



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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## EVALUATION REPORT

### STUDY FIELD

### MANAGEMENT

at Alytaus kolegija

#### Expert panel:

1. Assoc. Prof. dr. Jannis Angelis (panel chairperson), *academic*;
2. Ass. Prof. Dr. Giacomo Marzi, *academic*;
3. Prof. Dr. Iveta Ludviga, *academic*;
4. Mrs. Saulė Motiejūnienė, *representative of social partners*;
5. Mr. Matthew Kitching, *students' representative*.

Evaluation coordinator – *Mr. Gustas Straukas*

Report language – English

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## Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	<b><i>Company Administration</i></b>	<b><i>Business Management</i></b>
State code	6531LX120	6531LX004
Type of studies	College	College
Cycle of studies	First	First
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time (3 years); Part-time (4 years);	Full-time (3 years); Part-time (4 years);
Credit volume	180	180
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Professional Bachelor degree in Business Management	Professional Bachelor degree in Business Management
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study	2019-04-10	2012-08-24

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluations of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are based on the Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport on 17 July 2019, Order No. V-835, and are carried out according to the procedure outlined in the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) on 31 December 2019, Order [No. V-149](#).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study process and to inform the public about the quality of studies.

The evaluation process consists of the main following stages: 1) *self-evaluation and self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by HEI*; 2) *site visit of the expert panel to the HEI*; 3) *production of the external evaluation report (EER) by the expert panel and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of this external evaluation report of the study field SKVC takes a decision to accredit study field either for 7 years or for 3 years. If the field evaluation is negative then the study field is not accredited.

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).

The study field and cycle are **accredited for 3 years** if one of the evaluation areas is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

The study field and cycle are **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

### 1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC on 31 December 2019, [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the expert panel on 9th of May, 2023.

**Prof. dr. Jannis Angelis (panel chairperson)** of AFEO division, KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden;

**Ass. Prof. Dr. Giacomo Marzi**, IMT School for Advanced Studies Lucca, Italy;

**Prof. Dr. Iveta Ludviga**, RISEBA University of Applied Sciences, Latvia;

**Mrs. Saulė Motiejūnienė**, Director, UAB "Linolitas", Lithuania;

**Mr. Matthew Klitching**, Lancaster University, UK.

### 1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

The documentation submitted by the HEI follows the outline recommended by SKVC. Along with the SER and annexes, the following additional documents have been provided by the HEI before, during and/or after the site visit:

No.	Name of the document
1.	-

### 1.4. BACKGROUND OF MANAGEMENT FIELD STUDIES AT ALYTAUS KOLEGIJA

Alytus College (AK) is a public institution of higher education that provides higher education and professional qualifications. It seeks to support the needs of the Lithuanian economy, develop technology use and applied research activities, provide continuous education, upskilling and retraining. AK has 12 study programmes in 10 different fields, of which two programmes in the management field. Their goal is to prepare a management specialist, able to practically apply the knowledge acquired during his/her studies, and to successfully compete in the modern labour market. The Faculty Council adopts decisions on issues of study organisation and science, assessment of teacher academic activities and other issues of performance. The faculty of Information Technologies and Management organises and implements the process of research and studies, while the department is a division of the faculty that organises and implements the studies and applied research. Internationalisation is pursued through several centres (ie Information and Self-study Centre, the simulation company, Applied Research and Project Management Centre, Alytus Regional Open Access Centre, Regional Technology Centre). Staff and student mobility is managed through the international relations and projects Centre, Marketing Centre and Career Centre. The Company Administration (CA) study programme started in 2019, while the Business Management (BM) study programme started earlier in 2012. The content of both study programmes has evolved over time, based on labour market changes and needs in general and more specifically in accordance with findings of the 2016 international external evaluation. The study programmes were previously accredited for a three-year period.

## II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

*Management study field and first cycle at Alytaus kolegija is given **positive** evaluation.*

*Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas.*

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	3
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	<b>Total:</b>	<b>22</b>

\*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies.

2 (satisfactory) - the area meets the minimum requirements, and there are fundamental shortcomings that need to be eliminated.

3 (good) - the area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings.

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings;

5 (excellent) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

### III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

#### 3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

*Study aims, outcomes and content were assessed in accordance with the following indicators:*

*3.1.1. 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.*

As stated in the provided SER and also gathered by the review panel through interviews in our visit, the needs of society and the labour market are given priority when designing and offering the two study programmes. External stakeholders are included in the development and changes of the study programmes. Modules have been moved from electives to mandatory status, for instance Corporate Social Responsibility is made mandatory and the study subject Environmental and Human Safety moved to general study. There are ongoing changes within the offered modules so that content corresponds better with societal and labour market demands. The market demand for language (primarily English), is concentrated in the language teachings, with external or visiting teachers offering modules in English. AK reaches out to stakeholders about conditions and learnings in internships, seeking knowledge to modify programme modules as needed so that student skills are appropriate.

*3.1.2. 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*

The study programme aims and outcomes of both the CA and BM programmes in relation to the Alytaus kolegija mission in terms of objectives and strategy are aligned, as noted in the SER provided and statements from staff and AK leadership during the review panel visit. Student IT competences are good according to the social partners interviewed. It was noted by the panel that students may need further skills in languages, and this not only in English. This is currently primarily located in language modules and those given by visiting faculty and teachers. It was also noted that so called third age activities are held in the AK facilities, and these may be integrated into programmes as possible.

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

The study programmes are aligned with the set legal requirements as seen in Tables No. 1 and No. 2 as per the general requirements for first cycle study programmes at College level (professional bachelor).

**Table No. 1** Study programme Company Administration compliance.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>General legal requirements</b>	<b>Company Administration programme</b>
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	147 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	39 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	33%
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	46%

**Table No. 2** Study programme Business Management compliance.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>General legal requirements</b>	<b>Business Management programme</b>
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	180 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	126 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	60 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	30 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	9 ECTS



Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	33%
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	46%

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

There is a combination of assessment methods in use for the programme modules. Students are given formal examinations grades as well as feedback on areas of further improvement. At the beginning of each module the assessment used is described in detail, as well as the feedback students will receive. This is aligned with the stated aims and learning objectives of the two programmes and is suitable for the given student body.

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

The two study programmes are given in full-time and part-time formats. The programmes offer a combination of core and elective courses, with opportunities for internationalisation and practice experience through three internships. Modules have a theoretical part and then a practical component (e.g. learn bookkeeping concepts and methods, then apply them in a fictive company). Different modules provide information and understanding of different aspects of the business. They then merge in the internships and final project. It was noted that there is a need to ensure that individual modules are linked content-wise more explicitly to ensure accumulation of knowledge, and to avoid possible repetition between modules. The developed competences through the two programmes were supported by the interviewed alumni and social partners.

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

To personalise the two study programmes, students can choose from optional courses which are approved. Customisation opportunity exists in the form of module electives, as part of a pre-set elective list. The opportunity for personalised education is formally listed and provided to the students (described in the provided SER p.14), allowing for their selecting, and planning as they prefer. Review panel interviews with students and alumni both raised the issue that electives subject-wise are suitable but that more modules or electives in English or even other foreign languages (e.g. German) should be made available.

### *3.1.7. Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements*

There is a dedicated thesis board with at least five members, including academic and practitioner representatives. The structure and procedure is set by the graduation thesis qualification board. Requirements and provisions follow the set formal criteria, with respective study programmes (Company Administration and Business Management) having their own focus and demonstrated student capabilities. The academic and practitioner supervisors communicate throughout the thesis to ensure an appropriate thesis quality. The grade includes considerations of content and presentation. Final grade takes into account assessment of all thesis board members. The evaluation of the final thesis has a balanced membership, seeking to ensure academic rigour and practical relevance.

#### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

##### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Changing program modules content as needed based on labour market demand and skills requirements.
2. Close collaboration and involvement of external stakeholders beyond the internships provided, in taught modules as well as in the final thesis.

##### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Insufficient (but available) access to English modules (beyond foreign language subject courses) for local students to fulfil both student and labour market demand.

## **3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES**

***Links between science (art) and study activities were assessed in accordance with the following indicators:***

### ***3.2.1. 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***

The collaborative efforts between teachers and students at Alytus College (AK) foster an environment rich in innovative ideas, valuable insights, and productive teamwork. However, there is room for improvement in the ways AK engages students in applied research. Potential enhancements could include diversifying participation opportunities in national and international scientific events, encouraging joint research and publications with teachers as co-authors, and incorporating applied research or projects into graduation theses and other independent work.

In addition, AK teachers are active in research projects, seminars, conferences, and activities organised by various associations and organisations. The expertise of AK lecturers is significant on both national and regional levels, but it may be beneficial to further emphasise their contributions in the Management field study program. Examples of such contributions include participation in Erasmus+ programs that are already in place but should be enhanced,

especially asking the permanent faculty to visit institutions abroad frequently to give AK a more international perspective.

AK faculty overseeing the program collaborate with numerous partners, such as Alytus Region AB, UAB, IĮ, MB, VŠĮ, universities, colleges, and vocational schools. This partnership could be strengthened by expanding cooperation in applied research, professional development events, and renewal of study programs. The applied research conducted by teachers and students contributes to the modernization and ongoing improvement of the Management field study programs. Integrating applied research can bolster the quality of education and equip students with practical knowledge and skills. Nonetheless, it is crucial to regularly evaluate and update the research methods to ensure the effectiveness of these programs.

In conclusion, while the science and art activities carried out by Alytus College for the Management field study program are adequate and effective, there is potential for further enhancement. By implementing the suggested improvements, AK can better contribute to the development of research and art within the field of study.

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

Alytus College (AK) demonstrates a robust connection between its curriculum and recent advancements in science, art, and technology. To maintain this link, the college sector participates in applied research, professional development events, and updates study programs, reflecting the latest progress in various fields. However, there may be opportunities to further strengthen this connection by exploring additional areas of research or expanding interdisciplinary collaborations.

The faculty overseeing the programs collaborates closely with external partners, universities, colleges, and vocational schools across the country. This cooperation focuses on applied research, professional development events, and renewal of study programs. To optimise these partnerships, AK could consider fostering more extensive networks and sharing best practices among institutions.

AK has implemented a "Digital Literacy" module for both teaching staff and students in order to enhance their understanding and proficiency in digital technologies, online communication, and information management. The goal is to empower participants with the necessary skills to navigate the digital world effectively and responsibly, as well as adapt to the ever-evolving digital landscape.

In addition, AK actively involves students in applied research, offering opportunities to participate in national and international scientific events, prepare reports and publications, and present findings at conferences and seminars. To further enhance student engagement, AK could explore more diverse research opportunities, provide mentorship programs, or establish research-based extracurricular activities.

The collaborative efforts between teachers and students at AK create an environment that promotes innovation, insight, creativity, and effective teamwork. This atmosphere contributes to maintaining a curriculum that is current and relevant to the most recent developments in science, art, and technology. Regular assessments and updates of these collaborative efforts can help ensure their continued success and adaptability to changing trends.

In conclusion, the evidence suggests that the college sector at Alytus College is successfully achieving its goal of establishing and maintaining a strong link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science, art, and technology. Nevertheless, by implementing the suggested improvements, AK can further enhance this connection and better prepare students for their future careers.

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

AK provides a conducive environment for students to get involved in scientific activities consistent with their study cycle. The college involves students in applied research in various ways such as consistent and systematic involvement in the implementation of research, applied, and experimental activities in the study process. The students also participate in scientific discussions with Lithuanian and foreign scientists, present scientific reports at national and international conferences and seminars and prepare reports and publications for national and international events.

AK provides opportunities for students to participate in national and international scientific events. The college encourages students to participate in international entrepreneurship competitions, exhibitions, and mobility programs. Students are also involved in applied research by participating in annual entrepreneurship competitions in the field of social sciences such as "Išminčius", "PROFDAY", "Entrepreneurship Mania", and "Learn-calculate-memorise". Furthermore, students guided by lecturers participate in the national examinations of Economics and the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania "General Campaign for the Verification of Legal Knowledge", and fairs of simulation companies.

In conclusion, AK provides a conducive environment for students to get involved in scientific activities consistent with their study cycle. The college offers numerous opportunities for students to participate in national and international scientific events. The involvement of students in scientific and applied research enables them to develop skills, knowledge, and competencies that are crucial for their academic and professional development.

### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. The educational institution encourages and facilitates students' involvement in scientific and applied research through a variety of opportunities, such as participating in national

and international events, working on research projects with faculty, and preparing publications.

2. The institution emphasises collaboration between students and faculty in research and encourages students to take an active role in shaping the direction of research.
3. The institution offers a range of practical opportunities for students to apply their knowledge in real-world settings, such as entrepreneurship competitions and fairs.

## **(2) Weaknesses:**

1. Need to improve partnerships with organisations from other countries to facilitate employee exchanges. This allows staff members to work in different cultural environments, learn new languages, and broaden their professional networks. Some efforts have been made in this sense but we suggest allocating resources to this aspect.
2. Encourage staff to take on short-term or long-term assignments in different countries. These assignments can be project-based or rotational in nature, providing employees with opportunities to develop new skills and gain valuable international experience.

## **3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT**

*Student admission and support were evaluated according to the following indicators:*

### *3.3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of student selection and admission criteria and process*

Detailed entry requirements are set out on the College's website and are therefore accessible for applicants and other stakeholders. Admissions to the College are governed by the Regulations of Students' Admission to Alytus College, the Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Science and Higher Education and the Description of the Procedure for Establishing a Competitive Queue for Applicants to State-Funded Places for Undergraduate and Integrated Studies and Applicants for Study Grants.

In order to be eligible for the studies in one of the management field study programmes, applicants must have passed at least one national matriculation exam and have at least a secondary education. The competitive entry score for the management degree studies is based on the cumulative score of Mathematics (coefficient - 0.4), History or Information Technologies, Geography, or a foreign language (coefficient - 0.2), Lithuanian language and Literature (coefficient - 0.2), as well as the results of the matriculation exams or the annual grades of a subject that does not overlap with other subjects (coefficient - 0.2). Additional, national, requirements are in place for those applicants seeking to have tuition covered by the Government.

In accordance with the Procedure for Establishing the Competitive Queue for Applicants to State-Funded Places of First cycle and Integrated Studies and Applicants for Study Grants in 2022, applicants for non-state funded places can also be awarded additional points for certain, specified, activity. The award of the points is set out in the Regulations of Students' Admission to Alytus College and decisions are made by the Academic Council. As well as information detailed on the College website, the institution engages in a range of outreach and promotional

activity, including through open days, fairs, printed publications and visits to schools and other vocational education centres.

The College has witnessed a significant drop in applications between 2020 (275) and 2022 (86). This includes a demonstrable drop in the number of applicants who selected this institution as their first preference 70 in 2020, compared to only 26 in 2022. The College attributes this to the decision not to admit students to the Business Management programme in 2022. The institution also witnessed poor performance in the maths matriculation exam, where 30% of those taking the exam failed. Given it accounts for 40% of the cumulative entry tariff for competitive entry, this had a further negative effect. Despite this, overall admission to the study field held relatively stable compared to 2020 (and in fact increased from 2021). However, the average competitive score has fallen 0.48 over the same period.

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

Students seeking recognition of foreign qualifications are required to provide evidence of SKVC recognising these qualifications and credits. The College also publishes entry specific requirements on its website. In addition, the Alytus College International Relations and Projects Centre carries out an initial assessment of the documents as well as internal and external verification of the sources. This check considers the completeness and veracity of the documentation submitted, as well as ensuring it aligns with stated entry requirements. Evidence of language competency (TOEFL or IELTS) are also checked as part of this process, with the possibility that an interview will be scheduled to provide an additional check.

Students seeking exemptions through the accreditation of prior learning may do so under the Description of the Procedure for Crediting Study Results. Under these circumstances prior learning may be accredited where it constitutes at least 75 per cent of the intended subject or unit of study. In addition, no more than 50 per cent of the overall study programme may be exempted and the thesis and final examinations will not be considered for exemption. When discussing accreditation of prior learning, the SER states that: *Not more than 75 percent of the study programme intended to study are credited; the credited part may contain subjects of another (lower) study cycle or type of study (training) program in comparison with the study program to be studied but their volume may not exceed 50 per cent of the volume of the main programme intended to study.* However, during interviews at the site visit, the College clarified that lower cycle study may not be used towards courses at a higher level.

During the period under consideration 21 students had credit recognised, and one further student had the application for accreditation of prior learning refused.

The institution has appropriate systems and policies in place to accreditation prior experiential (or non-formal) learning. However, during the previous 3 years no students made such requests.



### *3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students*

The College introduces students to mobility opportunities during the introductory week, including the Erasmus+ mobility scheme. Students who have previously participated in mobility schemes also present to new students about their experiences. This information is reinforced through email and students can seek additional advice and support from the International Relations and Project Centre.

The College has had relatively modest engagement with mobility programmes. As such, one full-time and eight part-time students (predominantly from Turkey) studied at the institution under incoming mobility arrangements and 1 student attended VIVES University of Applied Sciences in Belgium for outgoing mobility. A further student is currently spending a semester at Kanagawa University in Japan. Students informed the team that these opportunities were well promoted and supported but certain challenges (family and caring responsibilities, language and employment) prevented them for participating to a greater extent.

The College is also taking an innovative approach to mobility, where possible, for instance through the delivery of 5 intensive blended programmes that have engaged 78 students from different programmes. These students are studying online for one week and then attended the College through an incoming mobility for one week on campus. The same programmes are already scheduled to take place again in 2023/24.

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

The College has a wide range of student support services in place to assist students. These include careers support provided by careers specialists who offer consultations and assistance in job search, CV writing and career planning. The College has also developed a dedicated website that houses career resources on these topics, as well as advertising related vacancies and providing analysis on labour market conditions. In addition to the website, the College has a career management information system (CMIS) in place that enables students to engage in interactive career counselling and sit self-assessment personality and aptitude tests. Students were satisfied with this support, which the expert panel considered was well organised, especially considering the size of the College.

The institution also has a wide range of scholarship opportunities available to students, which are outlined in the AK Scholarship Award Regulations. These include the incentive, orphan's, mobility, one-time social and social scholarships, the latter funded by the State. There is also financial support in place for students with disabilities and students are free to ask for a single instance of financial support if there is an unexpected situation, including a request to decrease the study fee. In total, 45 students received one or more forms of scholarship in 2022. The Alytus College fund also provides payment for active participation in different student activities and senior students receive payment for their participation in activities that support the College. Students report that they consider the range of financial support available to be

extensive and the majority of students the team met believed it surpassed support provided by other institutions.

The College has an active students' union and an agreement to provide an annual budget for the union of between 2000 and 4000 euros. Students confirmed that they view the range of social programmes as broad and high quality.

Psychological support for students is provided through a partnership with a certified clinical and health psychologist, cognitive and behavioural psychotherapy therapist, and a Merited Healthcare Worker. Assistance can be provided concerning a very wide range of issues including anxiety, depression, physical illness, loneliness and difficulties with personal relationships.

### *3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling*

A wide range of study information is made available to students, initially through induction in the first week of studies. Then subsequently through a wide range of communication channels including Moodle, the institution's virtual learning environment, email, presentations and counselling from group tutors, lecturers and centre leaders.

Information provided includes detail about the College's programmes, their organisation and documents regulating them, length of studies, modes, optional and alternative subjects, study schedules, calendars, students' rights and responsibilities, incentives, penalties, achievement assessment and criteria, the study outcome assessment system, academic mobility and scholarships. Each academic group is assigned a tutor by the Faculty Dean. These tutors are responsible for ensuring that information provided by the College reaches their tutees.

Teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that Moodle shells contain a description of the subject taught with stated goals and outcomes, methods, the teaching/learning assessment system, reference literature and information sources for students' independent learning, adapted lecture notes, tasks of independent work and exercises, presents self-assessment questions and tests. It was clear from meetings at the site visit that staff understand their responsibilities with respect to Moodle and students confirmed that this information is routinely provided.

The Management Department is responsible for coordinating student counselling (consultation) sessions and these are published on the College website. Students reported that they have access to staff, that any consultations take place in a timely manner and the sessions help students in their studies.

### *Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:*

#### *(1) Strengths:*

1. The use of innovative attempts to grow inbound mobility
2. The comprehensive range of financial support available to students
3. The extensive range of careers support available for students



## ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. The small number of students participating in outbound mobility

### **3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT**

***Studying, student performance and graduate employment were evaluated according to the following indicators:***

*3.4.1. 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*

The study programmes in the field of management are being carried out in full-time and part-time modes of studies. The length of the full-time study mode is three years and the length of the part-time study mode is four years. Students have a possibility to combine studies with professional and other employment. It is possible to have personalised full-time and part-time study calendars for a study year. It is indicated the duration of semesters, types of internships and their completion, examinations, holidays and periods for preparation and defence of graduation theses. The student schedule does not exceed 8 academic hours per day. The schedule can have exceptions in the cases when a lecturer-practitioner is invited to teach the study subject.

The mode of studies consists of 40 percent of contact work (theory, exercises, and consultations), of 60 percent of independent studies (60 percent), which are combined with the provision of additional consultations. The average number of contact hours per week is 20. (SER.p.34)

The examination session is 2-4 weeks which takes place at the time indicated in the study calendar. To prepare for the exam students have at least 2 calendar days. There are 2-6 examinations on average during the examination session. The scope of each study subject is determined by systematically assessing the student's workload required to achieve the expected learning outcomes of studies.

Students of the part-time study mode have at least two sessions per academic year. For them are also organised introductory sessions and consultations when the tasks of independent work, instructions for tasks and deadlines for their completion are presented. The main study modes are practical work, individual or team projects, consultations and seminars.

Teachers are applying traditional study methods and innovative educational and research development methods such as case and situation analysis, project preparation, discussions with professional practitioners and researchers, simulation of managerial processes, task solving, document analysis, demonstration and analysis of practical examples, solving real problems in practical activities, creation of insights and development scenarios.

The teaching process is organised in the form of teamwork, active participation and dialogues. Teachers are inviting social partners-practitioners to teach separate topics of special study subjects or to hold seminars and are organising educational visits to the companies of social partners. Such a method is helping to integrate practical business issues into the subject taught.

The teachers at Alytus College are using blended forms of learning. The courses of study programmes are uploaded on the virtual learning environment Moodle. Students have possibilities not only for independent learning but also for communication and cooperation in a virtual environment with teachers and other learners.

Practical training in companies is an integral part of the study programme. Internship is regulated by the procedure for organising, preparing, submitting, defending and assessment of AK student internships in organisations. Social partners are satisfied with students' skills. Principles, forms and the system of evaluation of learning outcomes are presented in the Order of Assessment of Learning Achievements of AK (SER p.35). Student achievement evaluation criteria consists of evaluation of theoretical knowledge of the study subject (individual topics) , practical implementation of the subject knowledge and overall level of professional ability. Theoretical knowledge allows students to understand, to interpret and to evaluate the relationship between individual components of the phenomenon or process as a whole. Practical knowledge allows them to evaluate and to apply knowledge analysing practical situations.

The evaluation system is focused on cumulative evaluation. The cumulative evaluation consists of interim settlements and the examination or project evaluation scores. A task is prepared for the examination; it indicates the goal of the examination and the learning outcomes of the study subject whose level of achievement will be assessed during the examination.

For students independent work the evaluation system is focused on cumulative evaluation too. This allows the systematic evaluation of students' achievements throughout the semester. At the beginning of the semester and during the first lecture of the study subject the teacher is informing students about the system of evaluation of the learning outcomes specified in the order of evaluation of learning outcomes. Students are receiving information about the components of cumulative evaluation and their relative weight in the general system of evaluation of knowledge and skills. It is indicated the minimum score for interim settlements, in the absence of which the examination or differential test may not be taken.

The teachers are giving the tasks for student's independent work and students are learning independently in accordance with the reference literature without the direct supervision of the teachers, but the teachers are providing consultations. Students' independent work includes preparation for seminars, tests, final tests and examinations, individual and group independent tasks, preparation of independent research papers, reports, professional bachelor's theses or projects.

There is developed separate requirements or procedures for the organisation and evaluation of independent work: AK Methodological Requirements for Preparation of Independent Work and Graduation Theses, Procedure for Organization of Alytus College Practical Training (cognitive, professional, final), Preparation, Submission, Defence and Assessment of Reports (SER p. 36). Students have a possibility to continue compensatory (post-college) or additional studies at university in the same or a contiguous field after graduating from the College.

In conclusion, the teaching and learning process at AK is organised well and ensures the gaining and consolidation of practical skills necessary for the future specialist in the labour market. Student achievement evaluation is based on clearly formulated criteria and allows an appropriate and reliable reflection of the level of knowledge, abilities and practical skills that the student has achieved during the study period.

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

Teachers and the academic community are ready to work with students of various individual needs. Since 2012 AK staff have participated in the project “Increasing the Accessibility of Studies” co-financed by the European Union Structural Funds and implemented by the State Studies Foundation.

Twelve College employees have acquired specific knowledge about the types of disabilities and related special needs, technical assistance tools and environmental adaptation, individualization of the study process and the curriculum, adaptation of tasks, forms of settlement and achievement evaluation.

The Official Guidelines for the Adaptation of Studies to Individual Needs was prepared during this project. There is a coordinator for students with special needs who provides comprehensive assistance and consultations. Students with special needs have the opportunity to individualise the study process. An individual study plan meets the individual needs of the student. Plan is determined in which the sequence of the subjects has to be studied and evaluation during the semester is determined. Also there is a possibility to choose the appropriate intensity.

Premises are adopted for students with special needs and students with visual impairments can use special computerised workstations in the library. There is the possibility for students with disabilities to receive targeted benefits to meet special needs since 2012. Targeted benefits (184 Eur per month) are received by the disabled, who have no more than 45 per cent ability to work, studying for the first time under first cycle studies. AK disabled students receive financial assistance which according to the lists and applications submitted by the College is provided by the Department of Disability Affairs: 107.55 Eur per month for special needs (students in state-funded and non-state-funded places), a targeted benefit of 134.40 Eur per semester to partially to partially reimburse study expenses (received by students studying in non-state-funded places). (SER p. 31)

Students can turn for psychological help. Alytus College has signed the partnership agreement with the certified EuroPsy clinical and health psychologist, cognitive and behavioural psychotherapy therapist, and the Merited Healthcare Worker.

In conclusion, socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs have good conditions to study at AK. Teachers have necessary skills and premises and libraries are well organised. Till now no one students with visual impairments used special computerised workstations in the library.

### *3.4.3. 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*

Principles, forms and the system of assessment of learning outcomes are presented in the Order of Assessment of Learning Achievements of AK. Monitoring of students' study progress is carried out by the teacher and the study program committee of the Management Studies field. Teacher monitors the progress of students' studies according to the measures provided for in the description of the study subject.

A cumulative assessment system is applied in the study process, which makes it possible to monitor the student's learning outcomes and plan the necessary measures for their improvement. The teacher is giving feedback to students constantly. Teachers are informing the students about the results of the evaluation of the work done as well as the evaluation of their reports.

The students have a possibility together with the teachers to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of the established evaluation criteria and the students' achievements. Students are introduced to their study achievements in a way that is acceptable to them, i. e., individually, in groups, using distance and e. teaching/learning environments. This type of feedback is appropriate and accessible to every student. In order to achieve better study results, students are provided with individual consultations by the teachers.

Program coordinators collect and analyse the results of monitoring students' study progress in the study programme performance evaluation indicators. After the end of each session, the programme coordinator provides a report which is approved by the faculty board. The generalised results of students' study progress are introduced to each teacher. In accordance with the evaluation results teachers can make changes in the content of the study subject and/or study and assessment methods.

For first-year students, their initial level of knowledge and skills is determined. They are supported by providing information, counselling, career guidance, and other services and possible specific measures/support (e.g. adaptation week for first year students, additional lectures on the development of knowledge and competencies in particular subjects, provision of tutoring and senior student/mentor services).

In conclusion, the monitoring system of students' study progress is organised well and is carried out by the teacher and the study program committee of the Management Studies field. Feedback is a priority element of the teacher-student communication process.

#### *3.4.4. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field*

Alytus College has a website of services on education for career. Students can find career planning advice, curriculum vitae and cover letter guidelines, the latest job advertisements and information on the labour market situation, vacancies, career opportunities and other useful advice. Alytus College monitors the employment of graduate students during which efforts are made to find out the situation of graduated students in the labour market.

The Career Specialist monitors the employment of graduated students by conducting direct surveys of graduated students and analysing the data collected in the Career Management Information System (CMIS). (SER P. 37). Information about students' employment in the labour market are reviewed and analysed after 6 months, 12 months and 3 years after graduation. CMIS objective monitoring of graduates' careers. The monitoring of graduated students' careers is carried out on the basis of the data provided by Sodra on graduated students working in Lithuania. Sodra data is not updated when the graduated students' careers are changed and the data is not valid and does not reflect the real employment and career situation of graduated students.

The Career Management Information system does not provide data on graduated students working abroad or self-employed. AK collects subjective data on the monitoring of graduated students' careers, which allows evaluation of the changes in the position of graduated students in the labour market and their career changes. Subjective monitoring of graduated students careers (with the permission of graduated students) is carried out by the Career Management Information system and by contacting graduated students individually 1 and 3 years after graduation. According to the subjective monitoring of the careers of graduates students who graduated in 2020 and 2021 1 year after graduation, it can be seen that graduated students have career changes as a half of graduates moved from a lower professional category to higher category positions. (SER p. 38)

The total average employment of the graduated student of the field of Management Study programmes for the last 3 years is 83 per cent, the average of the employed graduated students according to the acquired qualification level is 81 percent.

The survey of subjective career monitoring of graduated students of the field of Management Study programme in 2020–2022 was organised. Graduated students have evaluated professional preparation and acquired competencies positively. The survey of the last 3 years of employers' opinion on the professional preparation and competencies of Alytus College graduated students indicated that employers evaluated the professional preparation and competencies of graduated students positively. More than 50 percent of the employers surveyed were fully satisfied with graduated students' professional preparation and

competencies. The survey had questions about graduates' practical experience and theoretical knowledge related to their duties, about their ability to use information and communication technologies, to collect, analyse and interpret data and to know how to communicate or work with various IT tools and equipment needed to do the job, but there were no questions about what kind of practical skills needs social partners.

After graduation students have close relations with AK. They are invited to share their professional knowledge with the students during lectures or other activities, but no official Alumni organisation exists.

In conclusion, students at AK are provided with information about career planning and can receive necessary help from AK and social partners regarding it. Students career monitoring is based mostly on official data from State authorities such as SODRA, but this does not allow to know the real situation about students' employment as Sodra data is not updated when position of students is changed. No data on graduated students working abroad or self-employed are collected. Graduated students have a good relationship with the AK, but no Alumni organisation is existing.

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

Alytus College has The Code of Academic Ethics. This Code provides for academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination in order to foster academic integrity, transparency and accountability to the interested parties. The standards are based on academic integrity, responsibility, equality, non-discrimination, accountability, transparency, sustainable use of resources, academic freedom, impartiality, trust and respect in the assessment of research and study works. (SER p.39). Alytus College has the original screening system to check for plagiarism in written students' works.

In conclusion, AK has The Code of Academic Ethics and a system to check students' works against plagiarism exists.

#### *3.4.6. 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*

The students have right to an appeal, the examination procedures and application of which are provided in the Description of the Procedure of Submission and Examination of AK Appeals. It provides for procedures for lodging an appeal, forming an appeal commission and examining the appeal. There were no cases of appeals or complaints on violations of the principles of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination.

In conclusion, the Procedure of Submission and Examination of AK Appeals is existing at AK and there were no cases discussed.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. AK has various study methods and a cumulative evaluation system. There is a possibility for students to combine studies with professional and other employment.
2. Blended form of learning is used in AK and the possibilities of information and communication technologies is used in the study process. The courses of Management study programmes are uploaded on the virtual learning environment Moodle.
3. The monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress is organised well.
4. AK has close relationships with social partners and graduated students.
5. Socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs have good conditions to study at AK.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. AK has good conditions to study for students with visual impairments, but no students are studying.
2. Lack of information about graduated students' job places after graduation and no information about students working abroad or self-employed.
3. No official Alumni organisation.

## **3.5. TEACHING STAFF**

### ***Study field teaching staff were evaluated in accordance with the following indicators:***

#### ***3.5.1. 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***

The AK management field team consists of 24 teachers: 3 Doctors of Science and 21 Masters of Science Work in Management field study programmes. 71 % of the teachers in Management field study programmes have not less than 3 years of practical work experience in the taught course area. Doctors of Sciences teach 17 % of the study field courses volume of the study programmes (SER, p.42). The student/teacher ratio throughout the years of assessment on average 25 students per one full time teacher (SER, p. 41).

Many of the teachers in the Management field study programmes are active in social activities, they are members of various associations, unions, councils, and societies. SER (p.41) mentions various associations, and this was also confirmed during the discussion. The teachers are also active in applied research and during the visit teachers confirmed that the research workload is a part of their job descriptions, moreover, AK provides a good bonus for indexed publications.

SER (p. 42) claims that the uniqueness and advantage of the teachers in the study programmes of Management field studies are their great practical experience, cooperation and maintaining



close relationship with social partners, preparation, and implementation of Erasmus + programme Blended intensive Programmes, and systematic improvement of competences. Moreover, during the visit teachers named teamwork and positive organisational climate as well as students as main motivators for working at AK. Possibilities for raising qualification and international opportunities were also mentioned as motivators.

SER states that AK implements a Business Management study programme in the Management field of studies in English. The level of the foreign language proficiency of all the teachers who taught the courses in English, is not lower than B2 (SER p.42). During the visit part of the lecturers were able to communicate freely in English, therefore experts can confirm that the level of English language of teachers might be sufficient. This allows concluding that the number of the lectures in the AK study field, their experience of pedagogical and practical work, and qualifications are sufficient to achieve the learning outcomes and comply with the requirements, established in the legislation.

### *3.5.2. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring teaching staffs' academic mobility (not applicable to studies carried out by HEIs operating under the conditions of exile)*

The mobility of teachers in the Management field of study at ALYTAUS KOLEGIJA programmes takes place mainly as part of ERASMUS+ and is encouraged. During the visit teachers confirmed that they regularly receive information about mobility opportunities and that all teachers have equal opportunities for academic mobility. The results of teachers' participation in academic mobility are analysed and recognised during the assessment of annual teachers' activities reports and teachers' certification. However, Ser (p. 43, Table 13) mentions only 9 outgoing mobilities annually in 2021 and 2022. Evidently the mobility has increased recently (after COVID-19 restrictions) because during the discussion half of the teachers present were able to provide recent examples of their international mobility.

AK has signed many agreements for cooperation in the Management Studies field (40) for academic cooperation, students, and teachers/staff mobility with HEIs in 8 foreign countries (SER, p. 42.,43). Number of incoming mobility witnessed a significant increase from 9 in 2021 to 26 in 2022. Outgoing mobility of AK teachers is recognised by management as part of their annual report, but the main motivation for participating in mobility as stated by teachers is personal experience and gains for raising competencies. Teachers confirmed that they are satisfied with the conditions and will go for mobility in the future.

### *3.5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff*

Every year AK plans the need for teachers' competence improvement after the teachers express their preferences for participation in various seminars, courses, conferences, and other events. The head of the department prepares a plan of teacher's competence improvement needs which is discussed at directorate meetings and approved by the director.

Possibilities for improving competences of teaching staff include short term and long-term courses, research and applied research activities, participation in international and local



projects according to the study fields, participation in international mobility programmes, participation in seminars and conferences and possibility to intensively learn foreign languages (SER p. 45). Teachers during the visit mentioned the following examples: seminars for training digital literacy; use of MOODLE; English language; collaborative work with social partners; visits to companies with students and other examples.

During the visit, the teachers confirmed that they plan their professional development activities, for example, workshops with social partners, English language and computer courses, internships, pedagogical and psychological courses, etc... as part of their annual report. In addition, management provides different offers for improving competencies. If teachers see a need for additional training during the year, they can write a request which will be discussed and, in most cases, approved by management.

The panel experts had the impression that there are good conditions supporting any improvement in the competences of the teaching staff at AK.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Satisfied and motivated academic staff members whose motivation is mainly based on enjoying interacting with students;
2. Positive organisational climate and teamwork providing good basis for work motivation for staff;
3. Field teachers are provided with conditions for the development of competences including subject, didactic or general competences.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Academic mobility of field teachers could be more lively including incoming mobility.

## **3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES**

***Study field learning facilities and resources should be evaluated according to the following criteria:***

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

The AK is well-equipped with modern facilities, including a library with open funds, reading rooms for academic staff, and an electronic reading room. The IISC has implemented a modern book accounting, protection, and borrowing system RFID, which has made it possible to fully automate the processes of borrowing, returning, and protecting publications. The AK library resources are supplemented with scientific literature in foreign languages according to the study programs, as well as textbooks for foreign language learning and improvement of vocational foreign language skills.

Furthermore, AK has a range of information infrastructure for Lithuanian academic libraries for science and studies such as BIS, eLABa, ETD, PDB, LVB, and Lithuanian Science and Studies e-publishing system. The AK academic community uses the package of EBSCO Publishing database and has access to licensed and thematic collections of information. Additionally, students and teachers have access to full-text and bibliographic journal articles and specialised information sources in various websites.

The AK students actively use free databases and e-scientific periodicals, including *Organizacijų vadyba: sisteminiai tyrimai*, *Ekonomika ir vadyba: aktualijos ir perspektyvos*, *Economics and Management*, *Taikomoji ekonomika: sisteminiai tyrimai*, *Business, Management, and Education*, *Ekonomika*. These publications cover a wide range of subjects, including methodology of management, analysis of organisational concepts, interaction of organisation and macroeconomic environment, organisational design, human resource management, methodology of administration, marketing management, finance management, production management, and tendencies of management development. Such resources help students prepare their independent assignments qualitatively, develop their cognitive, practical, and transferable skills.

Furthermore, AK is a member of the Association of Lithuanian Science Libraries (LMBA) and Association of Lithuanian College Libraries (LKBA), which ensures access to the latest scientific literature, packages of materials of seminars, training courses, and conferences. AK teachers prepare methodological works in accordance with the Procedure for Preparation and Approval of Methodological Works of AK Teachers, which regulates the planning, organisation, and approval of methodological works of AK teachers. The Head of the Department prepares a draft of the annual plan for the preparation and updating of methodological works and submits it for the consideration of the Methodological Work Assessment and Approval Commission.

In conclusion, the AK has a well-equipped library, modern book accounting, protection and borrowing system, electronic reading room, and a range of information infrastructure for Lithuanian academic libraries. AK students and teachers have access to licensed and thematic collections of information, full-text, and bibliographic journal articles and specialised information sources in various websites, which are critical for ensuring an effective learning process.

### *3.6.2. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies*

The AK has made significant investments in ensuring that the necessary physical, informational, and financial resources are available to support the learning process. These resources include a library with open funds, reading rooms for academic staff and electronic reading rooms, which provide access to scientific literature, packages of materials of seminars, training courses, and conferences. The AK has implemented modern book accounting, protection, and borrowing systems, such as the RFID barcode technology, which has made it possible to fully automate the processes of borrowing, returning, and protecting publications. The AK library resources are supplemented with scientific literature in foreign languages according to the

study programmes, as well as with textbooks for foreign language learning and improvement of vocational foreign language skills. Additionally, the AK funds consist of over 21.9 thousand publications, including new publications intended for the implementation of study programs in the field of Management studies purchased in 2020-2022.

The AK academic community uses the package of EBSCO Publishing databases, which ensures access to licensed and thematic collections of information. Furthermore, the AK academic community takes an active part in the activities of Lithuanian virtual library (LVL), which provides access to the latest academic resources. The teachers teaching in the field of Management study programme prepare methodological works in accordance with the Procedure for Preparation and Approval of Methodological Works of AK Teachers, which regulates the planning, organisation, and approval of methodological works of AK teachers. The prepared and approved methodological material of the lecturers is provided to students in the virtual learning environment.

In conclusion, the AK Information and Independent Studies Centre has made significant efforts in planning and upgrading the resources needed to carry out the field studies, ensuring that the necessary physical, informational, and financial resources are available to support an effective learning process. These resources are continually being updated and improved, ensuring that students have access to the latest information and resources to support their learning.

### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

#### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. The AK has a well-equipped library and reading room for academic staff, along with an electronic reading room and access to electronic publications.
2. The AK accumulates scientific literature, packages of materials of seminars, training courses, and conferences, ensuring that students have access to the latest professional knowledge on peculiarities of management, marketing, human resource management, and areas of corporate social responsibility management.
3. AK has implemented a modern book accounting, protection, and borrowing system RFID. This barcode technology has made it possible to fully automate the processes of borrowing, returning, and protecting publications.

#### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. No particular weaknesses were identified.

### 3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

*Study quality management and publicity were evaluated according to the following indicators:*

#### *3.7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies*

The Study Quality Management system of Alytaus Kolegija meets the requirements of ESG and ISO 9001: 2015 standards (SER p. 55). AK considers as important the following main areas of study quality assessment: management, study planning, study organisation, study achievement assessment system, personnel, applied research and consulting services, international relations, mobility, and material and financial resources. According to the areas of assessment, a report on the activities of AK is prepared every year, which is approved by the Board of AK (SER p. 55).

During the meeting with the management team experts were told that the quality system has been improved a year ago – a new quality assurance group was formed (includes committee and subcommittees) and a head of the quality assurance introduced however, did not mention ISO 9001. Quality assurance committees work according to the process described in the Guide of QA. The new structures work very fast in case of a need. During the panel visit the head of the Quality Assurance Department confirmed that there are many people in her team and that they meet regularly, however, was not able to mention the exact number of people in the team. Another cornerstone of quality assurance at AK is the study programme committee for each programme that is responsible for the implementation of the study programme and quality assurance. According to SER (p.56) The committee of studies of Management field consists of 16 members: the chairman, 2 coordinators (teachers of the department of the study program), the dean of the faculty, 4 student representatives, 2 employers or 1 representative of social stakeholders whose professional activities are related to the study programs of Management field and their goals, 2 graduates and 3 teachers. During the visit teachers and representatives of the SER team confirmed that they meet twice a semester.

Overall, the panel experts had an impression that study quality at AK is well managed and good teaching results are achieved.

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

Social stakeholders are involved in the processes of assessment, improvement and quality assurance of the study programme; however, this involvement seems to be more of informal nature. Nobody from the social partners or alumni who were present in the discussion with experts have participated in the activities of the Programme or study field Committees. Stakeholders are involved in preparation of a self-assessment report of study field (SER, p.56), one representative was present in discussion with SER group. The stakeholders during the meeting mentioned participation in the defence commission of final thesis and guest lecturing as main examples of their involvement.

There is a possibility on the AK website for every stakeholder to register potentiality for improvement of AK activities<sup>24</sup>. The registered activities improvement potentiality is analysed, assessed and, if relevant, is included into Activities Improvement Plan. This allows all the stakeholders to participate in the improvement of AK activities to the fullest (SER., p.56). Alumni and social partners said that they know about this possibility, however, never used it. They consider direct talk with AK representatives as more effective means of communication. Students told the same – they know about it, but better choose to talk with involved parties directly.

Asked about alumni association and presence of any alumni events, discussion participants said there is no alumni association and events happen mainly informally, some have been invited by student association. Alumni expressed willingness to be more involved and would appreciate the presence of alumni association.

Alumni seem to be very dedicated to the AK, still experts had feeling that there is an untapped resource. AK could involve them more not only informally, but also in a formal way.

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

Alytaus kolegija has a very informative website where you can find all needed information about studies, quality improvement, survey results, etc., it even includes possibilities for Chat with AK. Information about quality available on the website includes Quality policy and system, evaluations of study programmes, survey results, etc...(website). However, many important sections are available only in the Lithuanian version of the website. The stakeholders can at any time fill the special form about suggestions related to quality or any other improvement which is available on the AK website, however it is available in the Lithuanian version only. There would be a suggestion, that all information in a website that is in Lithuanian language could also be in English language, especially a section devoted to MOODLE which is very relevant for foreign students. The website, however, lacks a section about research fields and research output (maybe experts were not able to find it). It could be advised to include this information as it would positively contribute to AK brand and image.

The student's opinion about the quality of studies is markedly noticed in AK. Students said that they complete surveys about teaching after every semester. Moreover, after each study course they have informal discussions with lecturers about the course and possible improvements. Also, alumni confirmed that they have completed an alumni survey right after graduation and then after 3 years the second one.

During the meeting with management, experts were told that the students are generally very 'brave' and if they want something, they just ask. Students confirmed that and were able to give a couple of examples of actual changes made after their inquiries: 1) study timetable was changed; 2) exam data was changed to match better to students' work schedules.

During the site-visit the panel of experts noticed that students and alumni feel satisfied and happy with possibilities for studies in their local city.

#### *3.7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the SKVC or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI*

The student's opinion about the quality of studies is markedly noticed in AK. Students said that they complete surveys about teaching after every semester. Moreover, after each study course they have informal discussions with lecturers about the course and possible improvements. Also, alumni confirmed that they have completed an alumni survey right after graduation and then after 3 years the second one.

During the meeting with management, experts were told that the students are generally very 'brave' and if they want something, they just ask. Students confirmed that and were able to give a couple of examples of actual changes made after their inquiries: 1) study timetable was changed; 2) exam data was changed to match better to students' work schedules.

During site-visits the group of experts noticed that students and alumni feel satisfied and happy with possibilities for studies in their local city.

#### ***Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:***

##### ***(1) Strengths:***

1. Good quality of teaching and learning and the information on Quality Management System is available on the website;
2. Very informative website in Lithuanian language with possibility for live chat and to fill in suggestions or pose questions any time.

##### ***(2) Weaknesses:***

1. Lack of formal involvement of social partners in the development of the study field. Stakeholders are involved but that seems to take place mainly on informal basis, therefore formalisation of the process could be recommended;
2. Lack of Alumni association and alumni events.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is an explicit linking between learning outcomes and curriculum on the modules. However, do consider linking content within each module more explicitly between them so as to ensure accumulation of knowledge, and avoid possible repetition.</li> <li>2. Such build-up of knowledge should also be made clear to the students, so that the purpose and logic of selected module content is understood.</li> <li>3. Need of the labour market in terms of student skills and focus was apparent. It is important that evolution and change of the program is retained so that offered modules are aligned with these identified demands. This should be managed in a systematic way and not done on an ad hoc or informal basis, so as to ensure that it continues over time.</li> </ol>
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen international partnerships: To improve international mobility and exposure, we recommend increasing efforts to establish partnerships with organisations from other countries. By allocating more resources to this aspect, your institution can facilitate employee exchanges and create opportunities for staff members to work in different cultural environments, and broaden their professional networks.</li> <li>2. Promote international research and teaching activities: Encourage staff to take on short-term or long-term assignments in different countries. These assignments can be project-based or rotational, providing opportunities to develop new skills and gain valuable international experience. You may consider offering incentives, such as travel stipends or language courses, to encourage participation. Regarding students, the “X-Culture” program could be a good starting point.</li> <li>3. Provide cross-cultural training and language support: To better prepare staff for international assignments and collaborations, we suggest offering workshops and seminars on cross-cultural communication and working practices. Additionally, providing language courses or tuition reimbursement for staff to learn the languages spoken in</li> </ol>



	partner countries can further facilitate successful international collaborations.
Student admission and support	1. Develop strategies to increase the currently small number of students participating in outbound mobility.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To provide more information about possibilities to study for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs. In order to build a socially responsible society in Lithuania, there is a need to raise public awareness about access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs and encourage them to study. The AK has good possibilities for that and a lot of funds was used to create them.</li> <li>2. Employability rates of graduates are high, but there is a lack of information about graduated students' job places after graduation and no info about students working abroad or self-employed. No systematic data is collected. A better organised system is required.</li> <li>3. Graduated students have close relations with AK, but no official Alumni organisation exists. To organise an official Alumni organisation in order to have more close relations with graduated students and to have better opportunities for them as Ambassadors of AK to attract more students to study here.</li> </ol>
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue initiatives for raising the language level of the teaching staff.</li> <li>2. Increase gender diversity of teaching staff, if possible.</li> </ol>
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The evaluation of learning facilities and resources is an essential aspect of ensuring the effectiveness of a study program. As suggestions, consider providing training and support for students to effectively use the databases and e-scientific periodicals. This will ensure that students are able to make the most of the resources available to them.</li> <li>2. Expand the range of scientific literature in foreign languages according to the study programs, as well as textbooks for foreign language learning and improvement of vocational foreign language skills. This will enhance the quality of</li> </ol>



	<p>foreign language learning and provide students with access to a broader range of information.</p> <p>3. Ensure that the AK academic community is aware of the latest academic resources available through the Lithuanian virtual library (LVL). This will ensure that students have access to the latest information and resources to support their learning.</p>
Study quality management and public information	<p>1. Organise involvement of the social partners in development of the study field in a more formal way, e.g. their participation in the program committees.</p> <p>2. Ensure that all the information in the website that is in Lithuanian language could also be in English language, especially the section devoted to MOODLE which is very relevant for foreign students. This could be extremely useful when the number of foreign students grows.</p>

## V. SUMMARY

Overall, as evident by the changes made to the two programmes, the aims and learning outcomes of the field study programmes Company Administration and Business Management are largely in line with the needs of society and the labour market. Of particular note to the panel was the strong and positive presence and involvement of local companies and the community, which help provide both subject relevance and student opportunities to the two programmes. The visit by the pane also revealed that AK is successful in establishing and maintaining a strong link between program content, and the developments in the subject fields. For greater effect, it is essential that there is an accumulative approach to knowledge in the modules offered, so the ongoing efforts to align and develop course content for such effect should be continued.

The panel appreciates the emphasis of AK staff on collaboration between students and faculty in research and encouraging students to take an active role in shaping the direction of research. We also recognize the efforts made to foster international partnerships and exposure. By implementing the suggestions provided in this area, AK can continue to foster growth with an internationally oriented vision that benefits students, staff, and the stakeholders of the region.

Moreover, AK has a well-equipped library, modern book accounting, protection and borrowing system, and a range of information infrastructure for Lithuanian academic libraries, along with access to licensed and thematic collections of information and specialised information sources, which contribute significantly to students' success. It is important that students are trained to search and use information in them, which also appears to be achieved successfully.

Finally, the expert panel wishes to thank the academic and supporting staff, social partners and students, who all allocated time answering our questions and sharing their views, as well as showing us around the facilities. It was noteworthy that the panel never felt information was withheld or that a less honest view was projected. That suggests there is a positive and open working environment and culture at AK, which is a key foundation for its development and improvements.

Expert panel chairperson signature:

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Jannis Angelis

(signature)