SKVC

CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of PHILOLOGY (LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE)

at Vilnius University

Expert panel:

1. **Prof. dr. Anastassia Zabrodskaja (panel chairperson),** *academic;*
2. **Prof. dr. Hélène de Penanros,** *academic;*
3. **Prof. dr. Aušra Martišiūtė-Linartienė ,** *representative of social partners;*
4. **Mr Osvaldas Bartaškevičius,** *students' representative.*

Evaluation coordinator – *Ms Miglė Palujanskaitė*

Vilnius
2023

Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	*Lithuanian Philology*	*Lithuanian Philology and Advertising*
State code	6121NX021	6121NX023
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle	First cycle
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time 4-year studies	Full-time 4-year studies
Credit volume	240	240
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor's degree in humanities.	Bachelor's degree in humanities.
Language of instruction	Lithuanian language	Lithuanian language
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education
Registration date of the study programme	19/05/1997	29/05/2003

–––––––––––––––––––––––––––––––

CONTENTS

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 *17 April, 2023..*

1. **Prof. dr. Anastassia Zabrodskaja**, Expert panel's Chairperson; Professor at Tallinn University
2. **Prof. dr. Hélène de Penanros**, academic member; Professor at INALCO, France
3. **Prof. dr. Aušra Martišiūtė-Linartienė**, Representative of Social Partners; Director of the Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, Lithuania
4. **Mr. Osvaldas Bartaškevičius,** Student Representative; Technical Language Translation and Localisation, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuania

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.	VU_Lithuanian Philology_SER_2022
2.	VU_Lithuanian Philology_SER_2022_Appendix 6_a sample of an individual study plan
3.	VU_Lithuanian Philology_SER_2022_Appendix 5_Final BA Theses
4.	VU_Lithuanian Philology_SER_2022_Appendix 4_Teaching staff
5.	VU_Lithuanian Philology_SER_2022_Appendix 3_Cohesion
6.	VU_Lithuanian Philology_SER_2022_Appendix 2_study plan
7.	VU_Lithuanian Philology_SER_2022_Appendix 1_aims and intended outcomes

1.4. BACKGROUND OF PHILOLOGY (LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE) FIELD STUDIES AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Vilnius University (usually referred to in this report as VU) is the oldest university in Lithuania, founded in 1579. It currently has about 23,517 students, taught by about 3,348 academic staff members (https://www.vu.lt/en/about-vu/facts-and-figures). The Rector of Vilnius University is the sole governing body and head of the university, who, together with the Council and Senate, takes care of the autonomy and public self-government of the university, as well as the quality of the university. The university consists of 12 faculties. The Faculty of Philology aspires to become one of Europe's leading centres for teaching and research in linguistics, literary and cultural studies.

Research in the evaluated field – Philology by language (Lithuanian Philology) – is conducted at the Faculty of Philology in Vilnius and Kaunas. Philological studies in Vilnius have been conducted since the establishment of the Jesuit College (which became Vilnius University in 1579) in 1570. It was established as an independent faculty (after the reorganisation of the Faculty of Humanities) only in 1964 in Kaunas and in 1968 in Vilnius. The university offers two Study Programmes in the first cycle of national Lithuanian Philology, "Philology by Language" (Lithuanian Philology), in the assessed field. This study programme allows students to specialise in Lithuanian Philology or to choose to study a foreign (Estonian, Latvian) language or Culture and Media according to their interests and needs.

In 2014, the Study Programmes were externally evaluated for accreditation, received a positive evaluation, and were accredited for 6 years. The SER references to the previous assessment, indicating how the various recommendations were implemented.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The *first cycle* of the *Philology (Lithuanian language)* study field at Vilnius University is given a **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	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	**28**

*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 shall be 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 (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)

(1) Factual situation

The Philology Study Programmes offered by Vilnius University are divided into two main areas of specialisation, distinguished by campus of study and academic focus. Study Programmes are devoted to the studies of national philology and satisfy the needs of Lithuanian society for the preparation of broadly qualified specialists of Lithuanian philology possessing a thorough theoretical background in the Lithuanian language, literature, and culture, as well as fundamental knowledge of Lithuanian linguistics and literary studies. By choosing one of the two offered tracks in LPh study programme, students may gain additional understanding of modern media, cultural processes and intercultural interactions (LPhCMS) or the languages (Estonian and Latvian) and cultures of the Baltic region (LPhFL). In addition, students of LPhA SP in Kaunas delve deeper into the advertising discourse and are able to link their knowledge and subject specific competences in the area to their philological qualification in their professional and academic activities. Graduates of Study Programmes are given the opportunity to actively participate in the changing job market. Thus, the Study Programmes are designed to meet the special language needs of Lithuanian society and the Lithuanian labour market, with a strong emphasis on knowledge of the Lithuanian Philology.

In general, Study Programmes are thoughtfully and carefully structured to achieve the intended profile of a successful LPh graduate. Each area offers a good balance of theoretical and practical coursework and culminates with opportunities for students to test their skills in a real-world setting. The expert panel believes that the LPh Study Programmes are comparable to similar programmes in philology at other European or North American institutions. The panel's conversations with employers and alumni confirm this. The LPh Study Programme also complies with the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework at Level 6, which is also confirmed in the SER (p.14). The panel noted no formal idiosyncrasies or calculation errors related to the SPs of Philology by language (*Lithuanian Philology*) (i.e., contact hours, ECTS credits awarded, etc.).

As will be discussed later in this report, the faculty consists of highly qualified professionals who conduct relevant research and have repeatedly expressed their commitment to the field, their students, and their academic fields.

Based on the structure of the proposed tracks in the LPh Study Programmes, the balance between theoretical and practical knowledge, the availability of actual internships in each Study

Programme, the required final theses (designed to demonstrate acquired research and composition skills), and the broad linguistic and literary skills developed, the team believes that the LPhCMS, LPhFL and LPhA meet the needs of the current society and the modern-day labor market for Lithuanian philologists with diverse and broader knowledge. The information on the admission requirements is published on the University's website, including the websites of the CAUs conducting the studies in the field, LAMA BPO (Lithuanian Higher Institutions Association for Organising Joint Admission), and other websites providing information on studies, and various other publications ("Where to study", etc.), study fairs, during visits to schools of general education, and other events (SER p. 44). It is easy to find all the information.

The admission of Lithuanian citizens for the first-cycle study programmes is centralised and takes place during the national admission period. The process is conducted by LAMA BPO.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is noteworthy that the accessibility of the study of Lithuanian philology is decentralized geographically because first cycle language studies in Lithuanian philology are conducted at Vilnius University campuses, located in Vilnius and Kaunas, providing opportunities for systematic study of LPh and necessary general competences to different residents of Lithuanian regions. Very well-designed Study Programmes attract talented students, as the report shows: SER, p. 46 states that the admission scores of the applicants to LPh SP are growing gradually. In 2018, the highest score to SF places was 9.84 points, and in 2021, the score was already 11.54 points, which means an increase of 1.7 points. In the period under evaluation, the competitive entrance score had grown as well (in 2018 it was 7.22 points, and in 2021 – 8.13 points). Candidates who are better prepared to learn not only provide a smoother learning process and better results, but also give hope that the LPh study programme is sustainable.

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

(1) Factual situation

Vilnius University's mission (https://www.vu.lt/site_files/Strateginis_planas_2020_I_dalis_EN.pdf) is "to educate active and responsible leaders of the society and the citizens of the Lithuanian state". The Philology Study Programmes are consistent with this mission. Philology, by its very nature, is an activity that requires strong linguistic skills, historical knowledge, and competence in intercultural communication. Thus, these SPs are well structured to produce graduates who will make significant contributions to the international profile of Lithuanian philology as well as media and advertising. The panel recognizes that various factors may limit students' participation in mobility (e.g., the cost of living abroad and the inability for graduate students to leave family or work responsibilities for long periods). However, future Lithuanian philologists should still benefit from the international mobility (especially since the Erasmus+ incoming teaching staff is very scarce).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As noted above, the need for Lithuanian-speaking philologists is important for the linguistic, cultural and socio-economic development of Lithuania, as well as for the promotion of Lithuanian language, literature and culture abroad. Mass media and advertising should be available in the state language. The study programmes address these needs directly, and such linguistic competencies in the official language align with Vilnius University's goals and mission. The panel assesses that the field and study programmes as well as their outcomes are aligned with the mission, objectives of activities, and strategy of the HEI.

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

(1) Factual situation

The structure and anticipated student progression, balance of theoretical and practical classes, and elements of student personalization in the Study Programmes meet and fulfill the national qualification levels, as the team understands them.

As noted earlier, the panel believes that the Study Programmes are consistent in structure, delivery, and outcomes with similar programmes at external (non-Lithuanian) institutions of higher education. The panel noted no major methodological errors in the calculation of ECTS credits, allocation of home study requirements, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel finds the full compliance of the Study Programmes with the necessary legal requirements, as we understand them.

Table No. 1 Study programme *Lithuanian Philology (tracks: Foreign (Estonian, Latvian) Language; Culture & Media Studies)* and its compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes (bachelor)*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	Yes; (without track) – at least 145 (LPhFL, LPhCMS at least 205 ECTS)
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS

ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	Yes; 15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	Yes; (LPh ~35 %; upon taking the respective LPh SP track: LPhCMS ~34%; LPhFL ~37% contact work)

Table No. 2 Study programme *Lithuanian Philology & Advertising* and its compliance to general requirements for *first cycle study programmes (bachelor)*

Criteria	General* legal requirements	In the Programmes
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240 ECTS
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	Yes; LPhA 195 ECTS
ECTS for studies specified by College or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
ECTS for internship	No less than 30 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 9 ECTS	Yes; 15 ECTS
Practical training and other practice placements	No less than one third of the programme	Yes; 15 ECTS
Contact hours	No less than 20 % of learning	Yes (LPhA ~35 %)

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

(1) Factual situation

The teaching methods and learning opportunities within the Study Programmes appear to be consistently well aligned. In general terms, there is a logical sequence between the theoretical and practical subjects studied and the teaching methods by which this material is presented as well as assessment methods with the help of which the acquired skills are controlled. This demonstrates collegial collaboration as students apply skills learned in one course to other courses in the same program.

The panel is somewhat concerned that future Lithuanian philologists are not trained to be freelancers who are able to find work, given the diversity of the field of philology, media, and advertising, and who are able to solve problems independently (and are open to lifelong learning). In conversations with students and alumni, there was criticism that Lithuanian philologists were not ready for the challenge of finding a job in their specialty.

However, this is a minor consideration in light of the overall coherence of the Study Programmes in terms of their structure, delivery, and intended learning outcomes. The panel rates these Study Programmes as strong programmes with a clear structure and definitely increases the skills required in their full complexity.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Overall, there is a broad alignment between learning outcomes, teaching/learning methods, and the Study Programmes' aims. The overall consistency of teaching, assessment, and learning outcomes seems robust. The panel assesses that the compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

The core courses of these Study Programmes are rationally chosen and, as noted earlier, are in line with comparable programmes abroad at the correspondent BA degree level. They are well in line to build both theoretical skills and practical knowledge, and especially to position the successful graduate as an employable philologist of Lithuanian. The Study Programmes are strikingly broad and are not narrowed down only to "philological" specialization.

A small suggestion for developing student competencies is to bring in more foreign experts (Erasmus+ incoming teaching staff) who could give lectures that would allow students to position Lithuanian philology within the current framework of modern philology. A good strategy might be to form institutional or departmental agreements with specific institutions or individuals to guarantee continuity of interaction and foreign engagement. In this area of

development, e-learning opportunities (ZOOM, Teams) can dramatically expand the teaching available to students at a relatively minimal cost to the institution.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Overall, the panel is satisfied that these are strong Study Programmes. The overall situation appears to be that well-designed and outcome-oriented Study Programmes are being implemented effectively. The panel assesses that the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures the consistent development of competences of students is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

Perhaps it is worth noting that the first act of student personalization is in the very choice of which Study Programme a student wants to take. Although, for the sake of brevity, this report usually refers to Study Programmes collectively, they are quite different programmes, with different goals and intentions.

Throughout the Study Programmes, opportunities for course selection (elective courses) are repeatedly provided.

The choice of the final topic/field of the thesis and place for conducting internship also seems to meet the requirement of student personalization.

While the panel understands that – quite rightly – there is academic oversight over the selection of thesis topics, the panel was impressed with the variety and diversity of topics addressed, at least in the dissertations selected to be presented to the team as supporting material.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As noted, there are opportunities for personalization in the Study Programmes. Choosing a dissertation topic and internship places are good elements of personalization. However, students complained that many of the specialisation courses were not open, as less than 6 students were enrolled. This problem deserves some attention in order to strengthen the effective possibilities of customisation of curricula.

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

(1) Factual situation

As noted earlier in this report, the preparation and evaluation of BA theses seems to be a strength of the Study Programmes. The topics under consideration cover broad areas of Lithuanian philology, media, and advertising.

The process of thesis topic proposal, research and composition, and subsequent submission is regulated by the relevant VU policies and procedures, notably Regulations for the Preparation, Defence and Storage of Research Papers of Students Studying at Vilnius University, and Procedure for Administering Research Papers in the Vilnius University Study Information System approved by the Vice-Rector for Studies of Vilnius University and the general procedures for the preparation, defence and assessment of students' final theses in the CAU which runs the Study Programmes which apply to the students of all fields and cycles of the respective CAU (SER, p 25). This centralised regulation does not seem to violate the examination autonomy of Study Programmes professors, from whom dissertation supervisors are formed. Not only university experts (incl. at least one researcher from another institution) but also social partners with relevant experience can be part of the defence committee (SER, p.26). It helps create a direct link between the academic world and more practical fields. As noted in the SER on page 26, 'the defence is public' and 'has an Electronic Plagiarism Detection System (EPDS), thus formal instruments are used to encourage academic integrity.'

Therefore, the thesis requirement seems to give students the opportunity to explore their chosen topic in depth and to demonstrate and improve their research abilities. In its rigor and scope, it corresponds to similar requirements for high-level BA theses in other European and North American universities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel assesses that compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements is adequate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Study programmes *Lithuanian Philology (tracks: Foreign (Estonian, Latvian) Language; Culture & Media Studies)* and *Lithuanian Philology & Advertising* design meets the legal requirements set out for higher education study programmes in Lithuania. The subjects are spread evenly. The modules are consistent with the level of studies.

2. The aims and learning outcomes of study programmes *Lithuanian Philology (tracks: Foreign (Estonian, Latvian) Language; Culture & Media Studies)* and *Lithuanian Philology & Advertising* correspond with the activities performed by Lithuanian philologists and media and advertising specialists.

3. The analysis of the subject-specific competence and learning outcomes indicates that the programme aims and learning outcomes are consistent with the type and level of studies and the level of qualifications offered, and that the name of the study programmes – *Lithuanian Philology (tracks: Foreign (Estonian, Latvian) Language; Culture & Media Studies)* and *Lithuanian Philology & Advertising* – as well as their learning outcomes, content and the qualifications offered are compatible with one another.

4. The study programmes – *Lithuanian Philology (tracks: Foreign (Estonian, Latvian) Language; Culture & Media Studies)* and *Lithuanian Philology & Advertising* are student-oriented and develop the competences necessary to seem to meet the needs of societal

13

and personal development, the modern labour market requirements, and to help the students to acquire competences compatible with their bachelor's degree. They also prepare the students for further studies (MA programme) or work in respective areas of study/research.

(2) Weaknesses:

These are not weaknesses but suggestions which do not diminish the value of the Study Programme:

1. According to the SER, the Study Programme Committee incorporates "collects and analyses feedback from the participants of the study process: students, lecturers, employers, social partners" (p. 89) into any planned changes of the study programmes. However, the panel did not find any consistent, systematic and clear evidence of market needs analysis, employer feedback, or incorporation of good practice from alumni into the BA programme in particular.
2. Although there is a university-wide compulsory on-line student feedback on subject courses, there seems to be no formally established system of informing students about its results analysis and any changes implemented.
3. In our discussions with teaching staff and current students, we picked up weaknesses concerning the participation of outgoing students and Erasmus+ incoming staff in mobility programmes. There appears to be poor dissemination of information within the university and a lack of wide consultations with staff and students on how to improve the situation. Increasing student exposure to foreign professors' lectures is desirable. If internationalisation is part of the university's mission and/or vision, the administration should enable, promote and encourage exchange of incoming faculty and outgoing students in order to allow them to acquire international exposure and experiences.
4. It is a concern of the panel that practical business skills are not clearly present in the Study Programmes. These could perhaps be built into other courses, but they would be useful for future philologists (media and advertising specialists etc.) who will often be working as freelancers or digital nomads.
5. The panel formed the view that the university should adopt a strategy that would emphasise the value and need of Lithuanian language. Not only does the national need have to be stressed but it is also important that there is a rich and sufficient provision of Lithuanian linguists for a variety of employment needs, and of course for the cultural richness that a philology degree offers to individuals and to groups. The public at large and even the public within universities do not always fully comprehend what a philology degree actually involves: proficiency in the Lithuanian language, of course, but also a knowledge of Lithuanian history, literature and culture. Such knowledge is essential when working as a specialist of Lithuanian philology in any domain.
6. In order to open up the full range of courses offered in the study programme, the University should consider the possibility of online partnerships with other Lithuanian universities offering a course in Lithuanian philology. This opening up to students from

other universities would make it possible to reach the 6 students required to open the course and thus improve the possibilities of customising the curriculum for the students. But it would also contribute to supporting the curricula of provincial universities with a less rich and therefore less attractive offer: this would help these programmes to be maintained, which is crucial for the strengthening of this rare field of teaching and research on the European scale. Such a policy would enable Vilnius University to play its role as a national reference centre in the field of Lithuanian philology, which needs to bring together all the forces present in order to strengthen itself at the international level.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

Links between science (art) and study activities shall be 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

(1) Factual situation

The VU Faculty of Philology has a rich and diverse research activity.
The Faculty of Philology is involved in the publication of 8 peer-reviewed journals, three of which are referenced in SCOPUS.

The SER shows 388 publications in 2020, slightly more than 400 in the previous two years. The details of the publications of the permanent professors-researchers indicate 128 articles or book chapters, 18 collective works, 10 monographs and 3 manuals, which gives a ratio of 2.37 publications per head over the last three years. Most of these publications were published in national editions, and about twenty in international editions, including some reference editions (Benjamins, De Gruyter, Routledge). Most of the publications are in Lithuanian, about fifty in English, some in German, Polish, Russian or Italian.

The lecturers of the Faculty of Philology organise a few conferences, some of which are annual and linked to seminars (p. 39). In 2018, they participated in 34 conferences in Lithuania and 40 abroad, which resulted in only 14 publications; in 2019, the report shows 50 conferences in Lithuania and 56 abroad with only 22 publications; in 2020, the covid period, 12 conferences in Lithuania and 35 abroad were given, with 21 publications.

The report also mentions 8 international research projects over the period, and about 50 national projects, which include research projects, requests for support for publication or for the organisation of a conference.

The research topics, according to the list of publications of the professors-researchers over the last three years, are varied and demonstrate a sharp research, in particular in theoretical

linguistics (synchronic & historical linguistics, dialectology, socio-linguistics, etc.) as well as in applied teaching, but also in Lithuanian literature. These results, which testify to a high level of internationally recognised research, make the Faculty of Philology of Vilnius University the reference centre for research in Lithuanian philology and Baltic Studies in the country.

(2) Expert's analysis

The inclusion of its research in the international context and the construction of the European research area is a stated objective of the component, but it seems that the policy to achieve this is based more on individual initiatives than on a comprehensive strategy, including in particular a policy of support for research and a policy of structuring local and international partnerships.

- While a research incentive scheme (consisting of a bonus system rewarding high-level publications) has been in place since 2018, the component lacks, on the one hand, support schemes for its researchers: only 7 one-semester sabbaticals have been allocated over the period 2018-2022 and a system of research grants is lacking, in order to support field research and internationalisation; teacher-researchers have to provide 288 of contact hours per year, which leaves too little time for research and the preparation of heavy files for international projects.

- On the other hand, if the Faculty of Philology of VU occupies a dominant position in the field of Lithuanian and Baltic philology, a national and international policy of research management would be necessary in order to structure this rare disciplinary field at the European level and to give it its rightful place in the European, then global space. Although certain national cooperations are in place, with the Institute of the Lithuanian Literature and Folklore, the Institute of Lithuanian Language, the Maironis Lithuanian Literature Museum and the Kaunas County Public Library in particular, the universities of VMU and Klaipeda are not mentioned as regular partners. It is regrettable that Vilnius University does not have a more structured cooperation with these other Lithuanian universities working in the same field: the disciplinary field under consideration is too rare to allow itself to be divided into independent units in a competitive relationship and all forces are needed to bring it to an internationally recognised level. Vilnius University ought to play its role as a national leader and support the field nationwide by establishing close cooperation with the provincial universities: coordinated research steering and support for training in the provinces according to their needs (using distance learning if necessary).

- Thirdly, international partnerships are also insufficiently developed: apart from international projects limited in time, and the invitation of a few professors from foreign universities, the report mentions "good relations" with neighbouring countries (Poland, Latvia, Estonia), but no structured partnership with European universities offering Baltic languages courses and carrying out research in the same disciplinary field. However, in order to raise the visibility of this rare discipline and thus participate fully in the construction of the European research area, the University of Vilnius, via its Faculty of Philology, would benefit from constituting itself as a European platform ensuring structured international cooperation in research, dynamic international exchanges, and even support (accessibility of online courses, co-accreditation of training courses, etc.) for university courses offered abroad in the discipline.

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

(1) Factual situation

The research carried out by the teachers of this faculty is clearly related to the content of the curriculum. Most courses are taught by specialists in the issues studied who are conducting research in the relevant fields (see Appendix 4), thus ensuring a link between teaching and research. Course content is regularly updated to incorporate the latest research findings in the field, and the syllabus and bibliography associated with the courses are updated annually.

In addition, the teachers organise, often in collaboration with external partners, scientific events, such as summer schools or seminars, where the latest research results in literature and linguistics are presented. These events are open to students, who are encouraged to participate actively in them, for example by writing reviews; some events also give students the opportunity to present their own work. These events are an excellent way of training in research by introducing students to the world of research, its activities and different actors, and by providing a link between training and the latest research developments.

The subjects of the theses also demonstrate a strong link between research and training, through their diversity and the actuality of their themes. In particular, the philology and publicity course opens up innovative research themes and the Lithuanian and foreign language course opens up interesting comparative perspectives. Generally speaking, most of the subjects treated place Lithuanian at the heart of the most current research on modern languages.

(2) Expert's analysis

The link between research and training in this field of study is strong. In order to further improve it, it is recommended that invitations to foreign academics be strengthened in order to reinforce the link with international research. Moreover, in order to ensure the opening of optional courses having a more focused and specific content, which are closed due to less than 6 students, the prospects of integrating these courses into the curricula of other Lithuanian universities (co-accreditation and online accessibility) should be studied.

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

(1) Factual situation

Research training through research is a stated objective of the programme and the conditions for achieving this are satisfactory. Students are familiarised with the applied side of research in their courses, which focus on implementing the latest results of ongoing research (see above). In addition, the curriculum includes the writing of a scientific paper in S4 and S6: the preparation of these papers, identification of the problematics, research strategy, etc., is done in groups with students working in the same subject area, which is a very relevant pedagogy for an initiation to research. This early initiation is good training for the thesis, which is

compulsory in S8. For this exercise, students benefit from hours of personalised follow-up with their research supervisor, which is a very positive point; however, we do not understand why the volume of follow-up hours is different for each speciality (19.2 hours for FPhil compared to 12.8 hours for KNF) and we can only urge the university to repair this inequity for both students and professors as soon as possible. The compulsory presence of a professor from another university or a representative of the socio-economic world on the defence jury is a final positive element which provides students with training in presenting their research to the outside world.

Students are also encouraged to participate in the various scientific events organised at the University: encouragement to participate in research seminars, to participate in and help organise summer schools or conferences, to present work at certain student or mixed conferences, to publish articles co-authored or not with a professor, to publish book reviews, etc. During the reporting period, there were 29 student participations in conferences and 13 published research papers, which for undergraduates is quite laudable.

The information system is very good, with the resources of a very rich library and a remarkable amount of open-access sources from any computer. This open-source policy of the University's published journals is highly commendable and a great plus for the students of the Faculty as well as of the whole of Lithuania.

The faculty is also developing a policy of training in scientific integrity: as early as the integration week in the first year, then during training in scientific writing in the second and third years; the student must also sign the code of academic ethics in the fourth year and all theses are subjected to anti-plagiarism software. The Self-Evaluation Report also mentions webinars and discussions organised by the library, and one can only encourage making this type of training compulsory, as the problem of plagiarism in the digital age is now massive, and even to adopt a specific anti-plagiarism charter, detailing the different forms it can take, including by translation.

Lastly, the faculty is home to the historic Philomat Society, which is certainly an important factor in integrating students into research activities.

(2) Expert's analysis

Conditions for students to get involved in scientific activities are certainly very good, with even better conditions for FPhil students, and a harmonisation from above is desirable here.

Two other points should be worked on to improve the situation:

> - Develop a system of internal scholarships to support the research and fieldwork activities of students: currently, the only existing possibilities are limited to applications, via professors, to the Lithuanian Research Council or to a special programme of educational initiative, which is insufficient.
> - Support the development of annual student conferences organised by the students themselves so that they have regular opportunities to present their research to their peers. These conferences would benefit from being organised in cooperation with the other philology faculties in Lithuania, possibly on a rotating basis between the three

universities concerned, so as to encourage students to present their work externally; in this context, these conferences would benefit from being open to Baltic Masters students enrolled at various European universities. This type of initiative would allow Vilnius University students to become accustomed to the outside scientific community at a very early stage, to establish early contacts with students working in the same fields, and to give a boost to the national and international dynamics that the field of research needs at the present time.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. Internationally recognised quality research carried out by very dynamic and committed researchers
2. Solid training of students in research through research via multiple possibilities
3. Home by nature to a field of research that is rare in Europe

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Lack of research management, which relies too much on individual initiatives (organisation of a centralised system for monitoring European projects and assistance in setting up collective projects; development of research support: research leave for teachers, field grants for students, support for scientific events for teachers and students, etc.; development of a policy of structuring partnerships)
2. The need for greater openness towards the external scientific community: at national level on the one hand, and at international level on the other; the preservation and development of world-class research in this rare disciplinary field requires a coalition of all the forces in the sector, which presupposes national cooperation and coordination, as well as a policy of broad international openness.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

Student admission and support shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

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

(1) Factual situation

Admission to the first-cycle studies in the field at Vilnius University takes place during the joint admission period in accordance with the admission procedure approved by LAMA BPO. It should not be forgotten that offering the different Study Programmes allows the individual student to personalise, in a sense, his or her program from the moment of enrolment.

The information on the admission requirements is published on the University's website, including the websites of the CAUs conducting the studies in the field, LAMA BPO, and other

websites providing information on studies, and various other publications ("Where to study", etc.), study fairs, during visits to schools of general education, and other events. The teaching staff actively participate in the University's initiative Student for One Day when secondary school pupils can participate in lectures.

(2) Expert's analysis

Admission Procedure and Criteria:
Vilnius University follows the joint admission procedure approved by LAMA BPO for the first-cycle studies in the field. This standardised procedure ensures fairness and equal opportunities for all applicants. The panel fully understands that the anticipated student enrolment is overwhelmingly Lithuanian; the panel only notes that this factor may stifle both inbound and outbound mobility opportunities.

Suitability of Selection Criteria:
To provide a comprehensive evaluation, it is essential to assess the suitability of the selection criteria used by Vilnius University. The selection criteria should be designed to assess the applicants' aptitude and potential for success in the chosen field. Factors such as academic achievements, entrance examinations, personal statements, and letters of recommendation could be considered as part of the selection process.

Publicity and Information Dissemination:
The provided information suggests that Vilnius University actively promotes the admission process and ensures the publicity of the study programs. The admission requirements and information are published on the University's website, as well as on websites of relevant institutions such as LAMA BPO. Furthermore, the university engages in various activities such as study fairs, school visits, and events like "Student for One Day," where prospective students can experience university lectures firsthand. These initiatives demonstrate the university's commitment to reaching out to potential applicants and providing them with the necessary information to make informed decisions.

Room for Improvement:
While the information indicates active efforts to publicise the admission process, it would be beneficial for Vilnius University to explore additional channels and strategies to enhance the visibility of their programs. Leveraging social media platforms, targeted online advertising, and collaborating with educational influencers could help reach a wider audience of prospective students.

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

(1) Factual situation

A foreign qualification is considered to be equivalent to secondary or equivalent-level higher

education obtained in the Republic of Lithuania if no essential differences between the general requirements of the country where the qualification was obtained and those of the Republic of Lithuania can be identified. Each foreign qualification is evaluated and a decision about its academic recognition is taken individually, based on available information and the practice of evaluating and recognising similar or equivalent foreign qualifications, thereby ensuring the consistency of qualification recognition practice.

In 2018–2021, there were no foreign qualifications recognised in LPh SP, however, several students had their learning outcomes from previously completed course units in FPhil recognised (in cases when the students had decided not to continue their studies and enrolled into another SP in FPhil through the admission process, but had completed some course units before).

(2) Expert's analysis

The recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies, and prior non-formal and informal learning is an important aspect of ensuring fair and equal treatment of students at Vilnius University. The university follows an individualised approach, evaluating each foreign qualification individually based on available information and the practice of evaluating similar qualifications. This approach ensures consistency and fairness in the recognition process.

Vilnius University considers a foreign qualification to be equivalent to secondary or equivalent-level higher education in Lithuania if there are no substantial differences in the general requirements. However, the specific criteria for equivalency are not explicitly outlined. Clear guidelines and standards for assessing foreign qualifications would contribute to transparency and facilitate the recognition process for applicants.

While no foreign qualifications were recognized in the LPh SP between 2018 and 2021, Vilnius University acknowledged the recognition of learning outcomes from previously completed course units in FPhil for students who chose to discontinue their studies in LPh SP and enrolled in another program within FPhil. This demonstrates the university's willingness to recognize and credit prior learning, enabling students to build upon their academic achievements.

To further improve the recognition process, Vilnius University could provide more comprehensive information about the specific criteria and procedures used for recognizing foreign qualifications. Clearly defining the requirements and expectations would help prospective students understand the recognition process and prepare the necessary documentation. Additionally, sharing examples and case studies of previously recognized foreign qualifications would guide applicants and increase transparency.

3.3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students

(1) Factual situation

Field students can spend a semester or a year studying abroad, including the compulsory internship for a period specified in the study plan, additional summer internship, graduate practice immediately after studies under Erasmus+, ISEP, Nordplus or under bilateral cooperation agreements. In total, field students can spend up to half of their study time in mobility programmes. Erasmus and Erasmus + programs alone are available to students for a total of 12 months. FPhil has signed 202 Erasmus contracts with foreign universities, and KNF has contracts with 252 universities: 58 of them are assigned code 023, i.e., "Languages"58;, and all students of the field can use them.

Due to the specific nature of the field SPs (as they target the youth who have finished Lithuanian secondary schools and who speak Lithuanian as a native and/or state language), they do not attract foreign students who come for full-time studies. However, the teaching staff offer course units in philology, Lithuanian studies, and advertising for Erasmus students in English. Foreign students who come on Erasmus or other exchange programmes can take introductory Lithuanian language courses.

(2) Expert's analysis

Vilnius University provides favourable conditions for academic mobility, allowing students in the field to participate in various exchange programs and study abroad opportunities. Students have the option to spend a semester or a year studying at foreign universities, including completing internships as part of their study plan. Additionally, there are opportunities for additional summer internships and graduate practice under programs such as Erasmus+, ISEP, Nordplus, and bilateral cooperation agreements.

Field students are permitted to spend up to half of their study time participating in mobility programs, which enables them to gain valuable international experience and broaden their academic horizons. Specifically, the Erasmus and Erasmus+ programs offer students a total of 12 months for mobility purposes. This allows students to immerse themselves in different educational environments and cultures, enhancing their personal and academic growth.

Vilnius University's Faculty of Philology (FPhil) has signed 202 Erasmus contracts with foreign universities, while the Faculty of Communication (KNF) has contracts with 252 universities, including 58 universities with a focus on languages. These agreements provide a wide range of options for students to choose from, ensuring a diverse selection of host institutions for their study abroad experiences.

Although the field SPs primarily target Lithuanian-speaking students who have completed their secondary education in Lithuania, efforts have been made to attract foreign students through the offering of courses in philology, Lithuanian studies, and advertising specifically targeted at Erasmus students in English. Foreign students participating in Erasmus or other exchange programs are also provided with the opportunity to take introductory Lithuanian language courses, facilitating their integration into the academic and social environment.

While the conditions for academic mobility in the field are generally favourable, the limited number of foreign students enrolling in full-time studies within the field SPs indicates a potential area for improvement. Additional initiatives could be undertaken to attract more foreign students to these programs, such as targeted marketing efforts and the expansion of English-taught courses to cater to a broader international audience.

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

(1) Factual situation

One of the most important forms of support is academic support. At Vilnius University, academic support for students is provided both in each academic unit separately and centrally in the Student Services and Career Department. Students are provided with consultations on all issues related to studies (such as admission, choice of a SP, financial support, suspension, termination of studies, individual study plan, change of study programme, and internship or informal activities).

The mentoring programme run at the University is designed to build students' general competences and intelligence, improve their academic and personal achievements and motivation to study, help to take over their mentor's experience and receive valuable advice in planning their professional future. The University's teaching staff and alumni share their personal experience on a voluntary basis, thus contributing to the personal and professional growth of students and the strengthening of the University's community.

With the help of various tests and individual career counselling, students are invited to self-assess their values, interests, competences, weaknesses and strengths important in choosing their career path.

Academic support and vocational education are provided through training. Students are mainly interested in training on stress management, efficient learning, and presenting themselves to employers: CV and motivational letter writing, and simulations of job interviews. In 2018, more than 800 students took part in various training sessions organised by the Student Services and Career Department, in 2019 the number exceeded 1,200, and in 2020 the training sessions attracted 10 635 students.

The main form of social support to students is financial benefits. In 2018-2021, students of the field received 104 incentive scholarships for excellent learning outcomes. Especially talented, highly accomplished students engaged in research, can apply for individual scholarships awarded at the University in respective fields of study and research.

The University has a Counselling and Training Centre, where students are offered professional psychological counselling (a series of counselling sessions) on issues related to their personal life, family, studies and social integration.

(2) Expert's analysis

Vilnius University demonstrates a comprehensive approach to supporting students in various aspects of their academic journey and personal development. The university recognizes the importance of academic support and has established mechanisms to provide guidance and consultations to students across all areas of their studies. Academic support is offered both at the level of individual academic units and centrally through the Student Services and Career Department. This ensures that students have access to the necessary information and assistance regarding admission, study program selection, financial support, study-related issues, and even career planning.

The mentoring program at Vilnius University is a valuable initiative aimed at nurturing students' general competences, intelligence, and academic and personal achievements. Through this program, students have the opportunity to benefit from the experience and advice of mentors who are members of the teaching staff and alumni. This voluntary sharing of personal experiences by mentors contributes to the overall growth and development of students, both personally and professionally. It fosters a sense of community and strengthens the ties within the university.

To assist students in making informed decisions about their career paths, Vilnius University offers various tests and individual career counselling services. These tools allow students to self-assess their values, interests, competences, weaknesses, and strengths, enabling them to make well-informed choices regarding their future career endeavours. Additionally, the university provides vocational education and training sessions that address topics such as stress management, efficient learning strategies, and effective self-presentation to potential employers. The significant number of students participating in these training sessions demonstrates the students' interest and the perceived value of such support.

Financial support plays a crucial role in ensuring students' well-being and reducing financial burdens. Vilnius University offers financial benefits to students in the form of incentive scholarships for excellent academic achievements. This recognition motivates students to strive for excellence in their studies. Additionally, highly talented and accomplished students engaged in research have the opportunity to apply for individual scholarships awarded within their respective fields of study and research. These financial benefits provide students with the necessary support to pursue their academic goals and contribute to their overall success.

The University's Counselling and Training Centre plays a vital role in providing professional psychological counselling services to students. This series of counselling sessions covers a wide range of issues, including personal life, family matters, studies, and social integration. By offering these services, the university acknowledges the importance of students' mental well-being and provides them with a safe and supportive environment to address their concerns and challenges.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

In 2021, 49% of all consultations on the study process provided centrally at the Student Services and Career Department were delivered by email, 25% – via a direct inquiry system on the website, 23% – by phone, 2% – on social networks, less than 1% – during meetings, and less than 1% – via discussion forums.

Students are advised on the programme objectives, content of course units, and career opportunities by members of their SPCs and lecturers teaching in the programme, who appoint hours for consultations, consult students between lectures and seminars and by e-mail. The LPh SPC organises consultations for students once a year. Students are consulted on career opportunities not only during lectures, meetings with alumni and potential employers are also organised.

(2) Expert's analysis

The provision of study information and student counselling at Vilnius University appears to have several strengths. Firstly, the availability of multiple communication channels allows students to access information and seek guidance in various ways. The distribution of consultations across different channels, such as email, direct inquiry system, phone, and social networks, demonstrates the university's efforts to accommodate different communication preferences and provide convenience to students.

The involvement of Student Services and Career Department in delivering consultations indicates a centralised approach to addressing student inquiries and concerns. The use of e-mail and the direct inquiry system on the website as the primary communication channels suggests that students have easy access to relevant information regarding the study process. This accessibility enables students to seek guidance and clarification on program objectives, course content, and career opportunities, contributing to their overall academic success.

Moreover, the involvement of Student Program Committees (SPCs) and program lecturers in providing consultations is commendable. These individuals possess specialised knowledge and understanding of the program, allowing them to offer tailored guidance and support to students. The availability of designated consultation hours and the provision of consultations through various means, including face-to-face interactions, email, and other online communication platforms, further enhance the accessibility of student counselling services.

However, it is worth noting some potential weaknesses in the current system. The limited frequency of consultations organised by the Lithuanian Philology (LPh) SPC, which takes place once a year, may not fully meet the ongoing needs of students throughout their academic journey. A more regular schedule of consultations could better address students' evolving concerns and provide continuous support for their academic progress.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:
1. The university offers both department-specific and centralised academic support
2. Diverse mobility programs

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Low foreign student participation

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment shall be 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

(1) Factual situation

In the first-cycle study program, the main forms of studying and teaching-and-learning methods are classroom work (lectures, seminars, consultations) and independent work (self-study of literature, work on written papers and specific tasks given by lecturers, etc.).

Much attention is paid to self-study as an inseparable part of studies: students regularly do written assignments, i.e., write report, essays, etc.; prepare presentations; learn to look for, select and systematise relevant information; read and independently analyse the literature indicated in course unit (module) descriptions; students who are studying languages perform writing, listening, and text comprehension tasks independently, they are also encouraged to practise language in informal ways in their personal time. The literature read and tasks completed during self-study are presented and discussed in seminars and workshops. During contact work, students have an opportunity to self-evaluate their work, get feedback from the lecturer who not only identifies the errors, but also comments on, provides advice and sets direction for students' further work. Students' competences are developed not only during contact classes, but also during research, pedagogical, Text Production or editing internship in institutes, schools, publishing houses, editorial offices, etc. Based on reporting on completed practical training, the student's work is evaluated by the lecturer teaching the module and the practical training supervisor.

Students' learning outcomes are assessed throughout the semester and during the exam session. The main form of work, seminar, enables a lecturer to observe each student's performance and give feedback, assess his or her individual abilities and progress and, depending on student's needs, adjust the methods applied in the seminars and lectures and their content within the framework of the course unit (module) description. The assessment for many subjects (modules) is cumulative, which facilitates constant monitoring of a student's progress.

Vilnius University adheres to the following principles of student performance assessment: professionalism, transparency, fairness, objectivity, reliability, respect, and goodwill. Constant, interim and final evaluation of student performance in a course unit (module) is enabled. The final assessment of student performance is obligatory. The initial parts of a continuous course units (modules) are evaluated by a pass/fail evaluation. Examinations and pass/fail evaluations are conducted in writing or in writing and orally. The same student performance evaluation criteria are applied to all students.

After completing the first cycle of studies, graduates can continue with the second cycle of university studies in the field of philology (e.g., linguistics, literary or cultural studies) or other fields (e.g., communication, etc.) at both Lithuanian and foreign universities or choose pedagogical studies and obtain a teacher's qualification.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The teaching-and-learning methods ensure that students acquire subject-specific knowledge and develop general and subject-specific competences. Students' competences are developed not only during contact classes, but also during research, pedagogical, Text Production or editing internship (in institutes, schools, publishing houses, editorial offices, etc.).

The teaching and learning process is flexible, orientated towards active learning methods and students competences, enables students to take into account the needs of the students and empower them to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

According to the SER, the University provides necessary support to students (including academic counselling, vocational counselling, career orientation, and so on) and lecturers (training, counselling, discussions, sand haring good practice), promotes initiatives for the internationalisation of studies (teaching visits, training, visiting lecturers, student Erasmus exchange program), and ensures the necessary learning conditions (suitable rooms, equipment, information resources, and so on). However, there are very few cases of outgoing and incoming lecturers and students.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University has a five-year strategy for promoting diversity and equality, which defines major guidelines till 2025; a Procedure for Adapting Studies to Individual Needs Arising from Disability that enables the tailoring of the study process to the needs of students and unclassified students with special needs; an informal society of people with special needs in FPhil (the University's Society for People with Special Needs). The aim of the society is to unite the members of the University's community who have special needs.

The University has an effective procedure to personalise the study process in order to suit the special needs of the students with disabilities: students can contact the coordinator of disability affairs, who, having clarified their special needs, prepares a plan for individual studies (listing

specific ways of personalised studies in relation to the area of the study process, such as study environment, lectures and other contact learning, assessment of learning outcomes, and so on), and ensures its implementation. The coordinator also advises the students with special needs on their other issues (the students with special needs can also use all consulting services available to all University students). The approved plan is sent to all directly concerned staff (lecturers, administrators, and others). To assess the learning outcomes of the students with special needs (who have vision, hearing, mobility impairment or other disability), lecturers use flexible forms of assessment, adjusting to the abilities of such students (for example, enlarging the font in the examination papers, expanding the time given for the exam assignment, adjusting the setting of the assessment exercise: ensuring sufficient lighting in the exam room, its accessibility, and so on). Information about support for the students with disabilities is available on the University's website.

During the period under evaluation, there was one visually impaired student in LPh SP (2016/2020); in September 2020, the study plan was individualised for one student in KNF.

The students coming from socially vulnerable groups receive state scholarships from the State Study Foundation in accordance with the procedures adopted by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2018–2021, students of the field received 37 social scholarships (LPh – 22, LPhA – 15 scholarships), 9 one-time social benefits (LPh – 7, LPhA – 2 social benefits), and 9 one-off target benefits (LPh – 3, LPhA – 6 target benefits), 21 loans administered by the State Studies Foundation (LPh – 12 loans, LPhA – 9 loans). During the period, 3 students with disabilities received the financial benefits (this area is administered by the Department of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour). Students encountering financial difficulties may apply for one-off social benefits or ask to postpone the tuition fee payment date if their studies are not supported by the state. During the period under evaluation, the University established a scholarship for 100 most talented students from disadvantaged families. The scholarship is awarded on an annual basis and is aimed at reducing social exclusion.

Support is available for students from Belarus and Ukraine. The Grand Duchy of Lithuania Scholarship has been established for the most talented applicants from Belarus. This scholarship provides an opportunity to study at the university free of charge and also it entitles to additional financial incentives. In 2022, the scope of the scholarship was expanded to include the applicant from Ukraine.

The students can get acquainted with the procedure for granting and paying the above benefits on the University website. Students of the field find out about support opportunities during introductory lectures in Semester 1.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The University has an effective procedure for personalised study process to suit the special needs of the students with disabilities; information about the support for students with disabilities is available on University's website. The students who come from socially vulnerable groups receive state scholarships from the State Study Foundation in accordance

with the procedures adopted by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. The University offers an opportunity for the Belarusian students who are persecuted for civil and political reasons and for the Ukrainian students who are fleeing their country because of the war to re-enrol with Vilnius University and to continue their studies in Lithuania, these students are provided psychological counselling. The conditions ensuring access to study for socially vulnerable groups, students with special needs, Belarusian and Ukrainian students in VU are adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students' progress is monitored on several levels: the course unit (module), all students of a given year, and the study programme.

On the level of the course unit (module) the progress of students is assessed by the lecturer of a course unit (module). In many modules, lecturers use a cumulative scoring system: the cumulative score consists of a combination of interim and final assessments (exam or final thesis / project defence). Feedback is provided during contact sessions (in the classroom or remotely, e.g., via MS Teams, ZOOM), through group and individual consultations (in the classroom or remotely, e.g., via MS Teams, ZOOM), or in writing through the VU virtual learning platform (e.g., via VLE, MOODLE or institutional e-mail). The teacher comments on the mistakes, the given mark, and draws the students' attention to respective advantages and problematic issues related to the task. Students have the opportunity to get acquainted with the corrected and assessed work and, if the feedback already provided was not enough, to additionally inquire about the assessment. The final assessments of a module are entered into the VU IS only after introducing them to the students (in the lecture room, VLE or any other ways accessible to all, for example, by institutional e-mail). Students are offered opportunities to consult their subject lecturers at the allotted time in a designated lecture room, in the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), and, in case of distance learning, by using the above-mentioned virtual work platforms (in case of distance learning).

Progress on the level of all students of a specific year is monitored by the Study Administration Department. On the level of a field study programme, the monitoring of student progress is done by the study programme committee. The Student Services and Career Department monitors student drop-out levels and implements an action plan for drop-out prevention.

Information on the implementation of the SP is periodically collected by using various ways. The surveys on satisfaction with studies and course units, which are conducted centrally after the introduction of VU IS electronic questionnaires. Summaries of survey results and detailed reports showing departmental differences are accessible to the University's academic community on the intranet. Lecturers can access feedback on the course units that they teach and the SPC chairperson can access feedback from all students in the programme via VU IS. SPCs meet to discuss survey results, draw conclusions and decide on the necessary improvements. Students are informed about the SPC decisions made based on survey results

through the student representative in the SPC. Taking into account student surveys and market needs, the SP is updated and improved: the scope and content of the modules are adjusted, and the possibility of adding new modules to the study programme is assessed. Students get information about the ongoing changes from their representative in the SPC.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress orientated to individual students' needs is very good.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University uses the tools of the Career Tracking Information System (CTIS) karjera.lt. According to Vilnius University data, one year after graduation more than half of the first-cycle graduates of field studies are employed on a contractual basis, some of the first-cycle graduates of field studies are not employed and continue their studies in Lithuania.

Out of the LPh SP graduates, all participants of 2018 survey (100%) had highly skilled jobs; according to the 2019 survey, slightly more than 70% had highly skilled jobs; and according to 2020 data, more than 90% were in highly skilled occupations.

The most frequent professions among the LPhA SP graduates were: advertising and marketing specialists, public relations specialists, education and training specialists, basic and secondary school teachers, teacher's aides, editors in publishing houses, administrators and executive secretaries, management and organisation analysts, sales assistants.

Taking into account the statistical data provided, it should be pointed out that the number of LPh SP graduates who get employed and who continue their studies shows a growing trend: in 2018 – 60.7% were employed and continued to study, in 2019 – 78.8%, in 2020 – 78.1%. More than 70% of LPhA SP graduates of 2018–2020 one year after graduation were either employed or were continuing their studies. In 2019, they accounted for 90.3%, but in 2020, the graduates in employment or further study accounted for 72.2%.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

A high number of graduates are successfully employed in the areas where there is need for the competences acquired in the field studies or continue their studies. The employability of the graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field are good.

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

(1) Factual situation

The main principles of academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are defined in the University Statute, the University's Code of Academic Ethics, its Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy, and other documents. Cases of breach of academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are handled under the Regulations of the Central Academic Ethics Committee of Vilnius University and the Regulations of the Academic Ethics Committee of the Core Academic Units of Vilnius University.

At the end of the spring semester 2021 two LPh SP students received a reprimand for academic dishonesty during the process of assessment of learning outcomes. After interviews with the students (the participants of the meeting were: the Dean, the Vice-dean, the lecturer teaching the course unit, a student representative, the coordinator of studies, the SPC chairperson, and the students themselves), the Dean's Office took the following decision: one student had to repeat the course in the spring semester of 2022, the other students was expelled from the University.

During the period under evaluation the KNF Commission of Academic Ethics did not receive any information about breaches of principles of academic ethics, tolerance or non-discrimination in relation to LPhA SP.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The implementation of policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

The appeal lodging procedure is determined by the Regulations of the Dispute Resolution Commission of Core Academic Units. The students who disagree with the examination procedure and (or) the evaluation of an exam or pass/fail evaluation have the right to file an appeal to the Exam Appeal Commission of their CAU, the Vilnius University Dispute Resolution Commission.

During the last three years students of LPh, LPhFL, and LPhA SPs did not file any appeals.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies meets all the necessary legal requirements is adequate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:
(1) Strengths:

1. The balance in SP between the certain subject-specific knowledge and skills, and development of general competences required for further studies, independent learning and labour market.
2. An effective procedure to personalise the study process in order to suit the special needs of the students with disabilities.
3. The student-centred model of study, feedback to the student during the study process.
4. Close cooperation with social partners in SPC (2 social partners, 2 student representatives), in internships (in institutes, schools, publishing houses, editorial offices, etc.).

(2) Weaknesses:

1. –

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching staff shall be 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

(1) Factual situation

Teaching staff is hired by the University in accordance with the Regulation on the Organization of Open Competitions to fill positions of teaching and research (creative) staff of Vilnius University and their attestation. Teaching and research staff (except for those invited) is hired for their main job at the University or for higher positions on a competitive basis. The term of office for teaching staff is five years. Teaching or research staff hired for their main job at the University shall enter into an open-ended employment contract after they have won a competition for the same position at the University for the second time in a row.

In order to determine whether the qualifications of scientific and pedagogical employees correspond to the position they hold, attestation is carried out every five years. Teaching staff members are carefully evaluated based on the number of scientific articles published, participation in conferences, research management, lecturing, preparing teaching materials, participating in the process of doctoral studies, supervising student research, expert, organisational and other scientific work. Student feedback on the work of faculty members subject to certification is also taken into account. Surveys to determine student satisfaction and the system of surveys by sections of the course (modules) contribute to a more objective assessment of student opinion.

Beginning in 2019, Vilnius University introduced an annual interview process. Study programme chairs meet with study programme teaching staff to discuss various programme-related issues. SER provides a very thorough overview of the procedure of annual interviews on page 67.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The number of faculty members is sufficient to ensure required learning outcomes, adequate Study Programme running is not in jeopardy. The teaching staff in the program are highly qualified and very active both in developing and updating courses and in publishing research findings and submitting research projects.

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)

(1) Factual situation

Faculty members improve their research, teaching and professional competencies by participating in academic exchanges under ERASMUS+ (Learning Mobility of Individuals), NORDPLUS, ISEP (professional development courses, monitoring visits, international cooperation visits, teaching visits and study visits of the SP staff to foreign universities and non-university institutions). SER, p. 76: 'In 2020 Vilnius University joined the ARQUS alliance of European Universities, and in 2021 a new "ARQUS Twinning" exchange programme was started piloting short-term mobility schemes for teaching staff and their students'".

Teaching staff participates in the project "Promotion of the Cooperation between Baltic Studies Centres Abroad and Lithuanian Research and Study Institutions", project "Towards Lithuania"), as well as professional development courses, supervisory visits, international cooperation visits, faculty and staff study visits to foreign universities and non-university institutions.

Program visits are funded by EU funds specifically earmarked for these programmes. Vilnius University also partially finances study and internships as part of the program of internationalisation of studies. The teaching staff of the study area is well informed about the exchange opportunities.

Project activities funded by EU foundations and other external research funding organisations provide opportunities for exchange visits. Faculty members of the SP are informed about these opportunities. The faculty administration provides consulting and organisational assistance, creates conditions for adjusting the schedule of work with students, organises business trips, and provides a favourable system of salaries during internships.

Study field staff visited a number of educational institutions in Europe and the United States. Study visits included internships for researchers to gather material for their research work, as well as internships related to project activities. Project activities carried out in cooperation with other Lithuanian universities create more opportunities for inviting researchers to give lectures and seminars in the frame of the Study Programmes. Still, quite a modest number of invited foreign lecturers have lectured as part of various academic exchange programmes or support as a result of long-term cooperation and personal connections established by the faculty.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is extensive research cooperation with relevant institutions in Lithuania and abroad, including EU institutions, which helps bridge the gap between theory and practice. Teachers in the assessed field demonstrate personal mobility and have the opportunity to learn and exchange experiences with experts working at foreign universities. Academic and project exchange visits create opportunities for teachers to strengthen their competencies, follow and participate in the development of translation research and teaching, which helps to enrich the teaching of SP course sections to students. However, there is insufficient evidence that exchange visits have had an impact on improving the teaching of Study Programme courses to students and/or the content and methods of teaching and learning within the areas taught.

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

(1) Factual situation

As discussed during the visit, Vilnius University creates the all-possible conditions for the professional development of teaching staff necessary to teach within the Study Programmes. The central administration of the university seeks to develop the scientific, didactic, and professional competence of the staff through the organisation of training. The volume and variety of professional development programmes and training activities offered increased significantly (almost fourfold) over the period under evaluation. The titles of the training programmes (e.g., "Active Learning Methods", "Student Work in Groups", "Supervision of Research Papers", "Communication Skills", "Integration of Information Communication Technologies in the Teaching Process", "Application of Blended Learning in University Studies", etc.), some of which were conducted by visiting foreign lecturers, are also evidence of the fact that the teaching staff and the faculty of the University have been able to develop their professional development, including also participation in seminars and workshops on innovative teaching-and-learning and assessment methods, implementation of those innovations etc.

As of 2019, all instructional materials must be uploaded to the university's updated Moodle system, so most faculty have participated in related training. As described in the SER (p. 79) and later confirmed during the visit, since spring 2020, due to the impact of Covid-19, teachers are also actively improving their distance learning and assessment skills. Teachers themselves also provide training and consultation to teachers at schools, other universities, and social partners.

The research competencies of the faculty in Study Programmes are mainly enhanced through participation in national and international conferences (96 times in Lithuania and 131 times abroad), research in various projects (altogether 62 projects), writing peer reviewed articles, participating in the editorial boards of scientific journals, reviewing articles, and establishing better internal communication among researchers from the five institutes of the Faculty of Philology.

There is also evidence that the practical professional competence of the teaching staff is enhanced by applying scientific knowledge in practice through participation in state and non-

state cultural and educational projects, programmes and events, public lectures and presentations, and participation in commissioned events.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The university has created perfect conditions for the professional development of faculty necessary to support the program. During the evaluation period, the permanent faculty has improved their professional skills in a variety of training programmes and that demonstrates the growth of research capacity and academic development in the field. Faculty members are generally involved in research directly related to the Study Programme in question. Faculty competencies are evaluated every five years as part of the hiring process using clear and transparent evaluation criteria, such as relevant degree availability, number and quality of published research articles and participation in conferences, research leadership, lecturing, preparation of teaching materials, participation in the doctoral supervision process, supervision of BA and MA student theses research, carrying out expertise, organisational and other scholarly work. To avoid difficulties for Study Programmes in the future when some of the current staff reach retirement age, or when others move on to other positions, it is important to educate young PhD researchers in all field well developed currently at Vilnius University.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. It is the impression of the panel that Lithuanian Philology is taught at an admirably high level.
2. The number, qualifications, and competencies of the teaching staff in the field of Study Programmes are more than adequate to achieve learning outcomes.
3. Teachers in the evaluated Study Programmes demonstrate active personal mobility and have the opportunity to learn and exchange experiences with specialists working in foreign universities.
4. VU has created a very good environment for the professional development of faculty necessary to support the Study Programmes.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Teaching staff should be more interested in attracting incoming Erasmus+ teaching staff.

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

(1) Factual situation

FPhil is in five buildings of an architectural ensemble hosting 79 lecture rooms, most of which are equipped with respective presentation equipment; 8 of these rooms are computer classrooms with 8 to 24 workstations each. All faculty units (departments and centres) are equipped with computers, printers and photocopiers, which teaching staff use to prepare study materials.

The lectures for the field SP are delivered on FPhil premises: the largest lecture rooms (V. Krėvės, K. Donelaičio) are used for general lectures attended also by students from SPs delivered by other faculties, medium-size or smaller rooms (B. Sruogos, LLS, K. Būgos, A. Salio, J. Balkevičiaus, Latvian Studies Room, A and K series lecture rooms) are used for seminars and practical classes. The area of all lecture rooms, the number of workplaces, and equipment are sufficient for contact work. The groups in the field SP do not exceed 30-40 students and can work comfortably in larger lecture rooms; smaller groups work in smaller lecture rooms (e.g., Latvian Studies Room has 12 workplaces, lecture room 110 has 15 workplaces).

In 2014–2020, almost all FPhil lecture rooms were renovated (only one LLS lecture room used by the field SP is still awaiting renovation), supplied with new furniture and modern equipment: computers, internet, loudspeakers, projectors, drop-down screens. Electronic door locks were installed in all lecture rooms.

The units of the University Library are located close to the CAUs, and it is convenient for the field SP students to use modernised University Library resources. The library has 1,900 workplaces (514 workplaces in the Central Library, 834 in SCIC, 550 in the reading rooms of the faculties). There are 381 computerised workplaces (72 in the Central Library, 199 in SCIC, about 110 in the faculties). In the CAUs delivering the field SPs and University Library units used by the students there are spaces for leisure and informal communication with sofas, bean bag chairs, tables, coffee and snack vending machines. A new and comfortable leisure space for FPhil students was created next to K. Donelaičio lecture room in 2013.

The most important informational resources for literature studies can be found in the University Library. Students can use the collections of printed publications and electronic documents that are regularly supplemented with new relevant documents. About 5 million printed publications are stored in the University Library. Students can access the content of 58 subscribed scholarly information databases and search for relevant articles, journals, video material, statistical data, patents, and other documents necessary for their studies as well as read more than 260,000 electronic books.

The University Central Library has 4 height-adjustable tables and 3 ergonomic chairs in the reading rooms of Philology, Philosophy and Lithuanian Studies for people with special needs. Information terminals are height adjustable. The buildings of FPhil are protected cultural heritage, but decisions to adapt the FPhil infrastructure for students with special needs are consistently taken: a mobile stair climber with an additional battery, installed; 3 height and angle adjustable rolling desks and 2 specialised ergonomic chairs.

(2) Expert's analysis

Lecture Rooms and Facilities at FPhil:

FPhil consists of five buildings within an architectural ensemble, hosting a total of 79 lecture rooms. Most lecture rooms are equipped with respective presentation equipment, allowing for effective teaching and learning experiences. Eight of these rooms are dedicated computer classrooms with 8 to 24 workstations each, providing practical computer-based instruction. All faculty units, including departments and centers, are equipped with computers, printers, and photocopiers, facilitating teaching staff in preparing study materials.

Delivery of SP Lectures:
Lectures for the field SP (specific program) are delivered on FPhil premises. General lectures, attended by students from other faculties as well, are held in the largest lecture rooms such as V. Krėvės and K. Donelaičio. Seminars and practical classes take place in medium-sized or smaller rooms, including B. Sruogos, LLS, K. Būgos, A. Salio, J. Balkevičiaus, Latvian Studies Room, A and K series lecture rooms. The lecture rooms' sizes, number of workstations, and equipment are sufficient for contact work, accommodating groups of 30-40 students comfortably in larger rooms and smaller groups in smaller lecture rooms.

Renovation and Equipment:
From 2014 to 2020, almost all FPhil lecture rooms underwent renovations, including the installation of new furniture and modern equipment. The renovated lecture rooms are equipped with computers, internet access, loudspeakers, projectors, and drop-down screens. Electronic door locks were installed in all lecture rooms, enhancing security and accessibility.

University Library and Resources:
The units of the University Library, conveniently located close to the CAUs (central academic units), provide modernised resources for field SP students.

The library offers a total of 1,900 workplaces, with 514 in the Central Library, 834 in SCIC (Scientific Communication and Information Center), and 550 in the reading rooms of the faculties. Within the CAUs and University Library units, spaces for leisure and informal communication are available, including sofas, bean bag chairs, tables, and coffee and snack vending machines. A comfortable leisure space specifically created for FPhil students has been situated next to the K. Donelaičio lecture room since 2013.

University Library Resources:
The University Library is a crucial source of information for literature studies. Students have access to a vast collection of both printed publications and electronic documents, regularly supplemented with new relevant materials. The library houses approximately 5 million printed publications. Students can access 58 subscribed scholarly information databases, offering a wide range of resources such as articles, journals, video materials, statistical data, patents, and other necessary documents. Additionally, students can read over 260,000 electronic books, enhancing their access to digital academic content.

Accessibility Adaptations:
Despite the protected cultural heritage status of FPhil buildings, decisions to adapt the infrastructure for students with special needs have been consistently made. Accommodations include a mobile stair climber with an additional battery, ensuring accessibility for individuals with mobility challenges. Three height and angle adjustable rolling desks and two specialised ergonomic chairs are available to cater to the specific needs of students with disabilities or special requirements.

Overall, the comprehensive facilities, resources, and adaptations made within FPhil and the University Library to provide a conducive and inclusive learning environment for students is exemplary. The integration of modern equipment, renovation of lecture rooms, availability of various resources, and the provision of accessibility accommodations demonstrate a commitment to enhancing the educational experience.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to SER, apart from using the common infrastructure provided and maintained by the University, each CAU delivering the field SPs directly takes care (e.g., by identifying the need for renovation and allocating a budget line) of the renovation and maintenance of the material resources necessary for study quality assurance. The CAUs delivering the field SPs under evaluation plan the improvement of infrastructure every year. The planning considers startegic plans and resources of each CAU and the University. The plans are drafted by the CAU administration and then approved by the CAU Council together with the annual budget.

(2) Expert's analysis

On the visitation day, the only thing that needs to be mentioned in terms of upgradability of the faculty is a need for a greater navigation system inside the faculty as the faculty consists of various buildings and different entrances. A better navigation system for the students is a must. Regarding SER, the system of allocating funds and evaluation of what is needed for the facilities is very good.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:
(1) Strengths:
1. Students with special needs are taken into consideration on a broad spectrum.
2. Consideration of student needs
3. Design of the faculty

(2) Weaknesses:
1. Lack of navigational aspect for navigating inside the faculty

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

Study quality management and publicity shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

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

(1) Factual situation

Quality Assurance procedures and policies at Vilnius University are informed by the VU Statute, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the Regulations of the Study Programme Committee of Vilnius University, and the institution-wide project 'Development and Implementation of the Internal Study Quality Management System of Vilnius University' (SER, p. 88). Thus, the University's institutional policies and commitments exercise broad authority over most quality assurance procedures, including accreditation, program management and improvement; student performance and solicitation; faculty hiring and promotion decisions; formulation and implementation of academic integrity policies, etc.

In practice, much of this work - as applied to these Study Programmes – is done by the appropriate Programme Committee, which includes academic staff teaching in the programmes, social partners, and student representatives. This is an appropriate delegation of authority, since the members of the Study Programme Committee have program-specific expertise.

The Study Programme Committee quality assurance functions are numerous, but in general they include: examining the programme and course structure to identify strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for innovation; examining proposed changes in course structure or delivery; evaluating and approving the topics of theses and identifying and approving appropriate supervisors; soliciting and responding to student concerns and suggestions (SPC has a student representative); and other practical and analytical functions.

The SER reports that the SPC are formally required to meet 'by necessity,' although in practice it appears to meet more regularly, with meetings convened 'at least once a semester,' and with additional electronic meetings 'at least once per month'. (SER, p. 90) Numerous examples of course modifications or substitutions based on these procedures are described in detail in the SER (pp. 91-92).

One basic and appropriate method of quality control is the biannual anonymous student surveys. They are anonymous, conducted at the end of each semester, and the data thus obtained are shared with the dean and each faculty member. This is a common and valuable process, and in talking with the team, faculty members indicated that they take these results seriously. They also mentioned that many of them informally conduct their own surveys at the end of each class to gauge student satisfaction or dissatisfaction with modules or assignments within each course. Both survey techniques are commendable and should be continued.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Quality Assurance policies and procedures, according to the panel, are effective, proactive, built-in, multifaceted, and well understood by students and faculty, maybe could be better understood by alumni and social partners. VU is a renowned centre for Lithuanian language studies that is able to provide effective and efficient oversight of quality maintenance for the Study Programmes.

The programmes reviewed here provide a high level of education and demonstrate a willingness to explore and address weaknesses, as evidenced both by the various Study Programmes changes made since the last accreditation report and, perhaps more importantly, by the testimony of faculty, social partners, alumni and students themselves. The panel particularly appreciates those faculty members who conduct their own informal surveys, as they provide compelling evidence of commitment to problem-solving and student curiosity. Thus, the panel believes that the mechanisms for quality assurance and maintenance are appropriate for the Study Programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation

As noted earlier in this report, both social partners and students are represented on the Study Programme Committee.

More broadly, the social partners appear to be actively involved in all of these Study Programmes, as has been independently confirmed in discussions by both administrative staff and social partners. The main formal elements of social partner involvement are: representative participation in the Study Programme Committee; advising on course changes or needed skill development; providing internship or other opportunities for students to practise in the workplace; and participating in the evaluation of theses and internship reports as well as providing feedback on interns. Thus, according to the panel, the social partners provide a valuable and extensive network of professional support for Study Programmes teaching staff and current students.

Perhaps more important than these formal connections are the informal advice and support provided by social partners. The panel noted that faculty in these Study Programmes have close ties to alumni and employers, and that there is general interaction in conducting workshops, giving guest lectures, participating in student conferences and workshops, and providing general advice and support. The panel believes that these multiple connections with transfer practitioners in the field provide a significant benefit to the overall quality of the Study Programmes and should be maintained.

This report has already detailed numerous areas of student involvement in the quality assurance of the Study Programmes under consideration, but here again we briefly note the representation of the students in Study Programme Committee; the elected representation of the student association (https://www.vusa.lt/en); regular formal (institutional) anonymous student surveys; and semesterly informal student surveys initiated by individual faculty

members. These engagement mechanisms provide compelling evidence of how seriously HEIs and these individual Study Programmes seek to engage students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

These Study Programmes are characterised by collaboration and participation between students, alumni, and social partners. This is beneficial not only in the classroom, but also in creating formal or informal "networking" opportunities for students who may soon find themselves freelancing (also as digital nomads) and needing contacts to become active in the field of Lithuanian Philology, Media and Advertising.

The active involvement of external stakeholders was repeatedly confirmed by various groups in conversations with the panel. The team believes it has seen compelling evidence of the benefits of such engagement. Therefore, the panel concluded that student and stakeholder engagement was implemented at a high level and was a strength of the programmes that was worth maintaining and deepening.

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

(1) Factual situation

Basic program-specific data appear to be derived from student survey results as well as internal documentation related to Study Programme development, staff evaluation processes, and other internal Quality Assurance procedures.

In general, information about the Study Programmes is widely disseminated to both faculty and students. Students confirmed that they receive formal and informal surveys regarding their opinions of their classes, and noted that they generally felt comfortable approaching faculty members personally for discussion. Faculty also confirmed that they are provided with the results of individual student surveys, and noted that they are also collegially involved in the larger issues of program revision, program implementation, or other larger-than-individual issues.

As noted earlier in this report, program leaders, faculty, and social partners also independently confirmed that social partners were directly involved in structuring and analysing the program. No social partners indicated that they were not sufficiently informed about program data to perform this service.

However, the panel could not establish how information and data are collected or analysed to determine needed or desired staff learning opportunities. According to the panel, faculty surveys of Study Programmes – perhaps anonymously – may be a useful method for determining the technological, methodological, or research-based learning desired by faculty.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The main regular data collection for these programmes is based on the results of semiannual student surveys, and these processes appear to be generally effective, valuable, and implementable. Within the appropriate constraints of confidentiality, there appears to be a general openness in the dissemination and consideration of these data.

Students, social partners, and other stakeholders seem to be well and regularly informed about the overall structure and implementation of the programmes.

Therefore, the panel believes that the collection, use, and publication of information about the studies meet the expected standards and are consistent with the study programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation

Again, as noted, the main mechanisms for eliciting and analysing student opinion are through regular formal and informal student surveys. In addition, students are represented on the relevant Study Programme Committee, which is charged with raising issues of concern or opportunity as perceived by students. Finally, both students and faculty noted that instructors try to be available for formal or informal discussion in person, which students understand and appreciate.

During discussions with the panel, none of the concerns raised by students were alarming.

Internship providers, alumni, and social partners have expressed deep satisfaction with their participation in these Study Programmes. The panel encourages this, and encourages more qualitative alumni surveys (preferably in the form of semi-structured interviews) of specific Study Programmes to get an accurate picture of the Study Programmes from alumni. Such surveys can provide valuable information, are easy to administer, and allow program alumni to be engaged and informed about their Study Programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel found that there is a strong commitment within the institution and the Study Programmes to receiving students' ideas, comments, and concerns and taking appropriate action. The overall mechanisms used to do so appear to be generally successful and understandable. The Study Programmes visibility among social partners, alumni and students is very good. The panel therefore finds that the opinion of students in the field of inquiry about the quality of their studies meets all expected standards.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There is a strong desire to survey students and get their opinions.

2. There is a useful and productive involvement of social partners at both Quality Assurance and Internship organisation as well as alumni employability domains.
3. There appears to be effective coordination for Quality Assessment among all relevant partners, including Quality Assessment initiatives at the institutional level, Study Programmes Committees, and teaching faculty.
4. The involvement of students is very good.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is some evidence that alumni experience higher wish to be involved in the Quality Assessment of Study Programmes than they actually are.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	Organise consistent, systematic, and explicit validation of market needs analysis, employer feedback, and incorporate graduate best practices into the undergraduate program, among others. It is desirable to expand students' exposure to lectures by foreign professors.
Links between science (art) and studies	Strengthen the collective system of support and steering of research Strengthen national and international partnerships to bring together the research potential in Lithuanian philology
Student admission and support	Continuously update and promote information about available study abroad programs, internships, and exchange opportunities. Provide comprehensive guidance and support to students throughout the process, including assistance with credit transfers and academic planning.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	It is recommended to establish closer cooperation with national and foreign higher education institutions.
Teaching staff	Teaching staff should be more interested in attracting incoming Erasmus+ faculty.
Learning facilities and resources	It is recommended to improve the navigation system throughout the faculty for easier navigation.
Study quality management and public information	It is recommended that the alumni experience be involved in the Quality Assessment of Study Programmes.

V. SUMMARY

The Study Programmes design meets the legal requirements established for higher education curricula in Lithuania, with subjects evenly distributed and modules appropriate to the level of study. The team is concerned that practical business skills are not represented in the Study Programmes. They would be useful for future philologists (media, advertising, etc.) who will often work as freelancers or digital nomads.

The field of Lithuanian philology is one of the rare disciplines in the European Union. Lithuania is too small to afford a policy of competition between its universities involved in this field. Vilnius University (VU) , which has the most important teaching and research resources in this field, must position itself as a national and international platform to support all the research and teaching potentials in this field, both on the national and international levels. To this end, an ambitious partnership policy must be implemented.

Vilnius University demonstrates a strong commitment to academic quality, student support, and international engagement. The university's well-defined admission procedures, recognition of foreign qualifications, and provisions for academic mobility highlight its efforts to provide a conducive learning environment. VU's comprehensive support services, including academic guidance, mentoring programs, and career counselling, contribute to students' personal and professional growth. Additionally, the availability of financial scholarships and psychological counselling services further enhance the overall support system at VU. While there may be areas for improvement, VU remains a respected institution that strives to meet the needs of its diverse student body.

Student achievement is guaranteed by clear assessment criteria, feedback and the possibility to personalise studies. The quality of the programme is demonstrated by the good employability statistics of graduating students, as well as their readiness to continue their studies at Masters and PhD level.

Lithuanian philology is taught at a very high level. The number, qualifications, and competencies of the teaching staff in the Study Programmes are more than adequate to achieve the learning outcomes. Teaching staff demonstrate active personal mobility and have the opportunity to learn and share experiences with professionals working at foreign universities. Vilnius University has created very good conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary to support the sustainability of the Study Programmes under evaluation.

Vilnius University offers a diverse range of facilities that support a vibrant and enriching academic environment. The university's investment into the infrastructure, well-equipped classrooms, laboratories, libraries, and other amenities contributes to the overall quality of education and research. The availability of specialised facilities, such as language labs and research centres, enhances the learning experience and facilitates academic growth.

Students are surveyed and their opinions are taken into account in evaluating the quality of the Study Programmes. There is a useful and productive involvement of social partners in both quality assurance, internships, and graduate employment. There appears to be effective coordination of quality assessment among all relevant partners, including quality assessment initiatives at the institutional level, Study Programmes committees, and teaching staff.

Finally, the expert panel would like to thank Vilnius University and the representatives of the STUDY FIELD of PHILOLOGY (LITHUANIAN LANGUAGE) for preparing the self-evaluation report. In addition, the evaluation team would like to express its gratitude for a well-organised visit to the Faculty of Philology in Vilnius.

Expert panel chairperson:	**Anastassia Zabrodskaja**
	(signature)