applicants. The second cycle programmes *International Executive MBA* and *Agri-Food Business Management* 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.

Due to pandemic *Agri-food Business Management* study programme had less popularity in 2021 as lectures here are organized in live sessions in different Baltic countries and some potential students postponed their entrance. So, entrants 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 8. The number of students who signed study contracts in the second cycle study programmes in Management field

Programme	Year/Funding	2019	2020	2021	2022
Corporate Strategic Management	State	9	11	15	11
	Non-state	12	12	5	11
	Total	21	23	20	22
International Executive MBA	State	-	-	-	-
	Non-state	42	43	44	40
	Total	42	43	44	40
Agricultural Business Management	State	8	7	6	7
	Non-state	4	7	4	5
	Total	12	14	10	12
Agri-Food Business Management	State	-	-	-	-
	Non-state	15	13	9	13
	Total	15	13	9	13

International Executive MBA can be singled out as the dominant programme in the field (Table 9), next by the number of students is *Corporate Strategic Management* programme. While a third-fourth are *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-food Business Management* programmes.

Table 9. The relative means on entrants to the second cycle study programmes in Management field, in %

Study programmes	2019	2020	2021	2022
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Corporate Strategic Management	23.4	24.7	24.0	23.2
International Executive MBA	46.7	46.2	53.0	50.5
Agricultural Business Management	13.3	15.1	12.2	12.6
Agri-Food Business Management	16.6	14.0	10.8	13.7
Total:	100	100	100	100

Analysing the admission scores to the second cycle study programmes (Table 10) in Management field, one can notice that they are lower for non-state funded studies. That happens mainly because of the admission procedures: students with higher scores fill in all the state-funded places first, then left candidates fill non-state funded places. Though, the deviations are due to different entry stages. Students pursuing a second degree may study only in non-state funded studies (quite often for *International Executive MBA* students).

Table 10. The highest, lowest, and average admission scores to the second cycle study programmes in Management field

Study programmes		Year/Funding	2019	2020	2021	2022
Corporate Strategic Management	Non-state funded	Highest	8.35	8.45	7.67	9.00
		Lowest	6.86	6.83	6.74	5.03
		Average	7.91	7.68	7.26	7.42
	State funded	Highest	9.91	9.53	9.58	9.88
		Lowest	8.49	8.64	8.01	9.01
		Average	8.99	9.05	8.51	9.41
International Executive MBA	Non-state funded	Highest	9.80	9.50	9.60	9.93
		Lowest	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00
		Average	8.90	8.75	8.80	8.97
	State funded	Highest	-	-	-	-
		Lowest	-	-	-	-
		Average	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Business Management	Non-state funded	Highest	8.07	8.34	8.15	8.35
		Lowest	6.82	6.92	7.06	6.42
		Average	7.31	7.49	7.64	7.75
	State funded	Highest	8.46	9.24	9.29	9.16
		Lowest	7.45	7.40	6.76	8.36
		Average	7.90	8.00	8.30	8.77
Agri-Food Business Management	Non-state funded	Highest	7.88	8.57	7.14	7.32
		Lowest	5.00	7.70	7.14	7.02
		Average	6.53	8.14	7.14	7.17
	State funded	Highest	-	-	-	-
		Lowest	-	-	-	-
		Average	-	-	-	-

From the data presented in the Table 10 it is clear that the variance of admission scores to all study programmes in Management field is not very wide. Analysis of average admission scores in second cycle study programmes shows that competition for state funded places has been stable and/or increasing which allowed attracting candidates with high admission scores. On the other hand, admission scores of non-state funded students are 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

The Description of Policy on Academic Recognition of Competences and Qualifications at VMU¹⁰¹ governs the principles, responsibilities, and means of the implementation of the assessment and recognition of competences acquired during previous formal and non-formal learning. The University's policy on academic recognition covers the following areas: the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad, the recognition of competences acquired in partial studies, and the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

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 Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (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, by the order of VMU Rector, the rules for admission of foreign citizens to VMU¹⁰² are updated and approved, and they outline the assessment of foreign qualifications, its application, documentation, and evaluation. The International Cooperation Department also conducts assessments of qualifications for persons with education abroad as well as for those entering to second cycle study programmes to be implemented in Lithuanian or another language. 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 Validation of Learning Outcomes at VMU¹⁰³. This procedure is performed in a decentralized way at VMU, and it is organised by the faculties (FEM or FBD), 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.

¹⁰¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DESCRIPTION-OF-POLICY-ON-ACADEMIC-RECOGNITION-OF-COMPETENCES-AND-QUALIFICATIONS-AT-VYTAUTAS-MAGNUS-UNIVERSITY.pdf> in EN

¹⁰² See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Rules-of-Admission_EN.pdf in EN

¹⁰³ 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

During the period analysed there was no inquiries for recognition of foreign qualification in all study programmes in Management field except for the students who came back from their exchange period in foreign university. In such cases all the study courses and grades obtained there were recognized as a part of student's study plan as it was agreed on agreed study plan. 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 Education¹⁰⁴. 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 correspond to the learning outcomes formulated in the study course of the study programme, the study course(-s) are recognised.

Learning outcomes of a person who studied or is studying at another Lithuanian higher education institution or a foreign higher education institution according to a non-pre-agreed plan of studies or as an unclassified student are recognised after assessing the formal requirements for the validation of learning outcomes and their compliance with the requirements of the study programme. Not more than 75 percent of the volume of the study programme to be studied may be recognised. Final thesis and (or) final exam is not validated. Learning outcomes obtained according to a non-pre-agreed plan of studies are recognised after assessing descriptions of study courses and their compliance with the learning outcomes of the study programme which the person is going to study. There were no cases of recognition of competences acquired in non-formal and informal way during evaluation period in Management field.

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. For example, there was 1 student of *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme (studied in 2019-2021) who was transferred with 20 ECTS from the VMU *Marketing and Sales* second cycle study programme; as well as one student of *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme participated in Erasmus+ study exchange and 30 ECTS of the third semester were acquired in studies at partner's university (studied in 2020-2022); and 2 students were transferred to *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme from *Marketing and International Commerce* study programme during the first semester of their studies without recognition of credits. Students of study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* study at universities in Latvia and Estonia as Erasmus+ students and all study courses of these semesters (60 ECTS) are recognized.

3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

¹⁰⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Description-of-Procedure-non-formal-ENG.pdf> in EN

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 placements abroad, VMU Erasmus days¹⁰⁵ are organised, Erasmus+ competitions are posted on VMU website¹⁰⁶, *Outlook*, social media, etc.

The international students come to study full time in two second cycle study programmes of the Management field conducted in English. In the *Agri-Food Business Management* study programme only foreigners are studying, coming even from India, Nigeria, and Cameroon. *International Executive MBA* foreign students came from Germany, France, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus, etc.

As it is shown in Table 11, there was fluctuating number of foreign entrants in the analysed period. It might be because of pandemic period and war in the region, when the number of foreigners travelling abroad was limited or even restricted by governments or depended on fear of uncertain situation in the region. 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 and war situation, or students' inability to finance studies.

¹⁰⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/erasmusdays/> in EN

¹⁰⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/> in EN

Table 11. Full time international students in second cycle study programmes in Management field

Programme	International Executive MBA				Agri-Food Business Management			
Year	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	3	3	3	3	16	15	15	17
2020/21	1	1	1	1	15	13	13	14
2021/22	2	2	2	2	11	9	9	11
2022/23	2	2	2	2	69	13	13	15

Data on Erasmus+ study exchanges and Erasmus Internships (Table 12) show that especially second cycle students in Lithuanian-language programmes take minimal advantage of the opportunities of study and internship abroad.

Table 12. Number of outgoing students in second cycle studies in Management field for partial studies or internship

	Corporate Strategic Management	International Executive MBA	Agricultural Business Management	Agri-Food Business Management
Year	Study in EU	Study in EU, etc.	Study in EU	Study in EU
2019	-	42	-	4
2020	-	43	-	5
2021	-	44	-	2
2022	1	48	-	1

Numbers of exchanges are the highest in the study programmes conducted in English, i.e., *International Executive MBA* and *Agri-Food Business Management*, because international students studying in these programmes take advantage to study abroad and have even broader international experience. Outgoing mobility is compulsory for all *International Executive MBA* students. This is executed by implementing Global Mobility Scheme – a portfolio of partnerships with strong business schools around the world for “*International study module*” exchanges (Tulane University’s Freeman School of Business in the USA; Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China; Aalto University, Helsinki, Finland; University Catholique Louvain, Brussels, Belgium; St. Petersburg University Graduate School of Management in Russia (currently suspended), Warsaw University of Technology, Warsaw, Poland; THM Business School in Germany, Chandragupt Institute of Management Patna in India, FGV EAESP São Paulo School of Business in Brazil; EM Lyon Business School, Lyon, France; University of Bologna Business School), Bologna, Italy)¹⁰⁷. BMI organize field seminars exchange, so, for example, 13 students participated in seminars in Brussels in 2021.

Students enrolled in the joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* in VMU study at universities in Latvia and Estonia as Erasmus+ students.

1 student of *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme went for Erasmus+ studies in Instituto Politecnico do Porto, Portugal, for the third semester in 2021, taking advantage of mobility “window”, described in section 1.5.

¹⁰⁷ See <https://www.bmiinstitute.com/vilnius/life-long-learning-opportunity/> in EN

The students of study programme *Agricultural Business Management* did not go to foreign institutions for studies or internships during the reporting period, therefore the data are not presented in Table 12. The international mobility of students in Lithuanian-language programmes is low because most of the students of these programmes are already employed during their studies, it's impossible for them to align mobility with current job placement here, in Lithuania, and they don't want to lose the job. Moreover, during discussions with the students about the mobility choices, they gave feedback that they had deliberately chosen specific field to study, and they are interested and focused mainly on study courses from the chosen field on curriculum. Thus, the real value of it is relatively small to motivate students to give up their jobs and permanent income, when study exchange scholarships were not increased for years.

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.

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 necessary information is provided in a timely manner, which enables the students to plan their study schedule.

The Dean, Vice-deans, Heads for departments, as well as heads and members of SPC's 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 Description of VMU Teachers Work Accounting Procedure, every teacher spends 10 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 the Procedure for Granting Tax Benefits and Reimbursement of Expenses at VMU¹⁰⁸; and the Description of

¹⁰⁸ 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

Procedure for Refund of the Paid Tuition Fee at VMU¹⁰⁹. 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 the Procedure for Granting Tax Benefits and Reimbursement of Expenses at VMU.

Student social support is coordinated by VMU Student Affairs Department¹¹⁰ that manage students' accommodation at the University dormitories, administrate student social and motivational scholarships, accommodation fees and release from tuition in specific cases. For example, during the self-analysis period, *Agri-Food Business Management* study programme student had a 25% reduction in tuition fees. Accommodation service is provided for VMU students, and they have opportunities to settle in the university dormitories. For example, students enrolled in *Agri-Food Business Management* study programmes in Latvia and Estonia come to study in Lithuania as students of the Erasmus+ programme and are provided accommodation services in order of priority. 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 scholarship¹¹¹ that was established by his relatives since 2002. This possibility is offered exceptionally only for students who show good academic achievements and / or are socially vulnerable. For example, 1 student in 2020 and 3 students in 2022 of *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme were awarded this scholarship.

Upon the need, students can receive free-of-charge counselling of a psychologist at VMU Psychology Clinics¹¹² in individual meetings or online.

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 Council¹¹³ 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 Centre¹¹⁴ of Student Affairs Department regularly organize seminars and provide consultations on career planning issues. Regularly, at least once a year, face-to-face¹¹⁵ (online in 2020) meetings with

¹⁰⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/KK-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

¹¹⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/departments-and-subdivisions/student-affairs-department/> in EN

¹¹¹ 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

¹¹² See <https://psichologijosklinika.vdu.lt/english/> in EN

¹¹³ See <https://vdusa.lt/en/> in EN

¹¹⁴ See <http://karjera.vdu.lt/en/> in EN

¹¹⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/vmu-centennials-alumni-day22/> in EN

VMU Management field alumni members¹¹⁶ 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 alumni of Management field are held regularly, at least once a year, where the alumni share their work experience with the current students, discuss the applicability of the knowledge and abilities gained. By collaborating with the Career Centre, VMU Agriculture Academy regularly hosts the Career Days¹¹⁷, meetings with the employers, and discussions on the students' career opportunities.

Other support opportunities: support for the activities of student organisations is provided through project competitions; there are individual consultations given concerning 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.

The pool of measures in various fields discussed suggests that the support provided to the students is sufficient.

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

The introductory information meetings with students are organized on the first day of their studies. During these meetings general regulations of VMU and specific rules at faculties and particular study programme are discussed, information on double degrees and possibilities of exchange (i.e., Erasmus+) is presented. Deans, Vice-Deans, Heads of Departments and Heads of SPCs meet with students, explaining them aim and learning outcomes of their programme 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.

These measures enhance the motivation of new students and encourage them to reach high learning achievements. The results of the annual survey of the 1st year students in the Management field show that these activities are seen by students as very useful (on average about 4 points out of 5).

Students can receive more information about the study programmes at the VMU website¹¹⁸. They also have an opportunity to get acquainted with full descriptions of study courses of the chosen study programme or elective / alternative study courses via *Moodle* platform. Study course descriptions include 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, the main 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 portal¹¹⁹ where they can receive informational messages. VMU Student Affairs Department provides counselling, dealing with student issues related to accommodation, scholarships, benefits, career counselling, etc.

¹¹⁶ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/alumni/> in LT

¹¹⁷ See <https://karjerosugdymocentras.blogspot.com/2021/02/vdu-zua-karjeros-diena-2021.html> in LT

¹¹⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/subject/10/> and <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/study/program/show/322/> in LT; <https://www.bmiinstitute.com/vilnius/programme/> and <https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/show/308/> in EN

¹¹⁹ 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

VMU has a centralized Student Centre¹²⁰ to support them by direct contacts or calling, emailing, or contacting through social media. In *Facebook* social network special accounts for VMU students¹²¹ and FEM students¹²² have been created, which publish relevant information for students. General information and news are also posted at VMU website.

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

The administration of Management 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. For example, on the FBD website, students can see the counselling time of each teacher during the semester. For consultations with the teachers of the study course, students can use special tools in the *Moodle* e-page of the study course. The meetings with the coordinator of administration of the studies, Head of SPC, and the Dean are held twice a semester, while for the part-time students these meetings are conducted remotely. During the meetings, the essential issues related to organisation of the studies are presented, the study courses of the programme are discussed, and the challenges of teaching / learning during the semester are discussed; students have the opportunity to speak out on the issues relevant to them, and common solutions are explored in order to meet the need for quality studies.

As a result of application of these measures, the information about the studies and counselling of students in the study field is sufficient.

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for the study programme Corporate Strategic Management.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Student admission and support</i>		
<i>No</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions taken by the HEI</i>
<i>International Executive MBA study programme</i>		
5.	More international mobility is needed within this programme for the students. The trip to China is not sufficient. More foreign students should be encouraged to join this international programme; the current figure of 10% needs increasing to internationalise this master programme, as was also recommended by the teaching staff to the expert team. The accreditation of prior experience and learning (APEL) needs improvement to ensure that only the most suitable	All students of the programme take part in international mobility to designated BMI partners' universities (see 3.3. for details). More than 30 countries are represented in the Student and Alumni Network Worldwide, including USA, China, Brazil, France, Finland, etc. The number of accepted students per year is now limited to 45, other applicants are rejected during admission process (see 3.1. for details). BMI offers executive trainings as well as certificate studies ending with Capstone project, and for a part of the students the non-degree studies is a suitable option, while 78 % (according to Sprinter survey results) prefer to strive for Master's degree and they are motivated to end up their studies with the defence of Final Master Thesis. By VMU

¹²⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/contacts/vmu-student-centre/> in EN

¹²¹ See <https://www.facebook.com/VytautasMagnusUniversity> in EN and <https://www.facebook.com/vytauto.didziojo.universitetas/> in LT

¹²² See <https://www.facebook.com/VDUEVF> in LT

	students are recruited, ones who are not going to drop out and ones who can complete the thesis on time. Currently, there is too much laxity in the process.	Regulations, students have a right to take one Academic leave for one year of studies as well.
<i>Agricultural Business Management study programme</i>		
4.	Enhance marketing efforts to attract more students, along with social partners who seemed very supportive of the idea	During various trainings, events, and meetings with social partners, the Academy and Faculty administration as well as teachers teaching in the study programme share information about the possibilities of studying in the Agricultural Business Management programme. The social partners play an active role in the implementation and promotion of the study programme.
<i>Agri-Food Business Management study programme</i>		
5.	It is recommended that the admission requirements and criteria be uniformly regulated and clearly communicated to applicants, including descriptions of the assessment criteria for determining the level of proficiency in the English language and for assessing the motivation of the applicant.	The meeting of the Joint Study Programme Agri-food business management Committee in Jelgava on 7-11-2019 was attended by representatives of the administrative leadership of all three universities and international relations specialists who discussed in detail the admissions experience of each country and agreed on the application of the same admissions procedure (Protocol No 19-1). It was decided to organize the admission process according to the general admission of each university. The procedure uses a tried and tested candidate selection procedure.
8.	Ensure that all the documents governing the studies are available to students by the start of the Programme, not only in the national language but also in English.	<p>The documents governing the study process are already available to all students at each university, in both national and English languages.</p> <p>As the study process is constantly evolving, each university is committed to publishing all governing documents in both national and English languages in a timely manner</p> <p>https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/show/308/ https://zua.vdu.lt/en/about-agri-food-bm-programme/ https://www.llu.lv/en/article/degree-programme-agri-food-business-management https://www.emu.ee/en/admissions/agri-food-business-management/</p> <p>To publicise the progress, news and good practices of this study programme, a Facebook account https://www.facebook.com/AgrifoodBM has been created and is continuously updated.</p> <p>In each university, staff responsible for student admissions, organisation of the study process and</p>

	quality assurance provide information to students (by phone or e-mail) in both national and English languages.
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Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Student admission and support</i>	
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A total annual number of entrants to the second cycle study programmes in Management field has been stable over the self evaluation period despite the decreasing number of students in general in Lithuania. The competition for admission to the most of the second cycle study programmes in Management field was relatively high. This shows that study programmes are attractive for Lithuanian and foreign students. ➤ The entrance scores of state funded students are high and even though the entrance scores of non-state funded students are constantly on average 0.5-1.5 points lower than those of state-funded students, they are still sufficiently high and allow to ensure good level studies. ➤ Relevant and efficient student support system that includes everyone – from teachers to the administration and governing staff – enables to give all the necessary academic, social, financial and psychological support to students in the quickest way. 	
Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To improve the organization of distance learning in Management 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 centres. 	

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 Management field are organized in full (*Corporate Strategic Management, International Executive MBA and Agri-Food Business Management*) and part time (*Agricultural Business Management*) 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.

VMU provides good opportunities for distant studies. During the implementation of these studies, Office 365 Teams and BigBlue Button 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 Guides¹²³ 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 form¹²⁴. Based on the most common student requests (for example, how to connect study courses

¹²³ See <https://studyonline.lt/en/vmu-teachers/user-guide/> in EN

¹²⁴ See <http://studyonline.lt/en/vmu-teachers/request-form/> in EN

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 guide¹²⁵ 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. The experience of the Covid-19 pandemic showed that studies at VMU can be carried out smoothly and qualitatively remotely, as the study process was not interrupted or otherwise disrupted.

All study courses, irrespective of study mode or study form, have their own section on *Moodle* platform online. It allows to organise teaching materials related to each study 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, lead discussions, etc. By *Moodle* 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 study 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, in second cycle studies study courses consist of 3-7.5 ECTS, where depending on the number of credits of the study course, contact work is allocated 30-75 hours, for independent work 50-125 hours, respectively. For example, the scope of study course of the study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* is 6 credits, so 60 hours allocated to contact work and 100 hours for students' independent work. The scope of the courses of the *Agri-Food Business Management* study programme is 7.5 ECTS, so 75 hours is allocated to contact work, 125 – hours for students' independent work.

In lectures, teachers use different study methods, for example, provision of information (explanation, illustration), using visual aids; explanation of cases in lectures. The study methods used in the seminars are also characterized by diversity, for example, case analysis, description and analysis of problem-oriented cases, issues, and practical tasks; moderation of 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 apply their knowledge to course related real situations. Problem-Based Learning is used in many courses. For example, in the study course "Agricultural Business Strategic Management", students analyse specific cases of agricultural business or business organizations serving it, such as JSC "Biogami", JSC "Dojus agro", JSC "Auga Group", 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.

The teachers 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 shared their practical experience very actively and delivered lectures on the most relevant topics to the students of the field. Several exact examples that took place in 2019: e-commerce consultant V. Vorobjovas talked about "E-commerce for dummies", sales manager A. Pilypaitis from agency What About discussed about "Google advertising:

¹²⁵ See <https://studyonline.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/User-manual-how-to-login-to-vmu-moodle.pdf> in EN

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", K. Šermukšnytė-Alešiūnienė shared challenges and opportunities in agriculture "DIH – a Gateway to the Digital AgriFood Sector Future. Or is the Future Now?" 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", Empowering Woman Agrifood (EWA) invited students to an open lecture-discussion, "How to empower your potential on the path of business creation?" T. Gehrke, member of the board of Vereinigte Hagelversicherung VVaG, gave a lecture on "Climate change, EU agricultural policy and the Green Deal: what a positive contribution? Can VEREINIGTE HAGEL provide to manage these challenges?". Bio-based Industries Consortium representative N. Emerencia shared insights on changes and opportunities in the agriculture and food business and so on. In 2022, G. Kvietkauskas, one of the leaders of agribusiness in Lithuania, General Director of JSC "East West Agro", gave a lecture "Ignorance is the greatest strength of a young business". Leaders of the agribusiness sector - such companies as JSC "Ivabalė", JSC "Agrokoncerno grupė", JSC "Luxera", JSC "DOJUS agro", JSC "Baltic Agro Machinery", JSC "Lytagra", JSC "Agrolab Baltic", JSC "Mantinga" and other representatives also gave lectures to the students of the Management field.

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 second cycle studies in the field of Management 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 of a study course. Independent work is intended for preparation for lectures, seminars, case-study analyses by studying the teacher's proposed literature, independent studying of literature, preparing for oral work presentation, midterm tests, and final exams. 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. Various assessment methods are used to evaluate independent work, such as analysis of solutions to practical tasks, listening to and evaluating oral presentations, observing group work, reading and evaluating written work.

As it is deeply embedded in the university culture, VMU Study Regulations gives students fairly enough freedom, at the same time with the aim to raise responsible personalities for their career and decisions. In the frames of a study 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, discuss 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 system for the assessment of learning achievements, 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 study courses busy with other activities or after the illnesses 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 at VMU website, as well as the information is presented orally during the introductory week each semester, made available in study course's Study Guide on *Moodle*. The Study Guide is prepared according to recommendations of VMU Innovative Study Institute¹²⁶ 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 student's evaluation criteria and the whole Study Guide for each study course.

According to VMU Study Regulations, a criterion-based assessment system for the learning achievements is applied at the university using a ten-point scale, and the assignments for examination are based on clear assessment criteria and linked to the learning outcomes of the study course. The main methods of assessment are related to the study methods and are the following: testing, written survey, assessment of individual / group work / research paper, observation and evaluation of the presentation, assessment of case analysis and practical assignments, which are related to the study methods. For example, a research paper is assessed, and its presentation is observed at the study course "Applied Research". Examinations and colloquiums are performed in written form, their assignments are the same or of equal value to all examinees. Study achievements of students in Management 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). All students taking the study course take a written test (a midterm or / and an examination) at the same time. Assessment of every study course depends on the level of achieving the intended study programme and study course

¹²⁶ See <http://studyonline.it/en/about/> in EN

learning outcomes. The exam grade accounts for 30 to 60% of the final grade. In the majority of study courses delivered, the structure of the accumulative score includes a colloquium, which accounts for 15 to 35% of the final grade. Evaluation grade of the group work, homework, and other assignments accounts for 15 to 35% of the final grade. The structure of the accumulative score is provided in the description of each study course and it may differ depending on the specifics of the course (for example, in the research papers, the prepared work and its defence are evaluated). This system of evaluation of the learning achievements encourages the students to work systematically and be active participants in the teaching / learning process throughout the semester.

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 (examinations, midterm tests) may be organised in a distance following the Description of the Procedure for Organising of Distance and Blended Distance Studies at VMU¹²⁷ approved by the Rector.

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 second cycle study programmes in the Management field graduates can enter third cycle study programmes in the fields of Business, Management, Marketing, Finance both in Lithuania and abroad. For example, during self-evaluation period 1 graduate from *Corporate Strategic Management* programme studied in joint PhD programme in the field of Management run by VDU (along with Mykolas Romeris 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 Opportunities¹²⁸ – 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.

For students who combine studies with care of family members or have other special needs, favourable opportunities to study at a time, form and pace appropriate to them are provided. 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

¹²⁷ https://studyonline.lt/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Nuotoliniu_studiju_tvarka.pdf in LT

¹²⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/VMU-disability-policy-University-of-inclusive-opportunities-2.pdf> in EN

matters 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 Schedule¹²⁹.

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, are 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. For example, one student with disability of mobility is studying now in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme.

In summary, it can be concluded that the disability policy applied at the university ensures full engagement in the studies for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.

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 the Procedure of Monitoring Student Learning Achievements and Providing Assistance to Students at VMU¹³⁰. Monitoring of learning achievements and delivery of assistance covers interrelated processes, which include the following: 1. An analysis of student enrolment in studies and learning situation in study courses. 2. An analysis of the reasons for the students' non-participation in interim and final examinations. 3. An analysis of intermediate and final evaluation of students. 4. Implementation of preventive measures to manage student failure and improvement of organisation of studies.

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

¹²⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/VDU-individualaus-studiju-grafiko-teikimo-tvarkos-apra%C5%A1as.pdf> in LT

¹³⁰ 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

In the studies in Management field, monitoring of students' progress and achievements is split among teachers, administrators for graduate 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 the administrators contact students to enquire about the reasons and to offer some help and / or assistance. Teachers are asked to inform the graduate studies administrators about non-participating students (in lectures and / or absent in 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 SPCs, administrators for graduate studies are held to discuss study process, students' participation and achievements, other quality related issues.

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 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 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 10 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 student's 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 Lithuanian 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 TOP5 universities: in 2020 – 20 points (4rd position among universities), in 2021 – 18 points (3rd position among universities), in 2022 – 12 points (6rd position among universities) according to employers' opinion about graduates of second cycle studies in Management field readiness to work. The employers' opinion on the graduates' readiness for the labour market is also collected through discussions with employers' representatives, such as during the university Career Days, through individual interaction between the teachers and employers and receipt of direct job offers from the latter. Feedback collected directly from employers shows that the employers appreciate the abilities of the graduates of the VMU study programmes in Management field quite well.

According to Government Strategic Analysis Centre (hereinafter – STRATA) in 2020 – 100 % of second cycle graduates of the Management study field were working, but in 2021 - 74%. The data of 2022 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 Management 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.

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 website¹³¹.

According to EXIT survey (of students ending their studies), conducted in centralized way by VMU Career Centre, in 2020 96% of second cycle graduating students of the Management study field were working; in 2021 accordingly 85% of second cycle graduating students. The majority of graduating students work in a field, related to study programme they finished. Analysing second cycle graduating students' results, in 2020 43% of them

¹³¹ See <http://karjera.vdu.lt/apie-mus/apklausu-rezultatai/> in LT

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. BMI surveys for *International Executive MBA* counts 90% of graduating working in top and senior managers positions. Employment data testify that the graduate employment is sufficient to justify the need for the study programmes in Management field, the programmes respond to the needs of the labour market, as graduates find employment in the area of operations related to the programme aims.

According to the data of the centrally conducted alumni surveys of the VMU Career Centre, the majority of graduates of VMU in Management field are satisfied with their careers and positively assess the contribution of the university to their preparation for the labour market. They pointed out that the knowledge and skills acquired during the lectures and seminars, as well as through independent assignments and the teacher's help, were the most useful in preparing for the labour market at the university. The summarized results of the feedback data analysis are published on the websites of the university or departments. According to the data of the EXIT survey conducted by the VMU centrally (among the students exiting the studies), the exiting students who participated in the survey also positively assessed the contribution of VMU to their preparation for professional activities (Table 13):

Table 13. Data of the survey of the students exiting (EXIT) the second cycle study programmes in Management field in 2020-20221 on the contribution of VMU to their preparation for the labour market

Rating scale	2020	2021	2022
Good, %	41.7	36.8	58.3
Rather good, %	41.7	47.4	16.7
Rather bad, %	8.3	10.5	-
Bad, %	-	-	-
I don't know, it's difficult to say, %	8.3	5.3	25.0

Table 13 suggests that in individual years, 75 to 84% of the respondents rated the VMU contribution to their preparation for the labour market as good and rather good.

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 Management field study programmes can be provided. For example, about 90 % of students in the *Agricultural Business Management* programme start their studies already having a job. Most of them work in Lithuanian agricultural business or related companies, for example, JSC „Kauno grūdai“, „Kaišiadorių paukštynas“, „Kaišiadorių paukštyno mažmena“, „Dojus agro“, „Auga group“, FMC, „Lithuanian Agricultural Consulting Service“, „National Payments Agency“, „Chamber of Agriculture“, etc. After completing their second cycle studies, they continue their professional activities further. Only two graduates of this programme worked and lived abroad during the analysed period. Several graduates have established and developed their own businesses, such as a farmer's or a consulting firm, and provide services.

BMI gathered feedback from *International Executive MBA* alumni, that already being executives, 41% of graduates made progress in their career during the studies, 31% had increase in earnings, and 15% felt impact on companies' profit margins.

Personal data cannot be provided due to the General Data Protection Regulation, though career examples of some successful graduates are presented on the university's website^{132 133 134} and *Facebook* and also invited to Open Door Days¹³⁵.

Collaboration with VMU alumni takes place mainly through alumni clubs, Alumni Coordinator, 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*¹³⁶, where VMU graduates are invited to register and become career mentors.

Through the BMI Alumni Association (network involves more than 900 *International Executive MBA* alumni), with its regular initiatives and activities, graduates form a dynamic community for networking and friendship, lifelong personal growth, and positive social impact. The association also welcomes current *International Executive MBA* participants at events. BMI is committed to maintain and expand the alumni network by organizing exclusive events for LSM, HEC Paris and BMI alumni, also providing opportunity to meet each other at the international mobility venues and exchange the know-how. Graduates of *International Executive MBA* form an elite business network and community, a family of sorts. Many stay active at BMI as speakers, coaches, project advisors, and committees' members, further ensuring strong ties between teaching and the current world of practice.

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 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.

In summary, it can be stated that the graduates of the analysed programmes find employment in the operational areas related to the aims of the programmes, the employers' feedback on the graduates' abilities is good, and communication with the graduates is maintained through the alumni clubs and university departments.

¹³² See <https://www.bmiinstitute.com/vilnius/bmi-community/> in EN

¹³³ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/alumni/> in LT

¹³⁴ See <https://evf.vdu.lt/stojantiems/magistranturos-studijos/strateginis-organizaciju-valdymas/> in LT

¹³⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/ivykiai/atviru-duru-diena-vdu-zemes-ukio-akademijoje/> in LT

¹³⁶ See <https://www.idialogue.lt/> in LT

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

The principles of academic integrity are defined in the VMU Statute¹³⁷, VMU Study Regulations, the Code of Academic Ethics of VMU¹³⁸, VMU Provisions on Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works¹³⁹. Non-discrimination measures are regulated by the Code of Academic 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 Gender Equality Plan for 2021-2025¹⁴⁰ defines the activities and measures planned in order to promote cultural and systemic changes at the organisation both on the institutional and structural levels for maintenance of the gender balance.

VMU Provisions on Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works 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, research papers and final thesis. Both the teachers and the students have the right to appeal to the VMU Commission of Ethics¹⁴¹ that 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 Study Department in written form. The final evaluation "0" (zero) is written in the learning outcome record book and dishonest behaviour is recorded. An investigation is carried out on behalf of the Dean of the faculty and the Chancellor of the academy, and a final decision on the imposition of a penalty is made.

All students and teachers of the second cycle study programmes in Management field are provided with access to specialized plagiarism detection software (through the 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. After preparing the thesis, each student must sign a Declaration of Integrity regarding the authenticity of the work. Prior to public defence, all theses are screened for plagiarism using *Oxsico* (previously *iThenticate*) software. In cases where the match detection software shows more than 10% match, each instance is analysed separately, and the final decision is made by the Plagiarism Prevention Commission (formed by the Dean's order). In case of suspecting the violation of the principles of academic integrity in students' scientific papers, every teacher may also check the respective works using *Oxsico* or *iThenticate* software.

Cases of detected plagiarism are very rare among the students of the programmes analysed, which may be explained by timely presentation of relevant information and professional counselling and supervision of teachers. During the self evaluation period, no cases of academic dishonesty have been reported in Management field.

¹³⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/VMU-STATUTE-EN-2018.pdf> in EN

¹³⁸ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Akademines-etikos-kodeksas_2017.pdf in LT

¹³⁹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Plagiarism-prevention-VMU.pdf> in EN

¹⁴⁰ See <https://gender-spear.eu/assets/content/publications/VMU%20Gender%20Equality%20Plan%202021-2025.pdf> in EN

¹⁴¹ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/commission-of-ethics/> 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 the VMU Regulations for Submission of Appeals Regarding Evaluation of Learning Outcomes and/or Assessment Procedure¹⁴², the VMU Provisions on Prevention of Plagiarism in Student Written Works, 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. Where the learning achievements are evaluated by the commission consisting of at least three members, the evaluation shall not be appealed under the appeal procedure.

The student may lodge an appeal, using the prescribed form, with the Head of the student's academic unit within 5 working days of the publication of the evaluation score in the register, and in unforeseen circumstances, the student may lodge an appeal after the end of the term and enclose the documents proving the fact of the circumstances. Students must provide arguments when making appeals. An appeal commission is formed, which considers the information related to the appeal and makes a decision within 5 days upon the receipt of the appeal. Whereas the research papers are evaluated by a panel of at least three members, the final theses are defended in public and evaluated by the Defence Committee, and the students are eligible to appeal regarding the defence procedure, but not the evaluation. During the self evaluation period, no appeals regarding evaluation of examinations, other assignments or thesis defence procedure were submitted in the second cycle study programmes in Management field.

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation for the study programme International Executive MBA and Agricultural Business Management.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Studying, student performance and graduate employment</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Corporate Strategic Management study programme		
6.	To justify that the study programme is problem based an improvement of assessment process should be taken into consideration, because the weight of the exam in most courses is too high. Higher standards regarding the class participation and self-assessments are also recommended.	All the study course descriptions for <i>Corporate Strategic Management</i> study programme have been systematically reviewed and the weight of the exam was lowered (in half of the cases, the exam accounts only for 30 % of the total grade). After the changes in VMU Study Regulations, now exam weight in accumulative score of the final grade could be 30-60 %. The student assessment in most study courses is now quite balanced among (relatively even shares) the midterm, individual / group work (with presentation in the classroom) and exam. According VMU Study Regulations, the attendance is not compulsory, although most teachers organise assignments in the way encouraging and motivating

¹⁴² See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/REGULATIONS-FOR-SUBMISSION-OF-APPEALS-2021-03-24.pdf> in EN

	students to actively participate in problem-based learning activities, taking to account efforts and time spent, and that the immediate feedback got during these activities (other instruments for getting feedback are available on <i>Moodle</i> course pages). In fact, the vast majority of students of this study programme attend the lectures and seminars.
Agri-Food Business Management study programme	
6. It is recommended that a single plagiarism checking system should be chosen and that the descriptions of the Codes of Conduct should be harmonised in order to ensure the same conditions and requirements for all students in the Programme, irrespective of the university in which their essays and theses are prepared.	<p>The meeting of the joint study programme <i>Agri-food Business Management</i> SPC on 07-11-2019 in Jelgava was attended by the administrative authorities of all three universities. The practices and requirements for plagiarism checking and compliance with the Codes of Ethics of all three universities were jointly discussed. It was found that all three universities apply the same high level of Code of Ethics requirements and internationally recognised instruments for plagiarism checking (Protocol No. 19-1).</p> <p>It was therefore agreed that students preparing their independent work assignments, exams and other tasks must comply with the requirements of the university in which they are currently studying the study courses; and that for the preparation of their Final Master Theses the enforcement of the Codes of Ethics and the checking for plagiarism will be carried out at the university which has admitted the students.</p> <p>It was agreed to inform all members of the Programme Committee and the administrations of all three universities as well as the thesis defence committee of any violations of the Code of Ethics or plagiarism that may be observed.</p> <p>Therefore, it was decided that the university, which accepted the student for studies, is responsible for verification of compliance with antiplagiarism and Code of Ethics norms. If a student's misconduct is identified, then the SPC members, the administration of all three universities (VMU, EMU, LLU), and the final thesis committee will be informed.</p>

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

Strengths

- The majority of the Management study field students complete their studies and successfully integrate into labour market, create own businesses, become employed in the areas related to the programme aims. High employability rate of graduates proves

that professionals in Management are in demand in the labour market. Cooperation with VMU graduates mainly takes place through alumni clubs, faculties, and the Alumni Coordinator.

- The virtual learning environment *Moodle* and the organization of blended distance studies enable the students (including those who work or have special needs) to participate in the study process at a convenient time and thus meet the students' needs and expectations.
- Student performance assessment is clear and transparent. The developed academic integrity and plagiarism protection as well as the prevention procedures are adequate and properly used in practice.
- Student-centred feedback and monitoring system for the students' study progress keep the students involved in the study process, promote students' self-assessment, give them direction for improvement of their learning outcomes, and raise their responsibility for personal development.
- The Disability Policy at VMU ensures full involvement of students with disabilities in their studies. For socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs, there are conditions to study according to an individual study schedule, various discounts for tuition or accommodation in a dormitory are applied.

Areas for improvement

- Continue with development and implementation of Problem-based learning and other practice-oriented study methods into study courses to better facilitate achievement of learning outcomes of the programmes and to meet market expectations for graduates' knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- In view of the market expectations regarding the graduates' knowledge, practical skills and abilities, social partners should be invited more actively to the lectures of the study courses delivered. The number of social partners planned to be invited and the specific study courses should be foreseen in the study programme improvement plans.
- The number of second cycle students participating in the alumni survey conducted by VMU Career Centre was very low last year, and the results are not representative. Therefore, the activity of participants in the alumni surveys should be increased via collaborative actions of SPC's, faculties' administration, and university departments.

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 21 teachers teaching study courses in second cycle Management field studies now at VMU. 17 (or 80.9 %) of them (Annex 3 provides the list of teachers) are permanent according to the criteria provided (works at least 3 years and at least part time at VMU) (see Annex 3). Second cycle study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* is taught by 9 members of academic staff and 7 (or 77.8 %) of them are permanent staff (see Annex 3). BMI hires teachers for *International Executive MBA* study programme directly from partners universities for each study course, while supervision of Final Master Thesis is assigned to VMU teachers. Presently 12 members of academic staff teach study courses in *Agricultural Business Management* study programme. 10 (or 83.3 %) of them are permanent staff (see Annex 3). Two teachers who work in *Agricultural Business Management* study programme are assoc. prof. L. Girdžiūtė, whose main job is at the Lithuanian Agricultural Advisory Service and Rasa

Pakeltienė, who currently is General Secretary of Association for European Life Science Universities (ICA). It should be noted that the international joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* currently involves only 4 VMU lecturers - prof. dr. R. Dapkus, prof. dr. V. Aleknevičienė, assoc. prof. dr. E. Besusparienė, assoc. prof. dr. R. Pakeltienė (she replaced assoc. prof. dr. L. Girdžiūtė in that programme last year).

The ratio between students and teachers is regulated by the "Description of the work accounting procedure for VMU teachers". The data presented in the Table 14 shows the student to teacher ratio total in Management field second cycle studies separately and in each of the study programme in the field except *International Executive MBA*, because there are no teachers working at VMU. Student to teacher ratio presented in Table 14 is decreasing gradually during the period analysed. In some programmes (*Agricultural Business Management* and *Corporate Strategic Management*) we see only minor fluctuations. It should be noted that study programme *Agricultural Business Management* is part-time; therefore, to calculate the total student to teacher ratio a total number of 1st to 3rd year students was used, while for the full time study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* – it was the number of 1st and 2nd year students. As presented in Table 14, over the analysed period the student to teacher ratio decreased mainly due to the decrease in the number of students (in the *Agricultural Business Management* programme) and the increase in the number of teachers. In the recent years an approach to have several teachers for a single course, where it is reasonable, has been followed in the study programmes. The rationale behind this decision is to ensure the transfer of more comprehensive knowledge and competences, enable teachers to attend conferences, go on exchange and other visits and engage younger professionals.

Table 14. Student to teacher ratio in study programmes in Management field during 2019-2022

Study programme	2019	2020	2021	2022
Strategic Organization Management	2.1	2.6	2.0	2.4
International Executive MBA	-	-	-	-
Agricultural Business Management	3.6	3.5	2.8	2.6
Agri-Food Business Management	3.8	3.3	2.3	-
Total in the field	3.2	3.1	2.4	2.5

The teaching experience of academic staff in Management field in second cycle studies varies from 7 to 42 years with an average value of 21.1 years. This fact indicates a balanced combination of age and experience of teaching staff. Most of the permanent teachers work in the university full-time. 2 of them have administrative positions in the faculty (dean of the FEM assoc. prof. dr. R. Bendaravičienė and prof. G. Jucevičius, the head of Scientific Research) are the members of University Senate. Certain teachers at Management field also hold a researcher's position (i.e., prof. J. Vveinhardt, who is a chief researcher in FEM, and assoc. prof. J. Greblikaitė, who is a senior researcher at the Bioeconomy Research Institute, etc.). Certain teachers combine teaching and work in a professional field (e.g., partnership prof. dr. V. Žirgūtis, lect. R. Rakštys, assoc. prof. L. Girdžiūtė, prof. R. Dapkus, assoc. prof. R. Pakeltienė, lect. A. Ganusauskaitė). It should be noted that representatives of business partners are also involved in lectures of the Management field (e.g., in the *Agricultural Business Management* programme, some of the lectures in the "Strategic Management of Agricultural Business" and "Management Decision Modelling" study courses are conducted by one of the largest

agricultural machinery trading companies in Lithuania “East West Agro” general manager G. Kvietkauskas). Practical work experience in the field of teaching is predominant from 3 to 42 years with an average value of 15.6 years. This shows the teachers' high pedagogical and practical experience and the required competence in Management 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, there are business leaders and representatives of own businesses, 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 entire study programmes of the analysed field in the university. This close relation between teaching and practice is especially important in the field of Management where innovations and new experiences are changing so fast.

Academic staff of the study courses in Management field is also active in research as it has been discussed in the part 2. Analysing the link between study courses taught and the research interests of teachers, majority of them are concentrated in 2-4 areas and there is a sufficient correspondence between the courses taught and research interests. So, the composition of teaching staff of study courses in Management field guarantees teachers gaining knowledge in research or practical experience.

Over the last 3 years under the assessment there were only few teacher replacements. After prof. dr. J. Čaplikas retired, and prof. dr. A. Gargasas resigned in 2019, their study courses are taught by assoc. prof. dr. J. Zaleckienė and prof. dr. R. Dapkus (in *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-food Business Management* study programmes). Prof. dr. N. Petkevičiūtė gradually handles over her study courses before the retirement in 2023 and was replaced by dr. G. Cibulskas (in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme). 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. Management 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 study 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 Management field practice and research. That is a good chance for new teachers, young researchers to join the existing academic staff. For example, two young teachers with practical experience E. Besusparienė and R. Pakeltienė, who defended their PhD thesis a few years ago, started teaching foreign students in the study programme *Agri-food-Business Management*.

In Management field competition for positions are organized in accordance with the procedure established in VMU by-laws when competitions are announced publicly and are open to the local and foreign candidates who meet the prerequisites¹⁴³. This encourages the

¹⁴³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/research/relevant-research-documents/> in EN

staff employed to work and improve in a quality manner. The attestation and selection of candidates for the position of teachers is carried out by the Attestation Commission formed and approved by the VMU Senate. The composition of the staff involved in teaching is regulated by The General Requirements for the Provision of Studies. For second cycle studies there are two requirements for teaching staff: "No less than 80% of master studies' teachers must hold a scientific degree", and "No less than 20% of the scope of study field courses must be taught by teachers occupying the position of a professor" (article 29).

Analysing the list of teachers provided in Annex 3, and the numbers presented in the Table 15, we see that the composition of teaching staff in Management field meets the official requirements.

As seen in Table 15, most teachers in all study programmes of the field have a position of professor or associate professor. There are about 15 % of teachers with no academic degree. This share was constantly increasing during the period analysed because of involvement of more practitioners and PhD students. In Management field study programmes, there are lecturers that are planning to defend their PhD thesis in several years.

Table 15. The composition of teaching staff in study programmes in Management field in 2020-2022

Study programme	Prof.	Partnership prof.	Assoc. prof.	Lecturers PhD	Lecturers, No degree
Corporate Strategic Management	44.5 %	11.1 %	33.3 %	-	11.1 %
International Executive MBA	81.2 %	-	-	-	18.8 %
Agricultural Business Management	23.1 %	-	61.5 %	-	15.4 %
Agri-Food Business Management	30.4 %	-	39.1 %	17.4 %	13.1 %

23.1% of teachers are professors in the *Agricultural Business Management* study programme. This number is even higher in the second cycle study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* where professors represent 44.5 % of the academic staff and *International Executive MBA* - 81.2 %. The programme also has one partnership professor (V. Žirgūtis) who is full time employed in business, yet more than 14 years teaches at the University. In the international joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* the share of professors in the overall teaching structure is also relatively high (30.4 %). It should be noted that *Table 15* presents the qualification structure of all lecturers teaching in the programmes, although only the second semester of international joint study programme is being conducted at FBD VMU, where 2 professors (V. Aleknevičienė and R. Dapkus) and 2 associate professors (E. Besusparienė and R. Pakeltienė) are teaching. Since studies in the Management field are evaluated only at VMU, the list of lecturers in Appendix 3 does not include lecturers from other universities implementing the joint study programme (Latvian Life Sciences and Technologies, Estonian Life Sciences). The similar situation is in *International Executive MBA* study programme, where BMI hires professors to teach study courses.

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 2022 July 4 by Order No. 291. 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 academic hours, an associate professor – 600 hours, a lecturer – 650 hours, an assistant – 700 contact work hours per year. On average, it amounts to around 31% of a teacher's workload.

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 website¹⁴⁴. 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 two study programmes in Management field that are taught in English – *Agri-Food Business Management* and *International Executive MBA*. All teachers in Management field know one or more foreign languages (English, Russian, German). English language of all the teachers working there is 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 or June when there are no regular lectures for students organized. Teachers of Management field attend them periodically.

Thus, it can be stated that the number, qualification, and competence of teaching staff within Management field in order to achieve the learning outcomes is sufficient.

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 visits teachers are provided with the possibilities for mobility in the field of research interests: research internships, participation in conferences, seminars, workshops. Management field has a long list of partner institutions which is reviewed and renewed each year. So, teachers can use this network for their research interests, too. There are university and state level funds where teachers can constantly apply for funding of their

¹⁴⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/research/relevant-research-documents/> in EN

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 in Management field. The total number of visits abroad reached 30 in 2019/2020 academic year (academic staff went to Poland, Latvia, Spain, Italy, Belgium, Finland, Slovakia, United Kingdom, Netherlands, Portugal, Hungary, Albania, Morocco, Thailand) which makes 1.4 visits per one permanent teacher in Management field studies. The international activities include the teaching and training visits with Erasmus+ programme (52 agreements signed in Management 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 (9 per year) in 2020/2021 academic year. In 2020-2022 academic year teachers used distant learning programmes for mobility instead (5 cases; in Turkey, Spain, Latvia, Netherlands, Poland). After pandemic period the number of visits increased significantly - 28 visits were implemented during the 2021/2022 academic year (in Spain, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Denmark, Poland, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Ireland, Portugal, Netherlands). Regarding the academic mobility of teachers, it should be noted that the duration of 1 visit abroad lasted on average about 6 days.

During the recent three years about 80.1 % of the permanent teaching staff from courses in Management field were participating in various academic mobility actions. The 3 years average is 24.0 visits per year, including academic mobility in distance mode. Mainly it was Erasmus+ exchange when the teachers also develop contacts with colleagues teaching the same study courses and discuss teaching methods, literature resources; attendance in conferences and seminars for dissemination of research results, etc. All international activities help to improve the level of academic competence through the experiences and examples gained in other countries, adoption of new or improved teaching methods, personal contacts established that gain 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 *Agricultural Business Management* study programme used the opportunity provided by the Research Council of Lithuania (except for the COVID-19 pandemic period in 2020-2021) to participate in the competition through the project "Increasing the internationality of Lithuanian science - development of R&D relations (LINO LT)", which funds the visits of researchers and science managers to develop international relations. The support provided to teachers gave an opportunity to participate in scientific conferences (Sapporo University, Japan, assoc. prof. dr. J. Greblkaitė, lect. R. Rakštys; prof. dr. V. Vitunskienė, assoc. prof. dr. Laura Girdžiūtė) and to improve their qualification and research.

VMU devotes particular attention to inviting teachers from universities of other countries. During 2019-2022, there were 35 international teaching visits to Management field courses (teachers came from France, Spain, USA, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Egypt, Czech Republic, Germany, Moldova, Indonesia, Cyprus). For example, in March 2022 the students of the second cycle study programme *Agricultural Business Management* were given lectures by prof. dr. Baiba Rivža „New Trends in Bioeconomy and Rural Development“ (Latvia), in 2021

they were given lectures by prof. dr. Irina Pilvere “Bioeconomy Development: Challenges and Possibilities” (Latvia), prof. habil. dr. Dariusz Gozdovski “Geographic Information Systems in Agriculture and Rural Development” (Poland), prof. dr. Baiba Rivza “New Trends in Bioeconomy and Rural Development” (Latvia), prof. dr. Vesa Niskanen “Statistical Analysis Using the SPSS” (Finland). In other Management field study programmes in 2022 lectures were given by prof. Begona Alvarez-Garcia “Theory and Practice of Tax Planning” (Spain), in 2019 – assoc. prof. S. Saksonova “Methods of Profitability Analysis of Business Segments” (Latvia). During the self evaluation period, students of *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme had a possibility to choose the elective course “Value Creation Chain in International Business”, delivered by visiting professor dr. Pierre Semal (Louvain School of Management, Belgium). During the visits of foreign teachers, students benefit from the acquaintance with more diverse teaching methods, a different approach to the taught course; intercultural interaction are also very important for students. It should be noted that the incoming teachers give lectures not only in Management field studies, but for mixed flows of students from different study programmes in the faculties.

It shows that teachers in Management field have rich possibilities for academic mobility for teaching, learning or scientific purposes and actively use it.

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 Description of Procedure for Professional Development of Academic and Non-Academic Staff¹⁴⁵. At VMU, teacher professional development is organised under 3 groups of competences: group 1 – general competences (foreign language competences, intercultural communication and cooperation competences, management competences, etc.); group 2 – professional competences (didactic competences, digital competences, research competences, course competences, etc.); group 3 – personal competences (personal development competences, time management competences, etc.)

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-provided¹⁴⁶ 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.

Teachers in Management field actively participate in the internal training at VMU. 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,

¹⁴⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DESCRIPTION-OF-PROCEDURE-FOR-PROFESSIONAL-DEVELOPMENT-OF-ACADEMIC-AND-NON-ACADEMIC-STAFF-AT-VMU.pdf> in EN

¹⁴⁶ See <https://mokymosiakademija.vdu.lt/> in EN

expert insights, and their experience (about 45% of all teachers from Management 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 Management field) were actively involved in the trainings conducted by VMU Innovative Studies Institute 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 defence”; „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.

In 2021 some teachers of the field participated in the conferences "Lithuanian Business Forum", Kaunas Business Forum", raised their professional qualifications in training on EU economic, financial, business and management processes and trends, quality and change management processes, effective project management. The teachers participated and improved their professional and pedagogical competences in trainings organized by VMU lecturers on the application of innovative teaching/learning methods, organization and assessment of study achievements in the distance learning environment in *Moodle*, updating and improving the quality of study content, evaluation and improvement of teachers' performance, effective digital education, using the *MS Teams* tool for distance learning, providing effective feedback and evaluating achievements, involving students in studies and research, intellectual property, open educational resources and others. The training "Using the *MS Teams* platform for distance learning" received a particularly large number of participants. Part of the researchers also participated in trainings on the use of the SPSS software package, classification methods in quantitative data analysis organized by the European Social Research Team in Lithuania.

The teachers of the *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agri-Food Business Management* study programmes raised their qualifications in the courses relevant to them: "New Trends in Bioeconomy and Rural Development", "Sustainable Food Chain Financing Perspectives", "The Digitization Ecosystem of the Lithuanian Agri-Food Sector in the European Context", "Viability of Small Farms Managed by Young Farmers under the new "Farm to Fork" Strategy" and others. These courses were taught by visiting teachers from foreign countries. For example, courses about bioeconomy development were conducted by the rector of the Latvian University of Life Sciences and Technologies Irina Pilvere and prof. Baiba Rivza.

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”.

Professional development of staff is one of the priority areas of the joint initiatives of the European University Alliance „Transform4Europe” and VMU. „Transform4Europe”

partners have developed guidelines for the application of innovative study methods and the professional development of teacher and non-academic staff in 2021. The guidelines are already being applied in practice and will increase the quality of higher education in Lithuania and others European countries.

The academic staff in Management field is very active in training. For example, during the past 3 years there were about 8 events of training and development of competencies per person (teachers were participating in business events, trainings, seminars, webinars, conferences, workshops, etc.). Most of them were aimed to increase competencies in study course field (teachers have attended events on human resource management, e-commerce, digital marketing, logistics, time management, coaching, leadership, change management, planning, entrepreneurship, and others). Some of academic staff in Management field joined or already are the members of BMDA (Baltic Management Development Association), LiMA (Lithuanian Association of Marketing), Association of Personnel Management Professionals 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 of the field.

The teachers in person or distantly participated in conferences, congresses, forums, schools, internships in Lithuania and abroad. 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 time 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.

At the end of each training at VMU, 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 and in website of Professional Competence Development Centre at VMU. The professional development needs of teachers are also formulated by the administration of faculties, SPCs.

In sum, VMU teachers in Management field have sufficient opportunities for professional development funded by VMU or outside actors and actively follow learning all their life principle.

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for the study programme Corporate Strategic Management.

Recommendations for the area under the assessment provided by the experts during the previous external evaluation*		
Teaching staff		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
International Executive MBA study programme		
3.	More teaching staff mobility is required to more fully internationalise this programme;	All teaching staff arrives to BMI to teach study courses from the leading universities, where their main full-time positions take place, so teaching at

	<p>more regular international exchanges are recommended. Additionally, it is appropriate if the Lithuanian teachers from Kaunas undertake teaching at the partner institutions on this EMBA programme; it should become an equal two-way process for staff in all of the five partnership institutions.</p>	<p>BMI in cooperation with VMU is international mobility for them.</p> <p>In order to make the <i>International Executive MBA</i> truly international, it was decided in BMI Academic Council to continue to hire study course teachers from the world's leading universities, because it gives this programme uniqueness in the Lithuanian study market and allows to meet requirements at executive MBA studies level. Majority of permanent teachers from Management field at VMU, responsible for supervision of Final Master Thesis, were actively participating in various academic mobility actions. VMU has sufficient financial resources for international mobility under the Erasmus + programme for teaching and learning visits; teachers can also benefit from funding for trips 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 participation at the conferences abroad.</p>
<i>Agricultural Business Management study programme</i>		
1.	<p>Give more training to staff to describe learning outcomes and their links to study objectives, course description and teaching methods.</p>	<p>Staff training has received considerable attention. The Institute of Innovative Studies and the Centre for the Development of Professional Competences periodically organise training for university staff, including updating and improving study courses. Lots of trainings on the application of innovative teaching/learning methods, updating and improving the quality of study content were implemented in which the teachers of the Programme participated. (see in detail in 5.3.)</p>
2.	<p>It is suggested to set up a strategy to deepening internationalization of teaching and research and making benchmarking of the study programme.</p>	<p>More high-quality papers are being published in the Management field. The share of good quality publications (indexed in Web of Science with impact factor) in all publications has increased about twice; in addition, the share of international authors has increased to about 60% over the last 3 years. The implementation of international and interdisciplinary projects lets to improve and enrich the content of study programmes in Management field. It is expected to improve our researchers' skills, competences and internationality as 2</p>

		<p>Horizon Europe projects are won and are starting to be implemented.</p> <p>VMU Agriculture Academy study marketing plan in 2021-2022 m. was supplemented with other measures for the promotion of VMU in the international space, promotion of international studies and study exchanges (projects in social media, short, inclusive study program videos, banners, visuals, communication on social networks, creation of VMU representative video in English, preparation of the presentation in English, preparation of representative VMU Agriculture Academy leaflets in English, updating of the VMU Agriculture Academy website in English, updating of the website area "International Relations", etc.). These measures appear to have a positive effect on students' interest in mobility.</p>
	Agri-Food Business Management study programme	
3.	<p>For some of the teachers implementing the programme, it is recommended to define the field of research more clearly in the future in order to achieve a more targeted development of subject competences and strengthening the quality of the taught subject.</p>	<p>Teachers have clearly defined their research fields, independent groups of researchers operate in the Faculty, carrying out research projects and preparing high-quality papers. The teachers constantly raise their qualifications in the field of taught study courses.</p> <p>During the meeting of the joint study programme Agri-Food Business Management SPC in Jelgava on 7/11/2019, a recommendation was adhered from the Latvian and Estonian partners that the programme's teachers should link their research more closely to the taught study courses and the programme as a whole (Protocol No 19-1). It can be stated that implementation of international and interdisciplinary research and scientific projects currently have a clear coherence with study courses of Management field.</p>

Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Teaching staff</i>	
Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The number of teaching staff in Management field is sufficient for qualitative provision of second cycle studies. ➤ The teaching staff of courses in Management 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 Management field, there are also enough of experienced teachers, who can transfer experience and contribute with scientific insights.
- Teaching staff of study programmes in Management 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 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 Management field have increased their professional visibility in national level a lot, though higher professional and scientific visibility of their expertise regionally and internationally would be a great benefit to Management 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 staff¹⁴⁷. The studies are usually organized in the buildings of the Faculties and Academies, where the administration is located, and the specialisation teachers are concentrated (the premises in the University buildings at Universiteto st. 10, and Donelaičio st. 52, as well as Europe Tower building in Vilnius for BMI *International Executive MBA* study programme). This assures better accessibility of the administrative and academic staff to the 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 237 classrooms at VMU which can be used for the study process according to teaching and learning needs. The size of the rooms varies from 3 up to 180 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.

Study programme *Corporate Strategic Management* premises (small and large classrooms, as well as offices) are mostly located at the sixth floor of Donelaičio st. 52, newly opened in November, 2022, though the classrooms, computer classes, reading room and other spaces are available for the programme studies throughout all the building.

Second cycle studies programmes *Agrifood Business Management* (in second semester) and *Agricultural Business Management* are delivered at the FBD, where large classrooms (up to 150 persons) and smaller (group working) classrooms, a computer class, and offices are available. BMI's teaching facilities are located on the 31st floor of the Europe Tower, a prestigious business centre in central Vilnius, with the administration partly on the 31st floor and partly on the 32nd floor. The lecture hall can seat up to 50 *International Executive MBA*

¹⁴⁷ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MTtfSRozWKY> in EN

students. BMI now leases a total of 300 sq. m. of premises, an increase of 20% recently. A groupwork/reading room as well as more office space were added. Companies in the same building provide additional meeting rooms when more group space is needed. BMI has been based at the Europe Tower since 2004. The current facilities with their prestigious location, city-centre accessibility and abundant parking contribute to BMI's image and generally make life easier for programme participants. Major search efforts in the past were unable to find anything nearly as favourable. BMI gives *International Executive MBA* students cards to access the Europe Tower and parking. The classrooms have wireless Internet and a SmartBoard as well as standard audio/visual equipment. Students bring their own laptop computers.

The resources (material and human resources) necessary for the implementation of the joint study programme *Agrifood Business Management* are available and sufficient in all partner universities (VMU, EMU, LLU). The joint programme *Agrifood Business Management* study process at VMU is located at FBD. The joint programme study process at Estonian partner university, Estonian University of Life Sciences (EMU), is implemented in the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences. There are 7 classrooms and 3 computer rooms with 66 computers in the Institute of Economics and Social Sciences. The academic staff and technical staff have their offices in the premises of the institute. There is the internet connection in all classrooms and offices. Students have access to rooms including free wireless internet access. Academic staff members have desktop computers or laptops. All classrooms are equipped with computers and projectors. The university library is located in the same building where students can work individually and in groups. Students have access to a sport club and there is a good bus connection with other parts of Tartu and Tallinn. The university library stock contained 297,245 items, including 297 245 books, annual subscribed magazines, and newspapers – 11,564 and 230 respectively. The special literature for the implementation of the programme includes 3,441 books in Estonian, 917 books in English, there are 16 different data bases. There are 54 workplaces in the reading room of the library, 16 work places with a computer, 2 rooms for seminars as well as 2 rooms for individual work. E-catalogues are available to find publications from digital and print collections, there is a digital archive of theses. The access to electronic sources is provided by the university's network and off-campus via a secure proxy server. In addition, copying and scanning services are available.

The joint programme *Agrifood Business Management* study process at Latvia Partner University, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (LLU) are involved three faculties (Faculty of Economics and Social Development, Faculty of Agriculture and Faculty of Food Technology). For example, the joint programme students are able to have practical works and laboratory works in the advanced production pilot laboratories and research laboratories of the Faculty of Food Technology in LLU. Master students in the laboratory have the practical learning of technological processes for dairy products; of basic technological processing of meat and fish processing; of fruit and vegetable processing using vacuum evaporator, freezers and two screw extruders; of bread production process; gas packaging possibilities in the food packaging process. To evaluate the quality of the products, master students use laboratories that can analyse basic quality parameters: moisture, water activity, dry matter content, fat, salt content, structural properties. The students of the joint programme also have access to the university's infrastructure, which includes dormitories, the LLU Fundamental Library and premises for learning. At LLU, students use the LLU Fundamental Library¹⁴⁸ network (26 national libraries) with a lot of common catalogues. The reader's card of the LLU Library provides access to other eight national libraries in Latvia. Two

¹⁴⁸ See <http://llufb.llu.lv/> in EN

thirds of the literature is in foreign languages, mainly English. 11 database is accessible at the LLU Fundamental Library. The library equipment and services create positive learning environment: students can take books and journals home or read on-site. Copying and scanning service is provided as well. The stock of the LLU Fundamental Library is improved year by year and accessibility to databases and literature provides students with the opportunity to get the newest information about developments in the research field in a short time. LLU holds publishing rights, which ensures that publications prepared in electronic or paper format are registered with ISSN and ISBN, as well as included in the National Library. The LLU Library regularly collects information about the academic publications of the academic staff and enters the information into the databases.

Thus, the premises used for Management field studies are timely modernized, suitable and sufficient for studies.

All the buildings (VMU and partners' institutions) 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.

Still, the Faculties have a right to use rooms in different buildings of VMU according to demand and convenience for students and staff. 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 6 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 – *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 or in February 2022. 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*: 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 2022 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, which is supported by the library for teachers.¹⁴⁹

BMI developed and launched its own custom E-learning platform, replacing an intranet which had become outdated and only served basic logistics needs. The new platform offers specific functionality for students, administrators, faculty, and alumni. *International Executive MBA* programme logistics were fully transferred to the new platform: administrative notices, provision of detailed study course and programme information, learning materials distribution, assignments submission, grade reporting, quality assurance surveys, and so on. Communication between administrators, programme participants and faculty members has also shifted to the platform, as students and faculty were on-boarded. So far that has included live optional extra lectures and virtual consulting with professors as well as exam-feedback sessions, course introduction videos by the professor, links to further learning materials, and so on. BMI is examining supplementary materials for students and possible e-learning materials on research methods which could be added to the platform.

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: *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 Management field study courses teachers use various software and tools depending on their needs. For instance, *Bloomberg* for organizational environment analytics, *Mage* software for management activities' simulation games, graphic editing programmes as *Adobe Photoshop* for developing visuals, websites development platforms as *Wix* and *Weebly*, user

¹⁴⁹ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-research/how-to-cite> in EN

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. Computer classes have specialized applications (SSPS, MatLab, STATISTICA, R software, enterprise resources planning WinQSB, Website CMS, *Teamgate CRM*, *Debetas*, *DB Apskaita*, *e-Geba*, *Stekas*, *Hansa World*, *Centas*, *B1*. It is possible to use process control modelling programmes *Adonis*, *Flexsim*, *ARIS Cloud* process control simulation program. The following programmes are suitable for teleworking: *MS Teams*, *Zoom*, *Voov*, *Cisco Webex Meetings*. In the computer classes of individual faculties, students can use special-purpose programs (e.g., *SYSTAT 10*, *SIGMASTAT*, *SIGMAPLOT 8.0*) for statistical evaluation of research data, the program *ArcGIS 10.3*, digital soil maps, etc. Computer classes have general applications installed as well (*Word*, *Excell*, *Powerpoint*, *MS Access*). For example, in 2021, prof. dr. Vesa Niskanen from the University of Helsinki (Finland) started working at FBD for a period of 5 years, providing the students with the opportunity to consult on the methods of the ongoing research and software using the *Matlab* software installed in the computer classroom and applying the optimization methods in research.

From pandemic period in Autumn 2020 the access to *Adobe Creative*, *SPSS* and other cloud software through remote computer classes was provided for Management 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. The Administrative Office notifies the Faculty and the Students on how to book time slots for the use of various software applications in the computer classrooms or laboratories according to schedule provided. Moreover, the Administrative Office sends inquiries to the teachers on the need to purchase new software, thereby encouraging the teachers to explore the ways to use the capacities of the software for the purposes of their courses and research, discussing this in clusters and at the Institutes.

In all, the means, equipment, and computer programmes used for Management studies are sufficient for the current number of students and suitable for achieving study results.

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 learning¹⁵⁰.

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 units¹⁵¹. 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 637 working places for them, visitors can work with 196 Library or personal computers. VMU libraries also provide access to individual and group work rooms, workplaces for visitors with disabilities, discussion spaces and recreation

¹⁵⁰ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-studies/trainings/> in EN

¹⁵¹ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/about/structure/departments/> in EN

areas. Opening hours for individual / group work can be booked in advance via the library website¹⁵².

International Executive MBA students have access to the library of VMU, as well as a small collocation of relevant literature is maintained in the BMI office itself. Students may borrow books and journals. Textbooks are provided to students during *International Executive MBA* courses, which they may purchase if desired. An archive of past study course materials is also kept for consultation or copy requests by students.

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 databases¹⁵³, VMU Research Management System (CRIS)¹⁵⁴ and VMU virtual library¹⁵⁵. Information resources for study courses can be found in the Study Subject Literature Catalogue¹⁵⁶.

The university community has access to almost 890 thousand electronic resources (454 thousand e-books, 37 thousand e-journals, 398 thousand conference presentations, audio recordings, other documents), 62 databases. The latter ones can be accessed on the University premises and from remote computers (via *EZproxy*¹⁵⁷). In the guide by subjects¹⁵⁸ (*CoursePlus*), users have the opportunity to find systematic links to thematic information contained in the University's licensed or open access academic resources according to the study courses.

The library recommends and provides access for the students to databases relevant to Management field as *Academic Search Complete*, *Business Source Complete*, *Cambridge Journals Online*, *eBooks of Vilnius Gediminas Technical University Press*, *eBooks on EBSCOhost*, *eBooks on ScienceDirect*, *Emerald Management eJournals Collection*, *JSTOR*, *MasterFILE Premier*, *OECD iLibrary*, *Oxford Journals Online*, *Passport (Euromonitor International)*, *SAGE Journals Online*, *ScienceDirect*, *SpringerLink*, *Taylor & Francis*, *Web of Science* and *Wiley Online Library*, other licensed and trial databases by 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

¹⁵² See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-studies/facilities-and-study-spaces/booking-a-workspace/> in EN

¹⁵³ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/databases> in EN

¹⁵⁴ See <https://www.vdu.lt/cris/?&locale=en> in EN

¹⁵⁵ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/> in EN

¹⁵⁶ See https://aleph.library.lt/F?func=option-update-Ing&P_CON_LNG=ENG in EN

¹⁵⁷ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-studies/facilities-and-study-spaces/> in EN

¹⁵⁸ See <http://subjects.vdu.lt/subjects/index.php> in EN

and trial databases is restricted only to members of VMU community.

The aim of the library is to create user-friendly conditions for access to information resources. The most necessary printed documents (almost 300 thousand publications in open funds) 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 website¹⁵⁹, electronic catalogues, in the virtual library, in VMU CRIS. The detailed review of library resources in Management field (24,256 of traditional documents, as well as 67,129 e-resources, 24 databases, etc.) is presented in Annex 4.

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 69 thousand publications, over 21 thousand records of final theses (ETD), almost 35 thousand el. documents: books, magazine articles, ETD and other documents, over 14,6 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 Management 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; "Manager's Work" by I. Bakanauskienė and N. Petkevičiūtė, "Career Management: Personal, Individual Perspective" by N. Petkevičiūtė, "Organizational Culture" and "Organization and Organizational Design" by S. Staniulienė, "Organizational Culture", "Congruence of Personal and Organizational Values" by J. Vveinhardt, "Management Culture and Social Responsibility" by J. Vveinhardt, P. Žukauskas and R. Andriukaitienė, "National Management Systems: Culture, Institutions, and Innovations" by G. Jucevičius, "Organizational Culture of Innovations" by B. Janiūnaitė, G. Jucevičius and M. Kriaučionienė, monograph "Sustainable development of law and management in the global context" by R. Pranskūnienė et al., "Analysis of good practice examples and exemplary models of the organization of short food supply chains in European countries" by V. Atkočiūnienė et al. and textbooks "Modelling company's sustainability: from utopia to reality"¹⁶⁰ by R. Drejeris et al., "Analysis of small farms in the Central European space", "Sustainability and innovation in rural development: study book for intensive internship", "Fundamentals of writing research projects: methodological approach" by V. Atkočiūnienė et al., etc.¹⁶¹

In 2021 the largest university sports complex in the country, named after President Valdas Adamkus and adapted to various sports, study and leisure needs, was opened at VMU. This sports complex is intended for the needs of the University community and consists of

¹⁵⁹ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/> in EN

¹⁶⁰ See <https://www.vdu.lt/cris/entities/publication/527b338a-47c7-41f3-8fee-e4955e467f1d/details> in LT

¹⁶¹ See <http://ebooks.vdu.lt/bookshelf/ekonomika-ir-vadyba/> in LT

grandstand building, court for basketball, indoor football, volleyball and other sports, football stadium with running tracks and long jump sectors, outdoor basketball courts, ground tennis court, artificial grass tennis court, sand volleyball court and universal court. The outdoor grandstands are equipped with 1000 seats.

Internships are not provided for in the study plan of second cycle programmes in Management field. However, students can have voluntary internship and/or an outsourced research contract may be concluded with the business entity for research in Final Master Thesis. The social partners of the faculties^{162 163} are interested that students will have the opportunity to learn Management processes in practice.

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

FEM recently moved to new, modern premises. From November 2022, the faculty administration, teachers work, and the entire life of the faculty take place in K. Donelaičio str. 52 on the top floor of the building. From Spring semester, 2023, most of the classes organized by the faculty (of *Corporate Strategic Management* – as well) will take place in the new modern spaces, which were installed and adapted for studies during the preparation of the self evaluation report.

Consulting rooms, classrooms, laboratories have been renovated in other VMU buildings 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* space¹⁶⁴ was established for students and professionals – social partners (School Basketball League, “Žalgiris” eSport team, etc.), where they could integrate eSports business practices to management 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 were ordered in Maintenance and Investment Department and renewed at S.Daukanto street building in 2022.

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 Management field; it is planned to further supplement material resources with project funds as soon as the application is available. For example, at the beginning of 2022, classroom No. 103 (teacher's workstation and 16 student workstations) and classroom No. 104 (teacher's workstation and 26 student workstations) were renovated at VMU Agriculture Academy Building III, where desktop computers were repaired and replaced, while in classroom No. 410 a Bloomberg terminal was installed. At

¹⁶² See <https://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/praktika/> in LT

¹⁶³ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/fakultetai/bioekonomikos-pletros-fakultetas/apie-fakulteta/bendradarbiavimas/> ; <https://zua.vdu.lt/fakultetai/bioekonomikos-pletros-fakultetas/studijos/studentams/praktikos-darbo-pasiulymai/> in LT

¹⁶⁴ See <http://evf.vdu.lt/studentams/magnus-esport/> in LT

Autumn 2022 renovation at VMU Agriculture Academy Building III was started, where new computer classrooms with computers, projectors, smart boards, and new furniture will be constructed from the old teachers' offices.

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. The Description of the Procedure for Forming the Information Resources Fund of VMU defines the principles, criteria, and sources for the formation of the information resources fund, the amount of information resources to be acquired, the search for and access to resources, the structure of the library fund as well as the monitoring indicators of the information resources fund.

An interactive document ordering service is installed on the library website¹⁶⁵. 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, the following books relevant for the second cycle programmes *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agrifood Business Management* students were ordered recently: “The state of food security and nutrition in the world: safeguarding against economic slowdowns and downturns” (FAO, 2019), “Chemistry and biochemistry of food” (Perez-Castineira, 2020), “Essentials of food science” (Vaclavik et al., 2021), which are now available for students and teachers in Academy library (Studentu str., Akademija). 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 study course Moodle page and in the course description.

The University community can order publications from Lithuanian and foreign libraries that are not available at VMU Library. This can be done through the Interlibrary Loan system by completing an interactive order form.¹⁶⁶

In this area, there were no recommendations from the previous external evaluation experts for the study programme Corporate Strategic Management.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to Learning facilities and resources

¹⁶⁵ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/for-research/purchase-request/> in EN

¹⁶⁶ See <https://biblioteka.vdu.lt/en/interlibrary-loan-request/> in EN

No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
International Executive MBA study programme		
4.	The premises used for this programme are of high quality and impressive overall. However, the area on two floors of Europa Tower is very cramped and its continued use should be seriously reviewed. The expert team agrees with those teachers who felt that more rooms are now needed. The VMU library space in Europa Tower is very cramped and minimal	BMI now leases a total of 300 sq. m. of premises, an increase of 20% since the last evaluation. BMI has added a groupwork/reading room as well as more office space. Companies in the same building provide additional meeting rooms when more group space is needed. The lecture hall can seat up to 50 EMBA students. While a slightly larger lecture hall and more group rooms of our own would be desirable, the current facilities with their prestigious location, city-centre accessibility and abundant parking contribute to BMI's image and generally make access easier for students, teachers and administration staff. Recent search efforts were unable to find anything nearly as favourable. Students have access to the premises of library of VMU, including online access to numerous databases, textbooks, etc., as well as customised e-learning platform, taking into account the trend of no paper consuming activities.
Agricultural Business Management study programme		
3.	It should be considered to develop a plan on how to ensure economic use of overcapacity of facilities in the coming years.	The integration of the two universities (VMU and Agriculture Academy) has led to a rationalisation of the use of material resources. The Faculty of Informatics and Faculty of Natural Sciences moved to the Agricultural Academy campus. For example, in 2022 autumn semester 80% of lectures hours per week in FBD auditoriums are conducted by FBD teachers and at 20% of hours lecturers - from other faculties of other study programmes.
Agri-Food Business Management study programme		
4.	It is recommended that in the prepared plan for the acquisition of methodological resources, not only to detail the positions of purchased literature sources, but also to methodically assess and ensure the required number of copies.	During the meeting of the joint study programme <i>Agri-Food Business Management</i> Committee in Jelgava on 7/11/2019, it was agreed that each university will regularly add to its library resources scientific and educational literature on the topics on which the partners have been assigned to teach their respective modules (Protocol No 19-1).

It was also agreed that teachers would use the most up-to-date sources of information available to them in registered databases to update their teaching material each semester, and that they would share the updated material with students on Moodle. According to recent years trends, the teachers updating the teaching materials every semester use more information sources in the subscribed university databases, which are available to students remotely.

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 Management 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 Management field, VMU library regularly updates electronic and printed resources; number and constitution of licensed electronic databases are relevant to Management 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 Management field.

7. Study quality management and publicity

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

VMU study quality assurance includes consistent and targeted planning, implementation, evaluation, and improvement of studies in order to achieve their compliance with the priorities of higher education, legal requirements and the needs of stakeholders. 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 Statute¹⁶⁷ (2018) determines general principles of quality assurance of studies and research.
- VMU Quality Manual¹⁶⁸ (2022, new edition) systematically presents the concept, principles, responsibilities and processes of quality assurance as well as related documents and quality indicators aimed at the continuous quality enhancement of studies, learning, research and artistic activities, and doctoral studies.
- VMU Study Regulations (2021, new edition) describe the process and responsibility distribution in study quality assurance.
- Description of Procedure for Study Quality Assurance at VMU¹⁶⁹ (2022, 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 VMU¹⁷⁰ (2022, 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 VMU¹⁷¹ (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.

The above-mentioned documents are made public on the VMU website in Lithuanian¹⁷² and English¹⁷³.

Compared with previous practices, described in the previous self evaluation report, the internal quality assurance in the study field of Management 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 Management 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 teachers in the preparation of the Management field self evaluation report during 2022 provided a good impetus, as well as the activities of a special working group in Management field in order to identify and eliminate duplication of courses in Management 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 / joined SPC, FEM Academic Council, BMI Academic Council, the Agriculture

¹⁶⁷ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/VMU-STATUTE-EN-2018.pdf> in EN

¹⁶⁸ See <https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/VMU-Quality-Manual-Abstract-2022.pdf> in EN

¹⁶⁹ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VMU-Procedure-for-Study-QA_2022-November-16-edition.pdf in EN.

¹⁷⁰ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VMU-Procedure-for-Feedback-Organisation_2022-November-16-edition.pdf in EN.

¹⁷¹ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/VMU-Procedure-for-Course-Attestation_Nov20-2019_edition.pdf in EN.

¹⁷² See <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/apie-vdu-kaune/svarbiausi-vdu-dokumentai/senato-dokumentai/> in LT

¹⁷³ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/important-documents/> in EN

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).

The Senate of VMU¹⁷⁴ 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 VMU¹⁷⁵ 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 Unit¹⁷⁶ 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. The SPC main responsibilities include coordination of the programme's implementation regarding the curriculum related questions and assurance of the programme quality. 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 statistical information of studies, data gathered by surveys and other methods as well as integrating the results of external evaluation. The SPC assures correspondence of the programme learning outcomes to labour market and society needs, it keeps contacts with social stakeholders and assures their involvement into the programme.

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 Senate¹⁷⁷ (see example in 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 SPC of each programme is composed of at least 7 members: the Head, 3 teachers, social partner, graduate, and student. In the case of the SPC of joint programme *Agri-Food Business Management* it is composed of partner universities of 12 members: the Head (VMU), 9 teachers (3 VMU, 3 EMU, 3 LLU), social partner and student (the student is delegated from VMU, EMU, LLU on a rotational basis).

Responsibilities among the SPC members are shared as follows:

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

¹⁷⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/rectors-council/> in LT

¹⁷⁶ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/about-vmu/structure-and-management-of-vmu/departments-and-subdivisions/studies-department/> in EN.

¹⁷⁷ https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VMU-Procedure-for-Study-QA_2022-November-16-edition.pdf Annex 3 in EN.

- 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.
- 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.

The SPC's inquiries, initiatives, and decisions are discussed by SPCs representatives in FEM or BMI Academic Councils or in the Advisory Commission for Studies and Science under the FBD Council and then approved by the FEM and FBD Faculty Council.

FEM 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 community and society needs, internal human and material resources, to make recommendations due to the improvement of study programmes and processes. For instance, in 2019-2022 FEM Academic Council 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 teachers in teamwork mode and according to *Artes Liberales* principles, a greater number of optional courses, especially taught in English, was generated, and developed. FEM 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 2022, 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 Management 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.

BMI Academic Council¹⁷⁸ advises and supports the BMI Dean on matters of academic policy, curriculum, and faculty. Its members bring global expertise in pedagogic development at business schools as well as familiarity with evolving management needs in the business world and representation of the interests of current programme participants. BMI Academic

¹⁷⁸ See <https://www.bmiinstitute.com/vilnius/governance/> in EN

Council has more of an advisory role for curriculum, faculty, and policy. BMI expanded its international Academic Council with experienced stakeholders, well-regarded personalities from academia and business. Their role is to provide BMI with world-class input for strategic planning and pedagogical development.

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 organisation 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.

In addition, BMI *International Executive MBA* periodic comprehensive reviews of programme quality and relevance by outside academics with experience in programme design and management (international peers) as well as business leaders ideally from BMI's target markets take place. EPAS (Extensive self-assessment of the programme's quality and ongoing development is carried out for progress reports to the EPAS Accreditation Board and during the application process for renewal of accreditation) coordinator is BMI Dean and Director General, assisted by *International Executive MBA* Programme Director. Five-year EPAS Accreditation granted in early 2015, then renewal was in 2019. Engagement of independent academics and practitioners for a fundamental review of the *International Executive MBA* programme every 5 years and *ad hoc* consultations regarding ongoing development of *International Executive MBA* take place.

Overall, the internal quality assurance system for VMU Management study field is properly structured, regulated, and functioning effectively.

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

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 Department, Faculty/Academy as well as SPC meetings, and via surveys. Teachers directly participate in study quality assurance through the enhancement actions at the study course level, when sharing their best practice with other teachers as well as through a systematic involvement in their own professional development. Teachers also have opportunities to actively participate in the quality enhancement actions at the study programme level.
- *Students* give their assessments of studies through the student representative in SPC, Faculty/Academy Council, group representatives, via student surveys, discussions, conversations and in direct discussions with teachers. Students are invited to get actively engaged in the study classes and to perform individual tasks in a consistent way, student representatives participate in the planned improvement actions of the study programmes.
- *Social partners' representatives* in 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 targeted discussions, for example discussing student practice and research project issues, joint project possibilities, etc. The most active social partners significantly contribute to the quality enhancement activities.
- *Alumni* suggestions are identified via surveys and during meetings organised by Alumni associations and the Faculty/Academy representatives, and the Programme alumni are active participants of the discussions to provide recommendations for study quality development.

The suggestions of stakeholders are discussed in SPC meetings, and decisions are taken to use them for quality improvement. Significant information 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 virtual learning environment, 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 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 surveys of employers are conducted to evaluate the preparation for work by alumni and the students who have completed internship as well as alumni adaptation in the labour market.

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.

There is an aim to ensure constant updating of study programmes in Management 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. The intensive cooperation with the Agriculture Ministry of Lithuania, National Paying Agency, Chamber of Agriculture, UAB "Dojus agro", agricultural cooperative "Pienas LT", UAB "Dotnuva Baltic", UAB "Agrokoncerno grupė", AB "Auga group" has been maintained in relation to promotion of studies programmes *Agricultural Business Management* and *Agrifood Business Management*. In 2021 an online discussion "Day of career'21: Online discussion with agribusiness leaders"¹⁷⁹ was organized for students who want to find an internship, a job, to get new ideas for the topic of their thesis, get to know the latest innovations in agribusiness sector. 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 Management field programmes.

Involvement of social partners in the internal quality assurance of studies in Management 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 Faculties 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

¹⁷⁹ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/vdu-zua-virtualios-karjeros-dienos21-apie-galimybes-ir-darbus-kuriancius-pokyti/>; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s_73PMwAV-0 in LT

theses committees. The co-operation with companies and their representatives during internships, where students solve business-relevant tasks during internship, take place.

Management 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 in section 4.1.

In networking with the social partners during meetings, Management 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 University alumni club as well as "Agriculture Academy Alumni Club".

The students are mobilised by the VMU Student Council that delegates the student representatives to act as members of the Faculty Council, Teacher Attestation Commission, and SPCs to present their suggestions. 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 Faculties Councils, SPCs, or by communicating with the teachers directly. The Deans and heads of Departments meet with the representatives of the student groups regularly, and the Heads of SPCs also hold active discussions with these representatives on the issues of the quality of studies at the start and end of each semester.

Teachers are responsible for teaching quality, renewal of the course content and study materials, adoption of adequate teaching and learning methods and clear evaluation criteria¹⁸⁰. 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 analyse the results of the feedback and make suggestions for improvement during the meetings of SPC and FEM and BMI Academic Councils. 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.

¹⁸⁰ 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.

Such procedures enable open participation of all programme stakeholders and leads to successful upgrading of the programmes and their courses.

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 including the main issues 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 following statistical information collected in a centralized way at the University and available to the Committees and Faculty administration is analysed: admission to studies, number of students and teachers, support provided to students, mobility of students and teachers, graduation of studies, employment of graduates and other information. The annual analysis of the programme also integrates opinion of stakeholders and teaching and learning quality evaluation that is performed at the end of each course. This evaluation 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 general 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.

SPC discusses the progress of quality improvement in its meetings at least twice a year to monitor the improvement actions. For instance, in BMI for EMBA debriefing sessions roughly every 6 months, for open discussion with the full class regarding the course questionnaire results, exams, and any other issues; ad hoc focus groups to address specific issues or to get students' reactions to changes which are being considered; quarterly meetings with class representatives for summaries of attitudes, comments and any potential problems; participation of class representatives in meetings of BMI Academic Council, grades assigned to the students ("pass rate") and faculty comments regarding students' work; thesis progress and completion rate ("on-time graduation"). After each year's module in China, BMI gathers feedback and consults with students, leading to adjustments the following year in terms of, for example, which companies are visited, which Chinese lecturers and topics to repeat, and which cultural outings were most valuable. After students suggested adding a

meeting with foreign businesspeople working in China, BMI began arranging dinner with local HEC alumni.

Results of surveys, stakeholder discussions, 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.

Results of the internal and external evaluation 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 (Table 16) is an illustration from the Improvement plan of *Agricultural Business Management* study programme (the programme improvement plans are stored at the faculties and in internal Outlook folders):

Table 16. An example of the Improvement plan of *Agricultural Business Management* study programme in 2021/2022

Areas for the improvement of the study programme	Planned actions	Action links to survey / external evaluation results	Responsible persons	Timeline	Implementation results: information on actions taken
Study objectives, outcomes and content	Revise the description of the programme in response to the provisions of the description of the Management field (the order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania of 30/09/ 2021 No. V-1776)	-	Chair of SPC lect. dr. J. Zaleckienė	Till 01/09/2022	Done The study programme description draft was prepared and discussed at the SPC meeting on 05.30.2022 (protocol No. SPK-PR-6). The draft of the program description has been submitted for coordination to the Study Quality Unit of VMU. The description of the program was submitted to the FBD Council for consideration and approval in August 2022.
Links between science and study activities	To invite to teach in the program those teachers whose scientific research is directly related to the taught course, who	-	Head of department prof. dr. J. Žukovskis Dean doc. dr. B. Vazonis	30/08/2022	Partially done Some of the teachers have been teaching the courses for several years, but the research is only partially related to the taught courses. In the next academic year representatives/practition

	carry out R&D project activities.				ers business and visiting teachers from foreign universities will be invited to teach individual topics of lectures and/or hold seminars.
	Involve students in R&D activities by preparing 2 articles and 6 reports		Teachers teaching in the study program	2021/2022 academic year	Done Agricultural Business Management 3rd year students presented the results of their research at the "Young Scientist 2022" conference, prepared and published articles.
	To carry out outsourced research, the results of which would be presented in master's theses and applied in solving real problems of companies' activities, by signing one outsourced work contract.		Teachers teaching in the study programme (thesis supervisors)	2021/2022 academic year	Partially done 3rd year student prepared a thesis on the topic "Strategy of introducing a new food product to the Finnish market". The research was carried out at the request of JSC "Biogami", but a formal contract for the outsourced final work was not concluded. In the next academic year, the plan is to organize round table discussion with students to identify what problems are faced in business enterprises (where students works or have voluntary internship) and what research of enterprise case could be a part of the Final Master Thesis in finding a way to solve those problems.

The External Evaluation Reports on study programmes of Management field were received in 2013, 2017 and 2018, 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.

In experts recommendations for *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme received it was recommended to include several innovation-related learning outcomes in the study programme, which would reflect the constant needs of society based on knowledge

and information, a new learning outcome "Designing and implementing innovative business and organizational systems, taking into account the current trends of the information and knowledge society" was included. The existing learning outcomes were also supplemented, giving them a more prominent dimension of the knowledge economy. The changes made are reflected in the content of each course accordingly.

Since experts suggested to pay more attention to the equal distribution of credits in semesters, in 2017 at the faculty level credit number of all second cycle programmes was unified, i.e., all courses are 6 ECTS, therefore, after the corrections made, the 5 courses taught in each semester include the same number of 30 ECTS credits.

Taking into account the experts' comments, it was ensured that in no course of the study programme does the student's independent work exceed 62.5%.

The proposal of experts to provide study courses, the learning outcomes of which would be related to business law, information technologies and digital society, was taken into account when improving the content of compulsory courses (e.g., "Business Insight", "Project Management"), strengthening the dimensions of information technology in business and business analytics. Also, in 2018 the Academic Council at FEM decided to fundamentally reorganize and expand the list of elective courses, in which courses providing transferable competences — law, analytics, ICT — will play an important role ("Artificial Intelligence in Organization Management", "Digitization and Financial Technologies", etc.).

After adjusting the VMU Regulations, the relative weight of the exam was reduced in the majority of courses, in the most the study process is based on Problem based learning method, as recommended by experts.

A decision has been made at the faculty level to coordinate the field trips of the second cycle study programmes to companies, thus expanding students' opportunities to get to know more diverse business companies and institutions. Also, more active involvement of alumni and practitioners in the implementation of the study programme is organized at the faculty level.

Another example of the second cycle study programme development is of the study programme *International Executive MBA*. EPAS peers recommended to work toward better consistency of student assessment among the diverse international visiting faculty. The detailed descriptors for each grade level and guidelines for a limited curve, along with an explicit teaching, learning and assessment strategy, all published in a Faculty Handbook that teaching staff must abide by. At the same time, programme staff began more closely monitoring the conduct of student assessment to ensure not only a focus on measuring learning outcomes achievement, but also to verify consistency of grading criteria and practices. Actual grades show consistency and has increased. For the most recent three cohorts, the difference between the highest and lowest average grades for any course ranged from 1.1 to 1.5; that is down from a range of 1.9 to 2.4 for the prior cohorts and shows a jump in grading consistency across courses.

During the review period, BMI made some changes related to student assessment and grading in response to feedback from students and faculty members. For example, to reduce the risk of "free riders" in team projects, (1) a policy was adopted to limit team size to 4 or 5 persons and (2) an element of peer-assessment was added: the grade assigned by the jury to the team is now modified for an individual's grade based on the confidential rating of his/her contribution by other team members and there is a minimum contribution rating required in order to pass. In response to students' request for more detailed feedback from professors

with exam results, since 2017 BMI began on occasion to offer online consultations with the professors.

A change was made to improve the objectivity of thesis grading. Previously grades were fully determined by the jury after defence. Some participants complained that the grade was mainly for presentation skills and at times was out of line with the written feedback by advisors and second readers about the quality of their research. A revised process was piloted in 2016 and fully implemented as of 2017, where the thesis grade is comprised 50% of the jury's grade for the oral defence, 25% of the grade suggested by the advisor, and 25% of the grade suggested by the second reader. (For a discrepancy of 3 or more points between the advisor's and the second reader's suggested grades, another independent reviewer is engaged.) The final grade now better reflects the overall thesis achievement by the participant.

After recommendation to increase the international diversity within *International Executive MBA* student body and provide additional international experiences for students, the global "International study module" exchanges launched in 2016 have sharply increased participants' international experiences and helped internationalize the classroom, and it is practiced up to now.

Curriculum renewal included increased technology-related content (especially a new "Digital Transformations" course), and better support of students' thesis research. The number of guest speakers was also increased, which are highly valued by students. The "Business game" replaced a former "Accounting" refresher course; introduction to the case method, another former initial activity, is now provided mainly through materials on the e-learning platform; "Economic, Monetary and Geopolitical Environment" course has been shifted to earlier in the programme, and a former microeconomics course is being eliminated with digital resources made available for those we need/want to learn more about that field.). "Digital Transformations", addressing topics like big data analytics, e-commerce, AI and other aspects of the digital revolution replaced a former course on "Project Management".

The Dean led a revision of the learning outcomes of all courses to ensure a level of expected achievement appropriate for an executive second cycle study programme, as EPAS peers had found about 25% of the course-level learning outcomes weak. At the same time, links between learning outcomes and assessment were made more explicit.

After experts' recommendations received in 2016, the study programme *Agricultural Business Management* revised learning outcomes, updated descriptions of study courses, list of final thesis topics, study course "Sustainable agricultural development" changed to course "Agricultural economics and sustainable development". Various methodical seminars were organized for teachers to increase their qualifications regarding with practical profile master's theses and the preparation of course descriptions. In 2022 changes have been made after confirmation of new description of the Management field (of September 30, 2021, No. V-1776). The aim of the study program, outcomes and study plan have been revised. In study plan was changed course "Management of trade and logistic process in agriculture" into new course "Agricultural business supply chain management"; and course "Social business" changed into course "Business project management". Changes have also been made to other courses by revising their content and updating courses descriptions.

After experts' recommendations received in 2018, the SPC of joint study programme *Agri-Food Business Management* organized meetings and discussions of partner universities

in 2019 in order to harmonize study organization processes in all partner universities. In 2020, the description of the study program was updated, the aim and outcomes of the study program were reviewed, all teachers revised and improved courses descriptions, adjusting the topics, courses outcomes, evaluation criteria of courses, teaching methods and literature. Also, in order to ensure that all partner universities work closely together, the partners are invited organize joint events and ensure the sharing of good practice. For example, the LLU were main partners organizing the conference “Sustainable bioeconomy development”¹⁸¹ in 2020 and 2021; and LLU and EMU teachers were the member in “Sustainable bioeconomy development”¹⁸² in 2021 and 2022.

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, interviews or discussions 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 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. 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 Management field aim and intended learning outcomes are announced and periodically updated in:

- „AIKOS“ – open information, consulting and guidance system, established by the Ministry of Education¹⁸⁴;
- VMU website¹⁸⁵;
- FEM website¹⁸⁶ and FBD website¹⁸⁷;
- On Facebook¹⁸⁸;

¹⁸¹ See <https://sbd.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/PROGRAMME-BIO2020.pdf>; <https://sbd.vdu.lt/conference-2021/> in EN

¹⁸² See https://sbd.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/2021_SBD_Programme.pdf; https://sbd.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/2022_SBD_programme.pdf in EN

¹⁸³ See https://www.vdu.lt/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/VMU-Procedure-for-Feedback-Organisation_2022-November-16-edition.pdf in EN

¹⁸⁴ See <https://www.aikos.smm.lt/en/Pages/Default.aspx> in EN.

¹⁸⁵ See <https://www.vdu.lt/en/study-programs-master-studies/> in EN and <https://www.vdu.lt/lt/visos-studijos-magistranturos-studijos/> in LT. 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.

¹⁸⁶ 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.

¹⁸⁷ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/faculties/faculty-of-bioeconomy-development/studies/study-programmes/> in EN

¹⁸⁸ See <https://www.facebook.com/vytauto.didziojo.universitetas/>, <https://www.facebook.com/VDUEVF> and

- Websites of social partners' companies.

Other activities are also held for the publicity of study programmes. For example, in the spring of 2022, for publishing the masters studies the event "The best investment - knowledge"¹⁸⁹ was held online.

In order to promote the studies programmes, a marketing plan for the studies at the VMU was prepared and implemented. It included the marketing measures and activities for admission and image campaigns, integrated VMU measures and specialized measures. Direct and distance meetings of the faculties representatives with representatives and students at the universities of applied sciences were held as part of promotion of the second cycle studies. For example, various events were organized to promote the second cycle studies, as "Webinar: Study opportunities in English for students of applied science universities and graduates at the Bioeconomy Development Faculty of VMU"¹⁹⁰, "Webinar about study opportunities at VMU Bioeconomy Development Faculty"¹⁹¹.

The VMU Agriculture Academy also uses the *YouTube* channel for communication and promotion, which contains videos presenting the study programme. For example, the joint study programme *Agrifood Business Management* is promoted by all partners university. Various videos were uploaded in VMU Agriculture Academy¹⁹², EMU (Estonia)¹⁹³ *YouTube* channel. For all VMU Agriculture Academy studies programme promotion were created various videos¹⁹⁴ or uploaded some events video¹⁹⁵. Also, for studies promotion is used *Facebook* channel and faculty website. For the joint study programme *Agrifood Business Management* are used all partners faculties websites (VMU¹⁹⁶, EMU¹⁹⁷, LLU¹⁹⁸) and *Facebook* channel¹⁹⁹. Study programme *Agricultural Business Management* is presented also in FBD *Facebook* channel²⁰⁰ and website²⁰¹. In order to establish and maintain the common position and image of VMU in the society, constant cooperation with the media and various news portals (bns.lt, verslozinios.lt, tv3.lt, lrt.lt, agroeta.lt, ukininkopatarejas.lt, mokslolietuva.lt, lrytas.lt, delfi.lt, 15min.lt, etc.) took place.

All these activities and measures prove the sufficiency of the collection, use and publication of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and outcomes for the studies in the field.

<https://www.facebook.com/vdubpf> in LT.

¹⁸⁹ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/geriausia-investicija-zinios-virtualus-informacinis-susitikimas-apie-magistranturos-studijas-vdu-zua-3/> in LT

¹⁹⁰ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/vebinaras-studiju-galimybes-anglu-kalba-kolegiju-studentams-ir-absolventams-vdu-bioekonomikos-pletros-fakultete/>

¹⁹¹ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/kvieciame-kolegiju-studentus-ir-absolventus-i-webinara-apie-studiju-galimybes-vdu-bioekonomikos-pletros-fakultete/>

¹⁹² See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6ei-YbIO9qY> in EN

¹⁹³ See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gMaqUiXIKH0>; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sX2kMW4d-tA> in EN

¹⁹⁴ See <https://youtu.be/ByT-QfG8fGQ> in EN; <https://youtu.be/YYUiUmCNPQ0> in LT;

¹⁹⁵ See <https://youtu.be/cWrMqdYhv44> in LT

¹⁹⁶ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/en/studentstalk-my-ambition-is-to-get-a-world-class-education-in-agriculture/>; <https://www.vdu.lt/en/study/program/show/308/> in EN

¹⁹⁷ See <https://www.emu.ee/en/admissions/agri-food-business-management/> in EN

¹⁹⁸ See <https://www.llu.lv/en/article/degree-programme-agri-food-business-management> in EN

¹⁹⁹ See <https://www.facebook.com/vdubpf/videos/agri-food-business-management/1273099456187298/>; <https://m.facebook.com/VDU.zemes.ukio.akademija/videos/studies-at-vmu-aa-agri-food-business-management-ma-it-is-an-international-joint-/651534359478254/>;

<https://m.facebook.com/Hansavideo/videos/2546168628781477/> in EN

²⁰⁰ See

<https://www.facebook.com/VDU.zemes.ukio.akademija/photos/a.228392007241219/5341834469230255/> in LT

²⁰¹ See <https://zua.vdu.lt/papildomas-priemimas-i-vdu-zemes-ukio-akademijos-magistranturos-studijas/> in LT

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 students about teaching and learning is gathered through surveys at the end of every semester, opinion of EXIT students and graduates is obtained through annually organized and conducted surveys 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.

According to the data of the VMU student survey on teaching and learning in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme, the study methods applied by the teacher encouraged them to be actively involved in the course being studied (8.19 in Spring 2022, 9.02 in Fall 2021, and 8.81 in Spring 2021); the teacher clearly presented the content of the study course - 8.14, 9.16, and 9.04 accordingly); teaching was well organized (8.43, 8.80, 8.93); the teacher supplemented the study content with examples (9.24, 9.33, 9.23); the teacher evaluated according to evaluation criteria that were clear (9.00, 9.24, 8.87); the teacher provided constructive feedback on the assignments completed (9.06, 8.92, 8.93); the teacher provided basic study information in VMU Moodle or another distance learning environment (9.14, 9.065, 8.52); the teacher followed professional ethics (9.94, 9.02, 9.78); total average score - 8.83, 9.26, and 9.14 accordingly. It shows that students evaluate study quality and teaching in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme as very good and the evaluations are quite stable in time.

All classes in *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme were attended by 57.14% students in Spring 2022, 84.31% in Fall 2021, and 71.88% in Spring 2021, a larger share of classes - 38.1%, 15.69, and 25.78% accordingly, a smaller share of classes - 4.76%, 0% and 1.56%. Students rated their work on average 8.62, 9.1, and 9.02 points accordingly.

Reviews of specific teachers are full of admiration for their personalities and ability to convey the material, for the teachers' involvement and help, although in several courses the students lacked a practical dimension or time to prepare for independent tasks, consistency or organization during the lecture, or the study literature turned out to be uninterestingly written, although relevant. Students highly valued the lecture recordings made during the pandemic period as a learning material, as well as the provided cases for studies.

The data of graduating students' survey (Exit) for Spring 2022 and 2021, show that for students the content of the study courses corresponded to the purpose of the study programme - 3.25 in 2022 and 3.64 in 2021 at 4 point scale; lectures, seminars, laboratory work and other study activities were well organized - 3.00 in both years; the study load was just right for students - 3.50 in 2022 and 3.21 in 2021; opportunities were created to learn various foreign languages - 2.33 in 2022 and 2.56 in 2021; if necessary, students could consult with teachers - 3.50 in 2022 and 3.86 in 2021; at the university, it was possible to choose minor studies - 3.00 in 2022 and 2.80 in 2021; the administrative staff provided the necessary assistance - 3.38 in 2022 and 3.85 in 2021; the equipment of auditoriums, laboratories and other study rooms was adequate - 3.38 in 2022 and 3.71 in 2021; study materials and literature sources were available in the library and/or in a virtual environment 3.63 in 2022

and 3.93 in 2021; the university provided the possibility of international mobility - 3.83 in 2022 and 3.40 in 2021; students completed all study assignments - 3.88 in 2022 and 3.64 in 2021 and spent enough time studying - 4.00 in 2022 and 3.57 in 2021; overall average - 3.41 in 2022 and 3.47 in 2021 from 4. 62.5% of students evaluate VMU input for their professional career as good, 12.5% - better than bad, others were doubted.

Overall, the in *Corporate Strategic Management* studies are evaluated as very good. Some aspects from the survey as foreign language or Minor studies possibilities are mostly relevant to the first cycle studies, thus evaluated in lower scores.

From 4 *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme students who discontinued their studies in 2020-2022 and completed the specific survey for these cases, all discontinued their studies on their own initiative. 2 students stopped their studies due to deteriorating health, 1 student realized that he had chosen the wrong study programme/specialty, 1 student could no longer balance his studies with work and family situation. Dropping out could have been avoided with good health or less study load due to lack of time, but comments indicated that all possible information and support was received to avoid this, and students are grateful that the faculty did their part - the administration work was rated 4 or 3.67 out of 4. All students intend to study in the future and specifically at VMU, all are currently employed. These students liked the competence of the teachers, their initiative in presenting lecture materials (all teachers teach their course clearly, logically and from the heart), and the cosy environment. They liked the study content, which responds to current trends, and liked the problem-based learning. It was outlined, that the teachers are friendly and knowledgeable in their field, in the lectures relevant information is provided using existing practical situations.

In the graduating students' survey (EXIT) of 2021 for the second cycle study programme *Agri-Food Business Management*, the students provided good evaluation of the study programme quality (3.33 out of 4 points). When asked to name the weaknesses, some of the students indicated insufficient communication of several teachers. In particular, the content of the study courses and compliance with the aim of the study programme were rated enough high by 3.67 points (out of 4 points). Students indicated that lectures, seminars, laboratory work and other study activities were good organized and study load was right (3.67 out of 4 points). The middling aspects were identified in the opportunity to consult with teachers and receive assistance from administrative staff (2.67 out of 4 points). Some students confirm that they put too little effort in communication with supervisors. The availability of study materials and literature sources in library and online environment was also rated as middling by the students (2.67 out of 4 points). The lower evaluation was about the opportunity to learn various foreign languages (2.33 out of 4 points). The possibility to participate in international mobility (3.67 out of 4 points) gave the higher evaluations from the students. The students indicated that they study abroad by Erasmus programme and students named that it was an advantage of studying abroad. Summarizing the student surveys, it was identified that the general opinion about studies and their organization is good, but there are visible areas for improvement, such as improving communication between teachers and students, where the lowest points are got.

In the graduating students' survey (EXIT) of 2021 and 2022 for the second cycle study programme *Agricultural Business Management*, the students provided good evaluation of the study programme quality 3 point (out of 4 points) in 2021 and 3.5 point (out of 4 points) in 2022. Positive trends are visible, which could have been influenced by SPC's activities in improving the study program. When asked to name the weaknesses, most of the students

indicated that nothing was missing. In particular, the content of the study courses and compliance with the aim of the study programme were rated high by 3.75 points (out of 4 points) in 2021 and 2022. Students indicated that lectures, seminars, laboratory work and other study activities were well organized (3.5 out of 4 points; in 2021 and 2022) and study load was right (3.75 in 2021 and 3.5 in 2022; out of 4 points). The exiting student survey (EXIT) shows that the students have the opportunity to consult with teachers and receive assistance from administrative staff. The students rated the opportunity to consult with the teachers by 3.75 points (out of 4 points) in 2021 and 4 points (out of 4 points) in 2022; the assistance by administrative staff – by 4 points in 2021 and 2022. The availability of study materials and literature sources in library and online environment was also rated high by the students (3.75 out of 4 points in 2021 and 2022). The lower evaluation was about the opportunity to learn various foreign languages (2.75 in 2021 and 3 in 2022; out of 4 points). The possibility to participate in international mobility (4 out of 4 points in 2021 and 2022) gave the higher evaluations from the students. Some students shares that he completed both bachelor's and master's studies at VMU, if he decides to study in PhD studies, it will also be at VMU. In 2022, the majority of students assessed the possibility of distance learning as an advantage²⁰². Summarizing the student surveys, they revealed that the general opinion about studies and their organization is good, many areas are rated excellent, the lowest score is the opportunity to learn foreign languages. It should be noted that language courses are not included in the programme's study plan, , and students have possibilities to learn languages as extra study courses.

The main tool for monitoring teaching quality in *International Executive MBA* programme is the online survey that students complete after each course or project. This gives a rating of the teacher's performance on a scale of 1 (worst) to 5 (best), where the standard to be met is at least 4. Ratings by courses for the last 3 cohorts average is consistently in the range of 4.4-4.6 out of 5, even in a case of new teachers - beginners. The ratings and accompanying (anonymous) student comments are shared with the professor. If a rating is at or slightly below 4 (only several cases in past three years), the Dean and Programme Director notify the teacher that improvement is needed and help develop an action plan for improvement based on the specific feedback. If the rating doesn't improve or falls lower, BMI's policy is to replace the teacher.

Students are also surveyed if the cost of the programme is compared to the quality of education they received so far, how they would rate the overall value for money of the *International Executive MBA* programme, so the rating were 8.4 in 2021 at 10 point scale, 8.5 in 2020, and 8.2 in 2019. Asked how they rate the quality of the programme, scored 8.6, 8.6, and 8.7 accordingly; and how likely they would recommend the *International Executive MBA* to a friend or colleague – 9.0, 8.9, and 9.0 from 10 accordingly. It shows that students of this study programme highly value its added vale and are content with the programmes quality.

In second cycle studies in Management field a qualitative approach of gathering students' opinions on study quality is also applied. It is so because the number of students to gather data from is not so big, as well as because deeper insights and testimonials are helpful 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 *Corporate Strategic Management* study programme are asked to fill in answers to several open questions in the questionnaire about all courses and the study

²⁰² A more comprehensive analysis of the survey data is available on VMU internal information system.

programme overall. The testimonials and feedback sessions are common practice in each cohort of students in Management field study programmes. 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 7.3.

Summarizing the named advantages of Management studies, the schedule suitable for working busy professionals, youthful staff and its involvement, open, friendly 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, more explanation of the preparation of Final Thesis. 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, requirements of the Final Thesis of Management field study programmes were unified and reviewed, more contact time is devoted to their explanation, defence procedures are more carefully implemented.

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

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

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Study aims, outcomes and content</i>		
No	Recommendation	Actions taken by the HEI
Corporate Strategic Management study programme		
7.	A more comprehensive interaction with the representatives of the industry and local organizations – with the assistance of the Alumni club – could be needed in further programme design activities.	At the faculty level, on the premises of the Graduate studies department, after discussing with the heads of all SPCs, a decision was made to coordinate the events of the study programmes to the companies, thus expanding students' opportunities to get to know more different businesses and institutions. Also, at the faculty level, more active involvement of alumni and practitioners in study programmes were organized (e.g., each year Alumni day is organized, during which relations with the FEM alumni network were renewed), as well as constant discussions with alumni representatives in SPC's meetings.
International Executive MBA study programme		
6.	As an important part of the programme development and quality assurance there should be established a formal Alumni-Social Partners Committee. It should meet on a regular basis with an agenda and minutes recorded. Its advice would	Social partner is included to SPC activities. According to Description of Procedure for Study Quality Assurance at VMU, SPC gathers at least twice a year and keeps minutes. All material is provided on website, as well marketing campaigns take place constantly, trying to get in contacts of potential students, mostly via networking at the executive level.

<p>help to continually improve and update the programme. This is the norm in most universities.</p> <p>Not enough potential students know about this master programme and what it offers; therefore advertising should be considerably improved, particularly across the Baltic states and the rest of Europe, to enhance recruitment and student quality.</p>	<p>All information is provided in English and accessible for international students and applicants as well.</p>
<p>Agri-Food Business Management study programme</p>	
<p>9. It is recommended that all partner universities work closely together for the purpose of internal quality assurance, sharing best practices and taking advantage if the partnership.</p>	<p>Signed contract by the Rectors of the three universities (EMU, LLU, ASU – since 2019 VMU Agriculture Academy) on 21 October 2016, includes the details of process organisation of the study programme, responsibilities of each partner and the functions of the Joint SPC. Within the scope of its functions, the Joint SPC is continuously involved in the monitoring and further development of the implementation of this study programme, as well as in the quality control of the implementation, involving all the teachers working in this study programme and the business partners who share their good practices with the students.</p> <p>Teachers from partner universities participate in joint SPC meetings, jointly organize events and participate in joint events. Through these meetings and events, teachers and administration discuss issues related to the study programme and share good experiences.</p> <p>There is a continuous exchange of information, both to improve the quality of the programme and to further strengthen the partnership, both by inviting partner representatives to events at their universities and to collaborate on various projects.</p> <p>One such example of exchange of good practices is the submission of a joint project on 20-01-2019 Horizon 2020 Framework Programme Call: H2020-RUR-2019-1 Proposal: 862873 - COACHINN. A second example of successful cooperation is the joint project "FARMENT - From Farmer to Entrepreneur", implemented in 2017-2018.</p> <p>Project of the Interreg Baltic Sea Region Programme 2014-2020 "Unlocking the Potential of Bio-based Value</p>

	<p>Chains in the Baltic Sea Region" Project Acronym: BalticBiomass4Value; ProjectNumber:#R095).</p> <p>In 2019 the evaluation of the study programme's content was performed in the framework of the project No.8.2.3.0/18/A/009 supported by ESF funding "Expert services from industries for evaluation of the content of study programmes and making recommendations", in which Latvian and foreign experts have evaluated overall content of this programme, as well as all improvements, made in accordance with the provided recommendations of external evaluation, which took place in 2018 Lithuania, and the conclusion was positive for its further accreditation.</p>
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Please provide main results of the self-evaluation in the area of
Study quality management and publicity

Strengths

- The main procedures for quality assurance and Management 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 Management 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. Management 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 national and VMU level surveys from Management 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.
- It is planned to pursue further integration and coordination of the quality management of Management field studies and the improvement of study programmes through faculties' joint efforts via regular meetings to address common strategic and study quality management issues.

