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INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF LITHUANIAN MARITIME ACADEMY

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ANNEX 1. THE LITHUANIAN MARITIME ACADEMY'S RESPONSE TO REVIEW REPORT	

Glossary of terms and abbreviations used in this report

Academy, the	Lithuanian Maritime Academy.
EHEA	European Higher Education Area. The inclusive term for the States working together to take forward the Bologna Process.
ERA	European Research Area.
ESG	The European Standards and Guidelines [In full: "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area". [The current (3rd) edition was published in 2009].
ISO	International Organization for Standardization.
LMA	Lithuanian Maritime Academy.
MARLINS	A computer-based language training facility to support students in the development of their (Maritime) English language skills.
MOSTA	Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre.
PEST	Political, Economic, Social and Technological analysis.
PSC	Programme Supervision Committee.
QMS	[LMA] Quality Management System.
SAP	LMA Strategic Action Plan 2009-14.
SER	Self-Evaluation Report prepared by LMA to support the Institutional Review.
SKVC	Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras [Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education].

STCW	[International Convention On] Standards Of Training, Certification And Watchkeeping For Seafarers.
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats analysis.
UniMET	Unification of Maritime Education and Training. A project to bring together existing networks and institutions working in maritime education and training. It aims to support the harmonisation of maritime education and training in higher education in support of the Lisbon Treaty and the Bologna Process.

I. INTRODUCTION

The review process and the review team

1. An international team of experts visited the Lithuanian Maritime Academy ("LMA" or "the Academy") from 27-29 March 2012 to carry out an Institutional Review. The evaluation undertaken by the Review Team ("the Team") followed the "Methodology for Conducting an Institutional review in Higher Education". It was authorised by the Minister for Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania and organised under the Minister's authority by the Studiju Kokybės Vertinimo Centras (SKVC).
2. The purpose of the Institutional Review was "to ensure pre-requisites for the improvement of performance and the promotion of the culture of quality, also to offer recommendations for the development of the activities of higher education institutions". In particular, the evaluation assessed the operation of the institution in the areas of strategic planning; academic studies and life-long learning; research and art activities; and impact on regional and national development.
3. To arrive at its conclusions the Review Team drew on a wide range of documentation provided by Academy, including a Self Evaluation Report, and met with staff, current students, graduates, members of the Council of the Academy and representatives of social partners. The Self Evaluation Report (SER) provided by the Academy to support the Institutional Review was helpfully organised in line with the requirements of the SKVC and was supported by a series of annexes providing much useful information.
4. The experts have also been presented with the results of the evaluation of learning resources and associated infrastructure conducted by MOSTA and with the evaluation decision of 22 June 2012.
5. The Review Team comprised Professor Emeritus Hans Peter Jensen (Chair/Team Leader, Denmark), Dr Markku Karkama (Finland); Dr Rasa Lekavice (Lithuania); Mr Dionis Martsinkevichus (Student Member, Lithuania); Dr Henrikas Mykolaitis (Lithuania); and Dr David Cairns (Secretary to the Team, UK).
6. The Review Team wishes to thank the Director of the Academy and, through him, all those that it met in its visit to LMA for the frank, open, and collegial way in which Council members, staff, students and the social partners of the Academy participated in the meetings.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE LITHUANIAN MARITIME ACADEMY

7. The Lithuanian Maritime Academy was established as the Lithuanian Maritime School in 1948. At that time its chief purpose was to train seamen and officers for the merchant fleet, fisheries, the Navy, and port duties. In 1991 it became Klaipeda Advanced Vocational Maritime School, which was renamed in 1998 as the Maritime Institute College of Klaipeda University. In January 2001 the College was designated by the Lithuanian Government as a higher education institution with the title of the "Lithuanian Maritime College".
8. In 2007, following an external assessment by an expert group on behalf of the Minister of Education and Science, the Lithuanian Maritime College formally separated from Klaipeda University (with which it has since continued to work closely) and was granted self-

governance. In 2008 the Lithuanian Government formally approved the title of the institution as "Lietuvos aukštoji jūreivystės mokykla/Lithuanian Maritime Academy". The Government-approved title of the institution therefore encompasses the Lithuanian "mokykla", or "college", and the English "Academy", a term that under Lithuanian legislation normally denotes an institution with the status of a university. For the LMA, the retention of the term "Academy" in its title is seen as necessary to enable it to cooperate (and compete) with other similar institutions in the Baltic states, Europe and further afield.

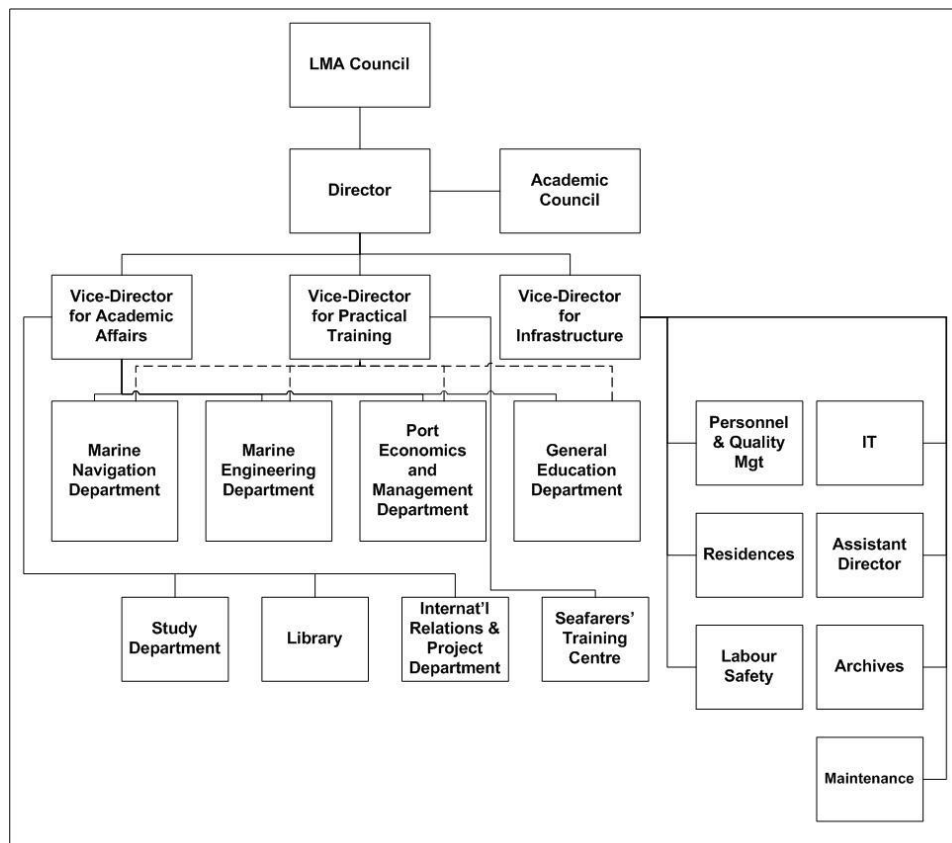
9. Lithuania's "Methodology for Conducting an Institutional review in Higher Education" assigns different criteria for assessing the research activities of a college and a university. The Review Team therefore took care to establish with the Academy's senior staff and its Council the criteria against which the institution's research should be assessed. The Team was satisfied with the explanations it received from the Academy and agreed that it would be correct for the purposes of this Institutional Review to treat the institution as a higher education college when reviewing its research activities. (see below, paragraphs 96-109).

Location

10. LMA is based in the City of Klaipeda, Lithuania's main port on the Baltic. The City lies at the mouth of the Danė River and is the most northerly permanently ice-free port on the Baltic. Klaipeda has a long maritime tradition, dating back at least to the time when it was the East Prussian City of Memel. The City of Klaipeda is the seat of government for the Klaipeda Region. The Academy is based in the imposing buildings of what was formerly a large secondary school which have been thoughtfully adapted to new purposes and are well-maintained.

Organisation and management

11. LMA is organised into four main teaching Departments: Marine Navigation; Marine Engineering; Port Economics and Management; and General Education. Their work is supported by teaching and infrastructural support staff as shown in the following organisational chart, adapted from an Annex to the Academy's SER.



12. In 2011 in accordance with the Law on Higher Education and Research and other Lithuanian legislation and regulations, the Academy ceased to be a "budgetary institution" and became a "public institution". The change followed the Academy's completion of a number of prescribed administrative procedures and allow it greater financial freedom – within defined limits – to manage its estates and staff salaries and take out commercial loans.
13. LMA is led by its Director who is answerable to the LMA's Council for its management, which also receives the Director's annual proposals for the Academy's Budget. At the time of this Institutional review the powers and status of the Council were unclear, following a challenge to the constitutionality of Lithuania's Law of Higher Education and Research (2009). Members of the LMA Council who met the Review Team told it that they were disappointed that the nature of their relations with the Director and his Management Team – which had been developing well throughout 2010-11 – were now "on hold" pending clarification of the status of Councils in universities and colleges.
14. LMA's Senior Management is led by its Director to whom the three Vice-Directors report. The Heads of the Departments report to the Director through the Vice-Directors though, as might be expected in a small and closely-knit institution, staff at all levels have ready access to the Director.

Programmes and Students

15. In terms of student numbers the Academy's chief full-time and part-time study programmes that lead to professional degrees are "Marine Navigation" and "Marine Engineering" (referred to by the Academy as the "technical programmes"), followed closely by "Port and Shipping Management" and "Finances of Port and Shipping Companies" (referred to be the Academy as the "social science programmes"). The duration of the full-time technical programmes is four years. The duration of the full-time

social science programmes is three years for the Finances of Port and Shipping Management and slightly longer (three and a half years) for Port and Shipping Management. LMA has recently begun to cooperate with Mykolas Romeris University to provide Master's level study opportunities at LMA's campus for the Academy's graduates. It also offers a substantial number of short courses for seafarers.

16. According to a background briefing note supplied to support the Institutional Review by the Academy, in 2011 there were
 - 770 full-time students studying at the Academy, of whom
 - ◆ 291 students were following the Marine Navigation programme
 - ◆ 181 students were following the Marine Engineering programme
 - ◆ 169 students were following the Port and Shipping Management programme
 - ◆ 129 students were following the Finances of Port and Shipping Management programme
 - 458 part-time students studying at the Academy, of whom
 - ◆ 228 students were following the p/t Marine Navigation programme
 - ◆ 114 students were following the p/t Marine Engineering programme
 - ◆ 51 students were following the p/t Port and Shipping Management programme
 - ◆ 65 students were following the p/t Finances of Port and Shipping Management programme.

At the time of the Review visit to the Academy its staff were anticipating that a new programme "Technologies of Maritime Transport Logistics" would shortly be accredited by SKVC.

International Convention On Standards Of Training, Certification And Watchkeeping For Seafarers

17. All those seeking to work as seagoing officers in the merchant marine are required to be meet the standards and requirements of the "International Convention On Standards Of Training, Certification And Watchkeeping For Seafarers". Graduates from programmes of study that meet these standards and requirements are readily employable. It is therefore essential to a higher education institution such as LMA that offers such programmes that it can certify that its graduates meet these standards and requirements, which include certification by Lloyds Register, and that the institution's quality assurance systems comply with the International Standards Organisation standard ISO 9001:2008. Under these arrangements LMA's quality assurance arrangements are therefore subject to regular compliance checks with the International Standard by external verifiers.

Mission and Vision

18. The Mission of the Academy is set out in its founding Statute and is as follows

- to enable individuals to acquire higher education and professional qualification that meet the needs of navigation and ports and Lithuanian economy and science, comply to the level of contemporary technologies, and satisfy the requirements of national and international conventions for maritime professions;
 - to develop applied science activity and research necessary for the Lithuanian maritime transport and Klaipeda Region and to advise municipal institutions, economic subjects, and individuals;
 - to disseminate the idea of Lithuania as a maritime state, to seek to implement it, and to promote maritime specialities among young people;
 - to implement lifelong learning principles, to enable continuous learning, and to assist economy subjects in the organization of professional development and retraining; to educate and train specialists open to education and culture, able to work under the conditions of fast change of technologies, to socialize in different social fields, and to integrate into the international community.
19. The Vision of the Academy is that of "a contemporary higher school, ... an educational institution open to society and [an] integral part of the national and European systems of higher education which meets the needs of Lithuania as a maritime state, observes the requirements of the EU directives, and provides the community with educational and different social services, i.e. higher non-university education, professional development and retraining, and education of self-expression."

III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

20. The SER described the legislative and regulatory requirements that provide the context for the Academy's strategic planning. These include
- European Union Directives, such as those on the recognition of professional qualifications and on the Minimum Level of Training of Seafarers
 - the requirements of "The International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification, and Watchkeeping for Seafarers" (STCW), most recently updated by the Manila Amendments in 2010
 - Lithuanian legislation such as the "Law on Higher Education and Research" (2009) and the "Law on State and Municipal Property Management, Use, and Disposal" (2002)
 - Lithuanian Government strategic planning frameworks, directives and regulations, such as Lithuania's "Long-Term Economic Development Strategy", its "National Education Strategy" and the requirements of the Lithuanian Ministry of Transport
 - the main documents of the European Higher Education Area and the European Research Area, including the "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area" [of the Bologna Process].

The Academy's Strategic Action Plan, 2009-14

21. In its "Strategic Action Plan 2009-14" (the SAP) the Academy does not set out an overall strategic goal but defines the Academy's principle "strategic activities" in terms of its founding Statute and "four principal areas" derived from the Statute. These are
 - Studies and lifelong learning
 - Applied Research and staff professional development
 - An impact on the regional and national development and the promotion of Lithuania as a maritime state
 - the improvement of the LMA management structure and the development of the quality management system
22. For each of the four principal areas the SAP provides a cascade of detailed objectives, identifying who is responsible for taking them forward, the timescale for their completion (in each case this is 2009-2014), and criteria to be used to assess whether the objectives have been met. To support the Review and in conformity with the institutional review methodology the Academy provided with the SAP copies of the Political Environmental Social and Technological (PEST) analysis it had undertaken and the analysis it had made of its Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities and Threats (SWOT).
23. In preparing for the visit the Review Team found that the PEST and the SWOT contained much valuable information but that in some cases it was difficult for the Team to see how the contents and remarks contained in the two analyses linked to the SAP itself. The Team was in no doubt that considerable time and thought had been devoted to completing the PEST and the SWOT analyses and recommends that it would be helpful to the Academy's strategic planning if, in future, it was to show the links between the threats and weaknesses on the one hand and the strategic opportunities and initiatives more clearly
24. The Review Team recognises that LMA has followed the methodology for strategic planning that is recommended by the Government of Lithuania; nonetheless, the Team recommends that the Academy should provide an overarching statement of its intended strategic direction (possibly for internal purposes only) that encompasses the four areas stated in paragraph 21 above. This would assist the Council, staff, and students of the Academy to achieve a better understanding of its plans for its future development. The clarity with which the four principal areas of the SAP is described, together with their subsidiary objectives is admirable; the methodology and presentation of the Academy's SAP could be improved by the addition of "milestones" for each objective, identifying key steps on the way to meeting each and providing indicative dates for each milestone (see below, paragraph 28).

Means for monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan

25. The actions taken by the Academy towards meeting the objectives of each section of the SAP are monitored internally by the managers of each of its administrative divisions and externally through Annual Reports to the LMA Council. According to the SER, progress towards meeting the objectives set out in the SAP is monitored internally on a continuing basis throughout the year, and reported on annually, in October, as one planning cycle ends and its successor begins. The SER also noted that representatives of the Students' Union attended the meetings of the Academy's senior managers and were therefore able to

participate in monitoring progress on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan. Progress is monitored externally through the presentation of LMA's Annual Report to its Council in March.

26. Within the Academy sections of the draft Annual Report to the LMA Council are seen by the relevant administrative divisions of the Academy and the final draft version of the Annual Report to the LMA Council is seen by the Academic Council (which includes student representatives) before it is submitted to the LMA Council (which likewise includes student representatives).

Information for stakeholders on the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan

27. Information for stakeholders on the Academy's progress is provided through the Annual Report to the LMA Council. When approved by the Council the Academy's Annual Report is published on its web site and is submitted to Lithuania's Ministry of Education and Science.
28. At the time of this Institutional Review the most recent and available Annual Report to the LMA Council was that for 2010. The Annual Report is organised into sections that correspond to the sections of the SAP. Each section of the Annual Report describes the activities undertaken by staff and students in the relevant area of the Academy's work but the Annual Report does not appear to go beyond description to analyse and present the progress that LMA has made in the period reported on towards achieving the objectives and outcomes set out in the SAP. The Review Team recommends that the Academy should provide its Council and other external stakeholders with means to track the progress LMA makes each year against the objectives and outcomes it has set for itself in its Strategic Action Plan (see also paragraph 22 above) through establishing and stating the milestones for measuring the Academy's progress towards its objectives.

Consistency of the Academy's Strategic Plan with the principles of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA)

29. The Academy's SER stated that in its strategic activities it is guided by the principles of the EHEA and that its internal quality assurance arrangements complied with the general requirements of the Bologna Process as formulated in the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2005). The current edition of this document – which is generally referred to as the European Standards and Guidelines, or ESG – was published by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA) in 2009; it might therefore be helpful for the Academy to update its understanding of the ESG with reference to the current edition.
30. Part I of the ESG sets out the chief elements of the quality assurance framework recommended for higher education institutions in the European Higher Education Area. These include
 - Policy and procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of their programmes and awards that are publicly available, together with a strategy for continuous improvement
 - Formal mechanisms for the approval, periodic review and monitoring of their programmes and awards
 - The assessment of students using published criteria, regulations and procedures

- Quality assurance of the qualifications and competence of teaching staff
- Adequate and appropriate learning resources for the support of student learning
- Information systems through which institutions collect, analyse and use relevant information for the effective management of their programmes of study and other activities
- Regular publication of impartial, objective, and up-to-date qualitative and quantitative information on the programmes and awards they offer

Policy and procedures for the assurance of the quality and standards of LMA's programmes and awards

31. The SER states that its quality management system "forms a processual attitude to studies and other related activity processes, [and] promotes the internal quality culture by involving all stakeholders in the process". The Academy provided its "Quality Assurance Manual" as an Appendix to the SER.
32. The procedures described in the Academy's Quality Assurance Manual are based on "eight quality management principles". These are clearly derived from the practice of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 9001:2008 standard for quality management systems, and are intended to meet the requirements of certification of fitness to deliver training for seafarers to the standards set out in the STCW. The Academy's Quality Assurance Manual is available on its web site. An extended version of the Academy's quality assurance manual that was stated to be compliant with the ESG was not available to the Team in English.
33. Quality management systems that have been designed to the ISO 9001 standard are comparatively rare in higher education institutions and the Review Team was not entirely sure that the Academy has thought through how it might be able to demonstrate that the requirements of the ISO 9001:2008 system that LMA follows and which is set out in its Quality Manual can be mapped onto the expectations of the ESG. Undertaking such a mapping exercise would help the Academy to explore the gaps and overlaps between the two systems and enable it to show in a convincing fashion that its arrangements are fully consistent with the expectations of the ESG.
34. The Review Team asked members of LMA what measures had been taken to respond to the SKVC external evaluation of the Port and Shipping Management programme in 2010. The Team was given full and helpful information which showed that in key areas the Academy had responded decisively to the recommendations arising from the programme evaluation. This information could have helpfully been included in the SER, where it would have demonstrated the Academy's commitment to "closing the quality loop" through responding to internal and external evaluations of its work. The Team recommends that in future Annual Reports to the LMA Council, and reports to other stakeholders, the Academy should describe the findings of significant internal and external evaluations, report its views on their findings, and report what actions it has taken to respond to them.
35. In 2011, the Academy reviewed the placement of its programmes in the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework (which itself had been certified to be in compliance with the European Qualifications Framework of the European Union in 2010) and made some adjustments to bring its programmes into line with the requirements of that Framework.

36. The Review Team understands that Lithuania considers that there is sufficient commonality between the EU's European Qualifications Framework and the Framework of Qualifications of the European Higher Education Area (FQ-EHEA) – the Qualifications Framework that applies within the Bologna Process – for them to be considered as equivalents. Senior members of the Academy with whom the Review Team discussed the placement of its qualifications in the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework were familiar with the "Dublin Descriptors" on which the FQ-EHEA is based. They were also confident that the Levels of the Academy's various qualifications were consistent with the "Dublin Descriptors". On the basis that Lithuania considers the requirements of the European Qualifications Framework and FQ-EHEA to be equivalent the Team is able to state that the level and characteristics of LMA's qualifications are consistent with the requirements of the European Higher Education Area.

Approval, review and monitoring of LMA's programmes and awards

37. As noted above, in 2010 a team of external experts was appointed by SKVC to evaluate the Academy's Port and Shipping Management programme. It found the Academy's quality assurance arrangements to be centrally organised and "rather complex". In 2010 the SKVC's programme evaluators were able to confirm that internal programme evaluations were taking place but their report was equivocal whether the data on programme performance that were collected by LMA – student progression and completion rates, student outcomes, and so on – were used to improve the performance of the programme.
38. For each programme there is a Programme Supervision Committee that brings together the staff teaching on the programme and includes student representatives. Heads of Departments rather than PSCs evaluate the progress of students and the programme several times during each session and at the end of the session. Programmes are also subject to periodic reviews of their progress by external panels appointed by SKVC and the maritime programmes are also subject to external review by the Lithuanian Maritime Administration European Maritime Safety Agency and external auditors for Lloyds Register. The present Review Team is satisfied that LMA has formal mechanisms for approving, monitoring, and reviewing its programmes of study. The Team recommends that the Academy should consider whether the Programme Supervision Committee should formally discuss the evaluation of the programme by the Head of Department and the associated recommendations for actions and improvements, which would be in keeping with the spirit of the ESG.

The assessment of students using published criteria, regulations and procedures

39. The SKVC team that evaluated the Academy's Port and Shipping Management programme in 2010 was able to confirm that the use of learning outcomes to derive assessment tasks was generally understood among the teaching staff, and that at suitable points in their studies students were briefed on the learning outcomes they were required to meet. The present Institutional Review Team was also able to confirm that students across the Academy's programmes knew what outcomes they were expected to achieve in order to progress through their programmes and secure their degrees and other awards.

Quality assurance of the qualifications and competence of teaching staff

40. An external assessment of the Academy's learning resources was provided for the Institutional Review by Lithuania's Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA). This showed that for the period 2008-10, and employing the

officially approved criteria, the composition, structure and qualification of the teaching and administrative staff was considered satisfactory.

41. The qualifications and competences of members of the teaching staff are assessed and verified prior to appointment. Each year feedback from students is collected for not less than one course taught by each member of staff. The students' feedback is provided to the member of staff and to their Head of Department and provides the basis for discussions between them about the performance of their teaching duties by the staff member and decisions about what support or other measures might be appropriate in the next session.
42. Across the Academy arrangements to ensure the competence and qualifications of the teaching staff are overseen by the Vice-Director for Academic Affairs. On the basis of the information provided by the Academy it seemed to the Review Team that LMA was taking active measures through the continuing professional development of its staff to increase the number of those that can contribute to applied research and degree level teaching.
43. In the SER the Academy explained that for certification within the terms of STCW seafarers required a good working knowledge of the English language ability to speak and understand English in the maritime context at specified levels. The Academy provides courses and tuition for its students in "Maritime English" and the members of the teaching staff who deliver the courses have themselves written and published course texts and primers in "Maritime English" that the students use in their studies. The Academy has also implemented a computer-based language training facility – MARLINS – to support students in the development of their English language skills. The proficiency of students in "Maritime English" is formally assessed throughout their studies. Members of the teaching staff (other than those delivering "Maritime English" courses) are encouraged to develop their English language skills so that they can participate more readily in cooperative and collaborative activities with maritime academies outside Lithuania and other higher education institutions more generally.
44. In addition to English language training students following the social science programmes "Port and Shipping Management" and "Port and Shipping Finances" may take elective language studies in German and Russian. These enhancements were made following feedback to the Academy from its students and those who provide study placements for them.
45. From its discussions with staff and students at the Academy, the Review Team was able to observe that, in general, students possessed a good level of facility in oral English, as did many staff. Staff in the more technically-oriented departments appeared, in general, to be less at ease than their peers in the other departments when conversing in English. The Team congratulates the Academy on the work it is currently undertaking to encourage the more widespread and fluent use of English by all its staff and encourages it to continue its efforts so that, in due course, LMA can provide one or more of its programmes (or parts of its programmes) through the medium of English (see below, paragraph 108).
46. The SER commented on the age-profile of the Academy's teaching staff, noting that the age-profiles for the Departments supporting the social science programmes and those supporting the technical programmes differed. In meetings during the visit, senior managers and other staff told the Review Team that meeting the staffing requirements of the STCW obliged the technical departments to recruit only senior staff with extensive maritime experience to teach the technical programmes. Such staff were difficult to attract to maritime education at the mid-point in their careers when they might be earning multiples of the salaries the Academy could offer. To add emphasis to this point, the Team

was told by staff and graduates who it met that newly qualified students could leave the Academy and immediately expect to earn more than twice the salaries of their tutors. It followed that other than in exceptional circumstances the Academy was only able to recruit former senior officers to teach on the technical programmes on their retirement from their seagoing careers.

47. Members of the Academy's teaching staff are formally assessed at five-yearly intervals through LMA's "attestation" process. Attestation takes into consideration the staff member's research, their teaching materials and feedback from students. Staff members who receive a positive "attestation" may be assigned additional classes or courses to teach, through which the staff member can increase their salary. The Academy has taken steps to encourage all its teaching staff to undertake research and to register for higher degrees where possible.
48. The Review Team is satisfied that the Academy has robust and effective means to assure the qualifications and competence of its teaching staff. The Team is likewise confident that, working within its financial means, the Academy is actively developing the proportion of its staff that can contribute to degree level teaching and applied research, and that it has robust and effective means to assure the qualifications and competence of its teaching staff which represents good practice.

Adequacy and appropriateness of resources for the support of student learning

49. An external assessment of the Academy's learning resources was provided for the Institutional Review by MOSTA. This showed that for the period 2008-10, and employing the officially approved criteria, the adequacy and availability of the Academy's learning resources and associated infrastructure was considered to be satisfactory, as was the efficiency with which the Academy had used the funds allocated to it from the state budget.
50. The SER described the learning resources the Academy has developed to support student learning. These include PC and more advanced workstations, Library facilities, engineering laboratories, facilities for training students and others in navigation, fire-fighting, responding to medical emergencies and escape procedures. In addition to these facilities, over several years the Academy has planned and installed a series of advanced computer-based simulator systems to support the training of students in practice-based aspects of navigation and seamanship. The most substantial of these systems is the Academy's "Full Mission Bridge Simulator", one of a suite of bridge simulators that allow students to practice different aspects of handling and managing a variety of classes of vessel. At the time of the review, the Academy was awaiting the outcome of an ambitious bid to the European Regional Development Fund for support the development of a "virtual ship", with the aim of advancing the competitiveness of the Lithuanian maritime sector.
51. The Review Team congratulates the Academy and its supporters in the Klaipeda "Marine Valley" Project (including Klaipeda University) on the imaginative development of LMA's simulation facilities, which the Team views as an instance of good practice in project visualisation and management and collaborative working. The team encourages the Academy in its continuing determination to plan for follow-on learning support projects of equal or greater ambition, including its bids for EU funding to develop a "virtual ship" simulator, and facilities for training in techniques for maritime crisis-management and Naval exercises.

52. The Academy's own assessment of the learning resources it provides for its students is that the equipment in its engineering laboratories is becoming outdated, if not actually obsolete – a point confirmed by the students who met the Review Team – and that it will need to be updated. The report of the SKVC review of the Port and Shipping Management programme in 2010 observed that the Library needed to acquire more up-to-date texts and more of them. Since then the Academy has purchased more copies of up-to-date texts (including texts written by members of its own staff): the number of texts purchased in 2011 was more than twice the equivalent number in 2010. Information provided for the Review Team by the Academy also showed that since 2010 it had entered into formal agreements with Klaipeda University to allow LMA students to use the University's libraries and to access a range of e-books, journals and databases to which the University subscribes. Since 2010 LMA's own Library has also subscribed to cooperation agreements through which staff and students can access a range of scientific and technical journals and e-books. Further measures are in hand to extend the seating area available to those studying in the Library or using its reference resources.
53. Part-time students (who are often seafarers) who are continuing their studies through distance learning, and full-time students on sea-going placements, have access to the Academy's electronically-based learning resources via the internet. Students and recent graduates told the Review Team that for seagoing students, access to the Internet via satellite-based internet services is often prohibitively expensive, so that their ability to use Academy's learning resources were generally confined to periods when they are in port or within reach of land-based Internet connections. Members of the Academy told the Review Team that their support for seagoing students was chiefly based on email technology which, since it is based on Internet access, shares many of the same difficulties described above. The Team recommends that the Academy should continue to give thought to how it might support students learning at a distance, for example through investigating off-line methods of information and resource sharing that sea-going students and distance learners can use without the need for a connection to the Internet.
54. On the basis of its reviews of the information provided by the Academy and its discussions with staff, students and graduates the Review Team identified that some areas of LMA's learning resources, such as its simulator facilities, were outstanding and that in others, such as the Library, an active and effective management was making rapid improvements to remedy weaknesses that had been identified. The Academy is aware that other areas of its learning resources, such as its engineering laboratories, require updating and it might now be wise for LMA to draw up plans for their gradual redevelopment that it can share with the LMA Council and its social partners.
55. Since 2010, the Academy has made some notable improvements to its library facilities. It is the Team's view that the volume of information that is now available to the Academy's staff and students through electronic means and their greater access to reading spaces should enable the Academy's Library to facilitate more extensive developments in student-centred learning. Such developments might, in time, enable the Library to become more like a "knowledge centre" than a traditional Library. This would be a forward looking and welcome development which the Team recommends that the Academy should investigate.

Academic and pastoral support for students

56. The Academy's arrangements for providing academic support to individual students focus on its expectation that all teaching staff will regularly make themselves available to students at set times through "consultations". These arrangements fit well with the Academy's size and cohesiveness. Students who met the Review Team seemed satisfied

that consultations took place regularly and allowed individuals to discuss their work and progress with their tutors.

57. In its meetings with students and staff during the visit the Review Team asked what arrangements there were to resolve any differences of opinion or personality between a student and their tutor. Both staff and students were confident that the student would approach the head of the relevant department in the first instance, and that if the head was unable to effect a solution, that the student would be able to escalate the matter to a more senior manager. It was told that, if necessary a "committee of enquiry" would be convened to resolve any matter between a tutor and a student that could not be dealt with by managers. As noted in paragraph 25 above, representatives of the LMA Students' Union attend meetings of the Director and senior managers of the Academy. The Team also noted the presence of student members on programme supervision committees and LMA's Council and Academic Council. The Team is confident that these representatives would be able to ensure that any intractable difficulties between a student and a tutor (or between a group of students and one or more tutors) would be addressed.
58. In the course of the visit the Review Team also asked students and staff what pastoral support the Academy was able to give students experiencing personal difficulties that were hampering their studies. Students and staff told the Team that the culture of the Academy was one of mutual support. The Academy closely monitored the attendance of students at classes and laboratories and absences – often the first sign of a student in difficulties – were actively followed up. Students emphasised that while the teaching staff were always ready to help and advise a student experiencing difficulties, that the same supportive and helpful attitudes towards students characterised LMA's administrative and other support staff.
59. The SER referred to the support the Academy gives to the LMA Students' Union. Students who met the Review Team told it that the Association was also able to support students experiencing difficulties and that one of the teaching staff was a medical doctor. Students also told the Team that the sporting, social, and community activities that the Students' Union organised for its members made a positive contribution to the well-being of the students at the Academy.
60. The Academy's present student support arrangements meet the needs of a tightly focused Maritime Academy, in which students who are being trained for a career in the merchant marine will need to be physically and mentally robust. With the development of the social sciences programmes, it is now the case that not all the Academy's students aim to progress to a seafaring life. The Review Team invites the Academy to review the accessibility of its facilities for those who are physically less able.
61. As the Academy continues to develop its academic and pastoral support arrangements for its students the Review Team recommends that it should also continue its support for the Students' Union, recognising that it is making an important contribution to the academic and social well-being of the student body.

Information systems for managing programmes of study and other activities

62. In the SER the Academy stated that it had installed an "e-quality management system" linked to the requirements of ISO 9001:2008 which external assessors had "positively characterized". In the SER the Academy referred to these arrangements as its Quality Management System, or QMS. The Review Team did not have access to the QMS and is therefore unable to comment on its features; the range of feedback information from

students and progression information that it holds and can analyse; how it supports the continuous quality improvement of students' learning opportunities; and whether the QMS is able to produce reports in a sufficiently timely way that they enable users to identify problems at an early stage and "nip them in the bud".

63. From the range of information available to the Team, however, including its discussions with staff and students, it was clear that the Academy gathered feedback information from students which it analysed in order to establish, among other matters, whether individual tutors were performing as required. It was also clear to the Team that the Academy gathered data and information on the progression of its students from Level to Level of their studies and information on those students who failed to progress and dropped out of their studies. Equally, it was clear to the Team that the data and information that are gathered through these processes are carefully considered by the Academy's staff and senior managers with a view to improving the curriculum and its delivery. Student progression and completion rates at the Academy are discussed further in paragraphs 72-78, below.

Regular publication of impartial, objective, and up-to-date qualitative and quantitative information on the programmes and awards they offer

64. The SER states that LMA publishes information in the Lithuanian language on its activities through its Prospectus, the Director's Annual Report to the LMA Council and through the Academy's web site. The Academy regularly provides information to the Ministry for Higher Education and Research and the Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA).
65. The information the Academy publishes about its work is also discussed in paragraphs 27 and 28 above. Information is periodically issued to media outlets and the press. The Review Team included members familiar with the Lithuanian language and has no reason to doubt the accuracy of the information the Academy publishes about itself.

Overall comments on the conformity of the Lithuanian Academy's quality arrangements with the provisions of Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines

66. The Review Team is confident that, overall, the quality arrangements that the Academy has in place for the areas covered by the ESG Part 1 are broadly consistent with the expectations of the Guidelines. As noted in paragraph 33 above, the Team advises the Academy to consider how it might demonstrate that the processes described in its Quality Assurance Manual, which are based on the requirements of ISO 9001:28 can be mapped against the ESG part 1.

Judgement on the contribution made by this area of the Academy's activities to its overall success

67. On the basis of its consideration of the Academy's SER and the supporting documents provided by LMA, and its discussions with staff and students of the Academy and its social partners, the Review Team has reached **a positive judgement of the area of Strategic management at the LMA.**

IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

The Academy's portfolio of programmes, awards, and short courses

68. The Academy's programmes of study lead to professional bachelors degrees: all are closely related to maritime activities. They comprise two groups of professional degree programmes: the first, referred to by the Academy as the "technical programmes" lead to named awards in Marine Navigation, Marine Engineering, and Electronic Engineering. The second group of professional degree programmes is referred to by the Academy as the "social science programmes": they lead to named awards in Port and Shipping Management, and Finances of Port and Shipping Companies. The Academy's technical and social science programmes are each offered in both full-time and part-time modes of study. The Electronic Engineering programme which LMA has developed but is yet to offer to students has only been planned for full-time study.
69. The SER stated that through offering part-time modes of study the Academy enabled students to study while retaining employment. More than one mode of part-time study is available: students following the Maritime programmes can take two-month blocks of intensive studies to enable them to organise their studies around periods of shore-leave, while the pattern for part-time students on the social science programmes is based around blocks of study of between two and four weeks' duration, in which teaching is delivered on weekday afternoons with some sessions (including assessment sessions) taking place on Saturdays. Students studying part-time on the technical programmes have access to some distance-learning support from the Academy when they are at sea (see paragraph 53) and LMA aspires to use distance-learning in the future to develop other courses and programmes to meet the needs of the Region and its stakeholders and the Lithuanian economy.
70. In addition to its professional degree programmes the Academy also offers a wide range of short courses. These are chiefly designed to enable mariners and others in the maritime and port sectors to master new skills and extend their knowledge of these domains. An Annex to the SER listed 24 such courses, almost all of which are linked to the certification and re-certification requirements of the STCW.
71. Surveying the range of professional degree programmes and short courses that are offered by the Academy the Review Team came to the view that they were well-matched to the Academy's mission and its strategic aims to support lifelong learning, advance regional and national economic development, and support the promotion of Lithuania as a maritime state.

Application, progression and completion rates for students on the Academy's professional degree programmes

72. The information that the Academy provided to support the Institutional Review, including the SER, highlighted its concerns with the number of students leaving LMA without completing their studies. The Review Team was also able to refer to an analysis of the Academy's resources for 2008-10 undertaken by MOSTA to support the Review.
73. In 2010 and 2011 the SER stated that non-completion rates in the "technical programmes", described in paragraph 68, had been 43 per cent and 48 per cent respectively. In the "social science programmes" more complex patterns of study and enrolment since 2002, including admissions to the programmes every second year rather than annually, make analysis of their non-completion rates and comparison with equivalent rates for the "technical

programmes" difficult. Data was provided by the Academy for the cohort recruited to the social sciences programmes in 2002 and graduating in 2006 which showed that 20 per cent of those admitted had not completed their studies.

74. While the Review Team was unable to locate comprehensive up-to-date progression and non-completion information for all the Academy's programmes before the visit it was subsequently assured that this information was gathered and closely analysed. LMA has identified student drop-out rates as a performance indicator for its Quality Management System.
75. The Review Team discussed student progression and completion rates with the Academy's senior managers, staff, and students in meetings throughout its visit. From these discussions it was apparent that over a number of years the Academy has worked hard to try to establish the grounds on which individual students might not have progressed through their programmes or completed them. The Team noted from the SER that student progression and completion rates were regularly discussed by Departments and by the Academy's senior managers, and this was confirmed by the staff it met. The Team commends LMA for the appropriately close attention it has given to collecting and analysing detailed progression and completion arrangements for its students.
76. Among the reasons adduced by the Academy for poor progression and non-completion was the financial crisis of 2008. This had led some full-time students to cease studying altogether in order to become earners and other students to transfer to part-time studies. Other causes put forward to account for poor student progression and non-completion included: student indebtedness and non-payment of tuition fees and a range of individual reasons that the SER divided between factors that the Academy is not in a position to address, such as illness and family problems, and factors that it can attempt to mitigate such as, for part-time students, temporary increases by the employer of the student's work load or short-term illness. In such cases the Academy can offer some flexibility in the schedule of tuition and assessment expected of the student.
77. Among first and second year students following the technical programmes the Academy has identified some that fail to progress to the final years of their studies because they have entered LMA with an insufficient grounding in mathematics physics and/or chemistry. It has also found that some students may choose to enter a programme for which they are not suited, either by temperament or aptitude. The Review Team is aware that other higher education institutions in Lithuania and across the EU have experienced similar challenges and that there is a range of potential solutions in other institutions and jurisdictions that the team encourages the Academy to learn from and draw on as it continues to work to address problems with progression and completion rates.
78. As the Academy continues to discuss the progression and completion rates for its students the Review Team suggests that it might find that LMA's analysis and responses are assisted by reviewing steps that Lithuanian and other higher education institutions are taking to address these challenges. The Team recommends that LMA should consider what measures it might need to take to make its admissions procedures more able to identify students who, when admitted, might need additional academic support in order to progress satisfactorily, and what additional academic support in mathematically-based subjects it might need to provide for such students.

Monitoring the effectiveness of placement studies

79. Each of the technical and social sciences programmes offered by the Academy that lead professional degrees includes a significant professional practice element, delivered through a placement with an employer. For the technical programmes the placement is usually seagoing; for the social science programmes the placement is usually with a shore-based employer able to offer a suitable placement opportunity.
80. Placement opportunities may be offered through an approach to the Academy from a maritime or shore-based employer or through contacts between members of the Academy and potential placement providers/social partners in the course of consultancy work undertaken by staff and other activities. Students who met the Review Team spoke appreciatively of the contribution their placement activities had made to their studies. They told the Team that following their placements many students were offered permanent employment after graduation by their placement provider. Social partners who met the Team included a number who provided placement opportunities: some offering seagoing placements and others shore-based placements. All the placement providers praised the way in which the Academy had prepared the students for their placements; several spoke warmly of their appreciation of the opportunity to avail themselves for the duration of the placement of well-trained and highly motivated students.
81. The Academy keeps records of the placements it has arranged for each of its students and collects feedback from both the student and the placement provider on the student's progress and the opportunities for learning that the placement has provided. This information is used to assess whether further students should be sent to the placement provider and what improvements to the curriculum might be made. As noted in paragraph 44, above, feedback from students after their placements had led LMA to introduce elective studies in German and Russian language. Students who had returned from placements to the Academy to complete their studies told the Review Team that part of the assessment routine for a placement was to prepare and deliver a presentation on the experience of undertaking a placement and the learning that it had made possible. This seemed to the Team to be an excellent means through which to acquaint first and second year students with the expectations and requirements of placements and their providers, while helping them to appreciate the relevance of their current studies for their future placements and, ultimately, their employment.
82. The Review Team came to the view that the Academy was carefully monitoring and managing the placement opportunities it was arranging for its students, and that the feedback it gathered from its students on their return and from those who provided placements for its students was contributing to the enhancement of the curriculum.

Monitoring the employment and careers of LMA graduates

83. The SER noted that the Academy's work to monitor the career paths of its graduates had been hampered to date by the lack of a reliable register of its alumni, through which it could track their progress and stated the Academy's commitment to support the development of an Alumni Club. The SER also noted that where the Academy had managed to maintain contact with its graduates this was generally because they wished to stay in touch with the tutors who had taught them and – through such contacts – the students with whom they had studied. The SER stated that the Academy has entered into a project with Vilnius University and other Lithuanian higher education institutions the purpose of which is to develop career management systems for students and graduates.

84. In the course of its visit to the Academy the Review Team was able to meet a group of LMA graduates that included individuals who had followed the technical programmes and the social sciences programmes. The graduates told the Team that finding employment for graduates from the technical programmes was generally straightforward: the Academy had established a strong reputation for training very able engineering and deck officers with ship-owners, crewing agencies, and other maritime employers based in Klaipėda, and with a number of international groups. Former students from the social science programmes similarly told the Team that the Academy's reputation among port employers for preparing practically oriented and skilled employees had also been helpful to them. Students from both groups of programmes told the Team that members of the teaching staff had been able to refer potential employers to them. The graduates who met the Review Team told it that many of them returned to the Academy after their graduation to pass on their experiences to their former tutors, for the benefit of the curriculum, and that it was a regular occurrence for former students to return to the Academy to make presentations on current developments.
85. From the discussions the Review Team was able to hold with graduates of the Academy and employers' representatives among the Council of the LMA and its social partners, it was clear that on graduating from the Academy successful former students – and particularly those from the technical programmes – were able to enter well paid employment. The Team suggests that the Academy might wish to make the success of its graduates and their employment opportunities more widely known to Lithuanian opinion formers and stakeholders.
86. The Review Team congratulates the Academy on the strong links that it maintains with those graduates who are willing to stay in touch with their former tutors. In the team's view, the tutors are also to be congratulated for the support they give their former students and the intelligent way that they use the feedback from the graduates to develop the curriculum and to widen the range of up-to-date information that the Academy is able to make available to its current students. As the Academy's former graduates progress in their careers it will be helpful for LMA to maintain its contacts with them and to keep under review with them the possibilities for them to contribute not only feedback but also teaching. Some experienced graduates might, indeed, eventually be willing to return to the Academy as members of the teaching and research staff.
87. The Review Team considers that the achievements of its graduates make the latter valuable ambassadors for the Academy with employers, social partners and opinion formers in Lithuania and internationally. As the Academy's graduates progress in their careers they will become an increasingly valuable source of intelligence for the Academy about current trends and needs in maritime training and higher education. The Team recommends that the Academy should redouble its efforts to support the development of its Alumni Club.

Contributions by social and business partners to learning and the development of new programmes

88. The Academy cooperates with other higher education to share access to specialist lectures and facilities. For example, there is close working and cooperation between LMA and Klaipėda University in which the Academy is able to make use of the University's Library and other facilities and the University has access to the Academy's simulators. In addition to the Academy there is a Shipping School in Klaipėda that trains seafarers. Graduates from that School regularly continue their maritime studies through transferring to the Academy. Further afield the Academy participates in international groupings such as

UniMET which is an initiative of the International Maritime Organisation with assistance from the European Union to support maritime education and training.

89. The Academy is an active promoter and participant in the development of a Maritime Cluster for the Baltic Region and the Academy's Director is a member of the Board of the "Baltic Valley Project", which is also known as the "Marine Valley". This Project aims to bring together universities and higher education institutions with businesses and other knowledge-based enterprises to promote and develop the maritime sector in Lithuania (see below, paragraph 101).
90. Representatives of social and business partners sit on the Academy's Council and also attend programme supervision committees. Representatives of social and business partners who met the Review Team during the visit to the Academy were able to confirm that in appropriate circumstances, qualified individuals might be invited to assist with the assessment of students' projects. Other social partners, including a representative of the Lithuanian Navy, told the Team that they were able to suggest curriculum developments to the Academy and propose new programmes. A representative of the Lithuanian Seamen's Union who met the Review Team described the work staff and students at the Academy were undertaking to reconstruct historic Lithuanian vessels and how this project was helping to make the Lithuanian public aware of their maritime heritage.
91. From its consideration of the SER and other supporting information provided by the Academy, and its discussions with representatives of the Academy's social partners the Review Team was able to confirm that the Academy cooperates actively with a wide range of bodies in the Klaipeda Region and further afield in Lithuania and beyond.

Transnational mobility arrangements for staff and students

92. The SER described the steps the Academy has taken to internationalise the learning of its students by encouraging staff and student mobility through the ERASMUS Programme. The SER stated that the Academy has been less successful in promoting outward and inward mobility of staff and students than it would have wished (particularly inward mobility) and described some of the matters that it needed to tackle in order for staff and student mobility to become more pronounced.
93. One factor – finances – has made it difficult for the Academy to fund all the students who apply to participate in an ERASMUS exchange but the Review Team was told that there were other contributing factors that restricted the opportunities for outward mobility, such as the need to achieve the closest possible match between the LMA curriculum and that of the institution receiving LMA exchange students. In the past, difficulties with achieving a sufficiently close curriculum match have had to be overcome by providing additional work for students to undertake after returning from exchanges, and assessing them, to enable the students to take forward their LMA programme.
94. Members of the Academy who met the Review Team suggested that another difficulty that it would need to resolve was that the Academy did not provide its study programmes through the English language. This diminished the attractiveness of the Academy's programmes to potential incoming students from maritime academies in other EU states. As the Academy continues its work to internationalise its curriculum the Review Team recommends that it should maintain and extend its support for teaching and support staff who are working to acquire 'maritime English', with a view to offering at least one whole degree programme through English within a specified period.

Judgement on the contribution made by this area of the Academy's activities to its overall success

95. On the basis of its consideration of the Academy's SER and the supporting documents provided by LMA, and its discussions with staff and students of the Academy and its social partners, the Review Team has reached a **positive judgement of Academic Studies and Life-Long Learning at LMA.**

V. RESEARCH AND ART

Consistency of the Academy's research activities with its mission and strategic documents

96. The SER described the ways in which the applied research that the Academy undertakes links to its Mission and its Strategic Action Plan. As noted in paragraph 21, the four areas of the Strategic Action Plan comprise
- Studies and lifelong learning
 - Applied Research and staff professional development
 - An impact on the regional and national development and the promotion of Lithuania as a maritime state
 - the improvement of the LMA management structure and the development of the quality management system
97. The SER described the different forms of applied research undertaken by staff engaged in research. These include applied research undertaken to support a range of consultancy activities, research on the characteristics of the Lithuanian maritime sector and research on the maritime activities of the Klaipeda Region and the Port and City of Klaipeda. Other applied research conducted by staff is directed towards the development of new programmes of study and new subject areas. In meetings with staff and students the Review Team was able to hear how the outcomes of some of the doctoral studies undertaken by staff were contributing to the curriculum and the learning opportunities available to the Academy's students.
98. Not all the Academy's staff have the academic background to undertake research, and some that do have the necessary research skills are too fully engaged with their teaching and academic administrative duties to be able to take on a research project. The Academy provides financial support for staff who are willing to undertake research or to register to study for a higher degree and a member of staff who gains a PhD is eligible for promotion to the rank of "associate professor".
99. The applied research and consultancy conducted by LMA staff generates income for the Academy which is used for special payments, including for staff development and for the improvement of learning resources such as equipment and software. Members of the teaching staff are strongly encouraged to undertake research for publication and conference presentations. When staff are considered for the purposes of appointment, or "attestation" of their fitness to teach, their publications are an important constituent in their portfolio of evidence. Publications in peer reviewed English language journals are especially valued.
100. The Academy is a member of the consortium of higher education institutions, businesses and municipal and regional bodies, led by Klaipeda University, that is seeking to develop a

"Marine Valley" along the lines of California's "Silicon Valley". The aim is to bring maritime research and business together to develop Lithuania's maritime sector and maintain its international competitiveness. The Review Team was told that some of the funds needed to develop the Academy's "Full Mission Bridge Simulator" had been made available through the "Marine Valley Programme", which is also known as the "Baltic Valley".

101. The Marine Valley Programme aims to promote collaboration between existing and potential contributors to research, academic and professional studies and business activity in the maritime sector. It is also intended to promote new technological and scientific "startup" businesses and enhance the general competitiveness of the Lithuanian maritime sector. At the time of the present review the main project being taken forward under the auspices of the Marine Valley initiative was a joint study between Klaipeda University (which is leading the project), the Academy, and the Lithuanian Nature Research Centre. The focus of this project "JURA" is the renewal of the existing maritime studies nucleus in the Klaipeda Region and the renewal of the "study infrastructure". This has led to substantial inward investment in laboratories and research facilities and it was under this project that the final stages in the development of the Academy's simulation facilities were completed. Plans for subsequent projects include the development of

- study infrastructures
- a fisheries and aquaculture laboratory
- engineering and communications networks
- a science and technology park for Klaipeda.

One ultimate aim is to establish a "National Centre for Marine Science and Technology".

102. Some of the activities listed as consultancy in the SER seemed to the Review Team to be more akin to professional training than applied research. LMA staff pointed out that a prerequisite to the delivery of professional training was establishing the character of the training required and development of the necessary support materials (including simulation scenarios) for the training and that this could properly be described as applied research – a viewpoint which the Team could understand. Other applied research activities cited by the Academy were clearly linked to the needs of Regional and local employers. In one case, for example, the Academy had provided a Klaipeda-based multi-national company with evidence of the environmental impact of its activities.
103. Reviewing the information available, it was not clear to the Review Team that the scope of the Academy's quality assurance/quality management arrangements extended to its research and applied research activities. The Team recommends that the Academy should bring its research and applied research activities more plainly within its quality assurance arrangements, such as data collection (which is already happening) feedback, and periodic review.
104. The Review Team was interested to hear from staff and supportive social partners about the imaginative work that was being undertaken to reconstruct a historic Lithuanian vessel. This project was being led by a senior member of staff linked to one of the technical programmes, with the support of the Academy and the participation of student volunteers. The aim was not only to reconstruct the vessel but the skills required for its construction

and to use the project as a focus for promoting wider understanding among the Lithuanian public of the country's maritime heritage.

105. The Academy consults its social partners and other stakeholders when it is considering whether to undertake particular research activities and those who met the Review Team were anxious to emphasise the contribution that the Academy's research potential made to their businesses and their capacity for development.

European Research Area

106. The European Research Area combines a European international market for research, where researchers, technology and knowledge freely circulate; effective European-level coordination of national and regional research activities, programmes and policies; and initiatives implemented and funded at European level.
107. It is the Academy's opinion that its participation in international research projects is fragmentary in character, a view with which the Review Team concurs. The Academy's participation in activities within the ERA is chiefly directed towards increasing the competitiveness of the Klaipeda Region and the Lithuanian maritime transport sector.
108. The Review Team observed that the senior managers and other staff of the Academy wish to make contributions to the ERA within LMA's field of competence. Before the Academy can participate more fully in the maritime research activities of the ERA, however, some difficulties will need to be overcome that stem from the size of the Academy and its financial resources. More involvement in the maritime research activities taking place across the ERA will also require a more assured facility with spoken and written English on the part of researchers and research managers (see above paragraph 45).

Judgement on the contribution made by this area of the Academy's activities to its overall success

109. The Review Team is of the view that the Academy's Research activities are consistent with Lithuania's expectations for a college of higher education and the resources available to LMA, and that the research that is conducted (which is mostly applied research and doctoral research by staff) is consistent with the Academy's Mission and Strategic Action Plan.
110. On the basis of its consideration of the Academy's SER and the supporting documents provided by LMA, the Academy's honest assessment of its own position, and the Review Team's discussions with staff and students of the Academy and its social partners, the Team has come to a **positive judgement of the area of Research and Art at LMA.**

VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Academy's impact on the Region and Lithuania more generally

111. A section of the SER described in detail the impact of the four principal themes in the Academy's Strategic Action Plan in terms of their regional and national impact. It noted in particular that each of the Academy's four principal study programmes had no equivalent elsewhere in the Lithuanian higher education sector that, even in the present challenging economic circumstances LMA's graduates found ready employment, and that there was a general need for new recruits to the maritime professions.

112. The SER noted that the Academy's technical programmes enabled Lithuania to service the needs of its own merchant marine and the Lithuanian Navy for navigation, engineer, and deck officers, and that they enabled LMA graduates to gain highly paid employment in the merchant fleets of other states while – for the most part – remaining domiciled in Lithuania. The development of the Academy's simulation facilities and its maintenance of training and re-certification programmes for seafarers that comply with ISO 9001:2008 requirements and, therefore, with those of the STCW, has enabled the Academy to maintain its reputation for advanced training. In this connection, the SER noted that in some cases maritime academies from neighbouring Baltic states sent students to the Academy for technical training.
113. The Academy's social science programmes in Port and Shipping Management, and Finances and Shipping Management, provide their students with higher education and training curricula that are closely attuned to the needs of the shipping and cargo-handling industries in the Port of Klaipeda and the Region, and the activities that service those industries and depend on them. In its meeting with social partners the Review Team was told by one chief executive that one of the main reasons his company (a large multinational maritime services provider) had had for moving its offices to Klaipeda was to have ready access to the Academy's graduates and its training and consultancy services.
114. The Academy cooperates with a range of other higher education institutions in Lithuania, both within the Klaipeda Region – most notably Klaipeda University – and further afield. As noted in paragraph 15, LMA provides a study base that Mykolas Romeris University uses to deliver Master's level programmes. This enables the Academy's graduates to study at Master's level without having to leave Klaipeda. Further cooperative ventures of this sort are to be encouraged and the Review Team recommends that the Academy should vigorously explore the possibilities for cooperative and consortium working that are open to it, both in the Region and further afield.

Judgement on the contribution made by this area of the Academy's activities to its overall success

115. The Review Team is of the view that the Academy's impact on the economic and social well-being of the Region and of Lithuania more generally is consistent with the Academy's Mission and Strategic Action Plan and is impressive, given the resources available to the Academy.
116. On the basis of its consideration of the Academy's SER and other supporting documents and its discussions with the Academy's staff and students and its social partners, the Team has come to **a positive judgement of the Academy's Impact on Regional and National Development.**

VII. GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Strategic management and planning

Good practice

1. That, working within its financial means, the Academy is actively developing the proportion of its staff that can contribute to degree level teaching and applied research, and that it has robust and effective means to assure the qualifications and competence of its teaching staff, which represents good practice (paragraph 48)

2. That the Academy's work in project visualisation and management and collaborative working in the context of the Klaipeda "Marine Valley Project" represents good practice (paragraph 51)

Recommendations

1. That it would be helpful to the Academy's strategic planning if, in future, it was to show the links between threats and weaknesses on the one hand and strategic opportunities and initiatives more clearly (paragraph 23)
2. That the Academy should provide an overarching statement of its intended strategic direction (possibly for internal purposes only) that encompasses the four areas stated in paragraph 21 above. This would assist the Council, staff, and students of the Academy to achieve a better understanding of its plans for its future development (paragraph 24)
3. That the Academy should provide its Council and other external stakeholders with means to track the progress it makes each year against the objectives and outcomes it has set for itself in its Strategic Action Plan, through establishing and stating the milestones for measuring the Academy's progress towards its objectives (paragraph 28)
4. That the Academy should undertake a mapping exercise to enable it to explore the gaps and overlaps between the quality assurance arrangements advocated by ENQA, in Part 1 of the European Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, and those of its Quality Management System (QMS), which are based on ISO 9001:2008, to enable it to show in a convincing fashion that its arrangements are fully consistent with the expectations of the ESG (paragraph 33)
5. That in future Annual Reports to the LMA Council, and reports to other stakeholders, the Academy should describe the findings of significant internal and external evaluations, report its views on their findings, and report what actions it has taken to respond to them (paragraph 34)
6. That the Academy should consider whether the Programme Supervision Committees should formally discuss the evaluation of the programme by the relevant Head of Department and the associated recommendations for actions and improvements, which would be in keeping with the spirit of the ESG (paragraph 38)
7. That the Academy should continue to give thought to how it might support students learning at a distance, for example through investigating off-line methods of information and resource sharing that sea-going students and distance learners can use without the need for a connection to the Internet (paragraph 53)
8. That the Academy should investigate how it might manage the development of its Library towards becoming a "knowledge centre" than a traditional Library, which could support the Academy's work to extend student-centred learning (paragraph 55)
9. That the Academy should review the accessibility of its facilities for those who are physically less able (paragraph 60)
10. That the Academy should continue its support for its Students' Union, recognising that it is making an important contribution to the academic and social well-being of the student body and LMA's academic and pastoral support arrangements for its students (paragraph 61).

Studies and life-long learning

Good practice

1. The Academy's carefully monitoring and management of the placement opportunities it arranges for its students, and its arrangements to gather and analyse feedback from its

students on their return from placements placement providers in order to enhance the curriculum (paragraph 82)

2. The work that the Academy undertakes to maintain strong links with its graduates, the work of its tutors to support their former students as they move into employment and the intelligent way that the Academy uses feedback from its graduates to develop the curriculum and to widen the range of up-to-date information that the Academy is able to make available to its current students (paragraph 86)

Recommendations

1. That as the Academy continues to discuss the progression and completion rates for its students it should review the steps that Lithuanian and other higher education institutions are taking to address these challenges and that it should consider what measures it might need to take to make its admissions procedures more able to identify students who, when admitted, might need additional academic support in order to progress satisfactorily, and what additional academic support in mathematically-based subjects it might need to provide for such students (paragraph 78)
2. That the Academy might wish to make the success of its graduates and their employment opportunities more widely known to Lithuanian opinion formers and stakeholders (paragraph 84)
3. That as the Academy's former graduates progress in their careers LMA should maintain its contacts with them and keep under review with them the possibilities for them to contribute not only feedback but also teaching possibly as members of the Academy's teaching and research staff (paragraph 86)
4. That the Academy should continue its efforts to support the development of its Alumni Club (paragraph 87)
5. That as the Academy continues its work to internationalise its curriculum it should maintain and extend its support for teaching and support staff who are working to acquire 'maritime English', with a view to offering at least one whole degree programme through English within a specified period (paragraph 94)

Research

Recommendation

1. That the Academy should bring its research and applied research activities more plainly within its quality assurance arrangements, such as data collection (which is already happening) feedback, and periodic review (paragraph 102)

Impact on regional and national development

Recommendation

1. That the Academy should vigorously explore the possibilities for cooperative and consortium working that are open to it, both in the Region and further afield (paragraph 113)

VIII. JUDGEMENT

117. In compliance with the procedures set for the external review of Lithuanian higher education institutions (22 September 2010), the international team of experts gives the Lithuanian Maritime Academy a positive evaluation.

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof. Hans Peter Jensen

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Dr. Markku Karkama
Dr. Rasa Lekavičė
Dr. Henrikas Mykolaitis
Mr Dionis Martsinkevichus

Vertinimo sekretorius:
Review secretary:

Dr. David Cairns

ANNEX 1

THE LITHUANIAN MARITIME ACADEMY'S RESPONSE TO REVIEW REPORT

Lithuanian maritime academy (Academy) and their staff are grateful to the international team of experts and to representatives of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education involved in the Institutional review for the recommendations and insights for the further development of the activities of the academy. Provided recommendations will be taken into consideration while evolving and building up the main areas of the LMA activities.

Please find below additional information on the Institutional review report of Lithuanian maritime academy.

p. 6. The Lithuanian Maritime Academy was established as the Lithuanian Maritime School in 1948. At that time its chief purpose was to train seamen and officers for the merchant fleet, fisheries, the Navy, and port duties. In 1991 it became Klaipeda Advanced Vocational Maritime School, which was renamed in 1998 as the Maritime Institute College of the Klaipeda University. In January 2001 the College was designated by the Lithuanian Government as a higher education institution with the title of the "Lithuanian Maritime College". In 2008 Lithuanian Maritime College was renamed in Lithuanian Maritime Academy.

p. 50: Please be informed that on 18 April 2012 the subsidy contract for funding Project "LLIV-289 Improvement of the Competitiveness of Lithuanian-Latvian Maritime Sector Engineers / LTLV-MARINE ENGINEER)" from the European Regional Development Fund is signed. The aim of mentioned Project is to develop virtual ship in the Academy. Academy is actively involved in project activities; please find attached the list of current and completed projects.

p. 72: Information on students' progression and non-completion is collected, monitored and analysed in the Academy on the continuous basis. Students' progression and non-completion monitoring, analysis and prevention is the part of Academy quality management system. The indicator of students' drop out is measured periodically and describes the effectiveness of Academy performance, this was mentioned in paragraphs 35-38, 161-167 of self-evaluation report.

Permanent monitoring of day-time students progression and non-completion is performed by Marine navigation, Marine engineering, Port economics and management departments and of part-time students – by Study department. At the end of each study year departments complete special form F-68, „Summary of students drop outs" (filled in forms for 2008-2009, 2009-2010, 2010-2011 study years are attached), where the data about numbers of dropped out students are presented according to study groups and the reasons of non-completion. The analysis of the data is aimed to identify the main causes of non-completion and work out prevention measures to reduce drop outs of to help students who left school to return to study and successfully complete their studies.

In addition we would like to inform that the new study programme "Technologies of Maritime Transport Logistics" has been accredited by Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 30th of April 2012.