



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

**LIETUVOS SVEIKATOS MOKSLŲ UNIVERSITETO
VEIKLOS VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF
LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES**

Grupės vadovas:
Team leader:

Prof. Dr. Jean Louis Vanherweghem

Grupės nariai:
Team members:

Prof. Dr. Douwe Breimer
Prof. Dr. Ivan Leban

Olev Kalda

Dr. Linas Rovas

Delia Gologan

Vertinimo sekretorius:
Review secretary:

Paul Mitchell

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Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras

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I. INTRODUCTION

Purpose

1. The review of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LUHS) was commissioned by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), Lithuania, in its role as the Authorized Agency prescribed by Lithuanian law. The review was conducted in accordance with the prescribed methodology pursuant to the Procedure for External Reviews in Higher Education, approved by Government Resolution No. 1317 of 22 September, 2010.

2. The review was informed by the following prescribed principles:

- autonomy and accountability – account shall be taken of the balance between the autonomy and social responsibility of the institution of higher education;
- contextuality – account shall be taken of the qualities of the institution's mission, strategy and operating conditions;
- holistic approach – account shall be taken of the interaction and compatibility of the areas being reviewed;
- stakeholder involvement – representatives of the study system stakeholders (students, graduates, academics, employers and other social partners) shall be involved in the procedures of self-evaluation and evaluation;
- unity of internal and external quality assurance – the internal quality assurance system and the external review must be based on mutually harmonized principles and public criteria, which also lie at the basis of the quantitative and qualitative indicators set by the institution for itself;
- continuity – while conducting an institutional review of a higher education institution, account shall be taken of the previous evaluation and the follow-up performance.

3. In accordance with the requirements, the Review focused on examination of the following principal areas:

- strategic planning;
- academic studies and life-long learning;
- research and/or art (creative) activities;
- impact on regional and national development.

Membership

4. The members of the Review Team were:

- Prof. Dr. Jean Louis Vanherweghem, (team leader), EUA expert, Professor of Nephrology and Epistemology and former Rector of the Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium
- Prof. Dr. Douwe Breimer, Professor of Pharmacology and former Rector of Leiden University, the Netherlands
- Delia Gologan, (student member), student of Political Sciences, holding a Pharmacist diploma, member of the Executive Board of the Romanian Youth Council
- Olev Kalda, Deputy Director General of Estonian Veterinary and Food Board, Estonia
- Prof. Dr. Ivan Leban, Professor of Inorganic Chemistry at the University of Ljubljana, EUA expert, Director of Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency in Higher Education, Slovenia
- Paul Mitchell, (team secretary), Director of Mega Mitchell Consulting Ltd., UK

- Dr. Linas Rovas, Doctor of Medicine Associate Professor, gynaecologist and Director of Siauliai State Hospital Mother and Child's Clinic, Lithuania.

Approach

5. The review was carried out using the process prescribed at national level. The Team sought to conduct the review in a professional, challenging and courteous manner. The review process as a whole proceeded smoothly and during the site visit, the Team was met with unfailing courtesy and helpfulness, and was able to engage in discussion and exploration of key issues. The support of SKVC coordinator and of the Team's liaison officer in LUHS are also appreciated.

Procedure

6. In fulfilling the purposes of the review the Team has:

- considered the broad national, regional and professional contexts within which LUHS operates;
- considered a self-evaluation document prepared by LUHS and a range of supporting documents submitted in advance of the site visit (Annex 1);
- considered a small number of additional documentation relevant to the Team's lines of enquiry during the site visit;
- considered data from the national MOSTA agency
- conducted a three-day visit to LUHS in Kaunas (18 – 20 March (inclusive) 2014);
- toured a sample of the facilities and learning resources available to LUHS; and discussed with LUHS the results of the MOSTA material resources assessment
- met a range of stakeholders representative of LUHS activities including:
 - Members of LUHS Council;
 - Meeting with Chairman of the Senate;
 - Members of LUHS Senate;
 - Rector and Vice-Rectors;
 - representatives of students and officers of the Student Representative Office (Student Union);
 - meeting with group of students in 'resident' phase of study;
 - Self-evaluation team members and representatives of staff responsible for quality management;
 - Meeting with staff group about academic studies and life-long learning;
 - Meeting with staff group about research and/or art activities;
 - Meeting with staff group about impact on regional and national development;
 - Meeting with social partners, employers and graduates;
 - Heads of support services, including discussion of MOSTA data.

Self-evaluation document

7. The Team was informed that the University's self-evaluation had been overseen by a group formed by the resolution of the University Senate in September, 2013 and comprised the leaders of a number of working groups, coordinators, representatives appointed by the Students' Representative Office and representatives of social partners. The University community was kept informed of progress in preparing the report through periodic reports to the Rectorate and the Senate and via the intranet. The draft self-evaluation report had been published on the University intranet for comment and it had been signed off by Senate and Council in December, 2013.

8. The Team considered that the self-evaluation document was highly effective in responding to the assessment criteria and that it provided a wide range of supporting evidence. It was realistic and the SWOT analysis demonstrated a high degree of self-awareness. The supporting

documentation was very comprehensive, well structured and well referenced; not all of the supporting documents were available in English, but this did not prove to be a major obstacle on this occasion. The self evaluation provided a full picture for the Team. During the visit the Team was able to engage with the University in an open and constructive discussion.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSTITUTION

Structure

9. The Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (LUHS) was created in 2010 through the merger of Kaunas University of Medicine and the Lithuanian Veterinary Academy. It now forms the largest centre for teaching and research in the biomedical sciences in Lithuania. Its activities relate exclusively to human and animal health and it plays a major role in Lithuania as the sole provider of higher education in pharmacy, veterinary medicine and animal husbandry technology.

The merger has established a sound platform for the implementation and development of a “One Health” policy in Lithuania (and in the Baltic region), an integrated approach to health that focuses on the interactions between humans, animals and their diverse environments. It encourages collaborations, synergies and cross-fertilization of all those professional sectors and stakeholders whose activities have an impact on health. This offers the opportunity to grow a Centre of Excellence.

10. LUHS consists of two main academic divisions:

- the Medical Academy (MA), which contains five faculties (Medicine, Odontology, Pharmacy, Public Health and Nursing) and four research institutes (Behavioural Medicine, Endocrinology, Cardiology and Neuroscience),
- the Veterinary Academy (VA), which contains two faculties (Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Technology) and one research institute (Animal Science).

They are supported by the University’s support services (organised across 28 administrative units), covering a wide range of management and support functions in support of the needs of students, teaching, research, clinical practice, social, cultural and other activities.

11. The University is the founder of three public establishments:

- the Hospital (as above) of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (Kaunas Clinics), jointly established with the Ministry of Health and the largest medical hospital in the Baltic States. The University Hospital works closely with the University in providing resources for practical training and coordinates its strategic planning with the University in support of medical education and research, while also providing clinical services and facilities, participating in the training of medical and other professionals, participating in research activities jointly with the University, approving and applying results of scientific research into clinical practice, and providing health care services. The Team heard that the Hospital is well-equipped (for example in medical imaging), and was active in a range of sophisticated medical specialties such as neurosurgery, cardiac surgery and organ transplantation.
- the Practical Training and Testing Centre. The Centre is a facility for the organisation and delivery of practical training and research, primarily devoted to the delivery of training to intending specialists in livestock, veterinary sciences, food safety and other related professional areas, to enhance their skills and qualifications, and to disseminate

knowledge and practical experience in the sciences relating to livestock, poultry and other animal breeding, farming and veterinary activity.

- the Secondary School of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. The school is dedicated to the development in its students of abilities, skills and values, which will allow each student to become an honest, enquiring person and an independent, responsible and patriotic individual.

12. Physically LUHS operates across 283 buildings on a number of different sites. It has been very successful in obtaining EU and other capital funding to construct new purpose built accommodation. Overall LUHS has good facilities for teaching, including modern classrooms, laboratories and libraries and modern and well furnished hospitals. There are also plans for setting up research-project related development sites (science parks) in Santakos and Nemunas Valleys.

LUHS is supported by large facilities for practical training, including:

- Kaunas Clinic: the largest medical hospital in the Baltic States;
- unique small and large animals hospitals and a centre (a farm) for veterinary practical training and experiments;
- a University pharmacy, preparing and dispensing medicines.

LUHS provides 9 dormitories, accommodating 1,674 students (21.5% of the total student population.)

The University has integrated its inherited IT systems for Finance, HR, and Student Records and is presently converting legacy data. Over the last 3 years the University has completed a programme of Wi-Fi coverage over the main campuses. Wi-Fi is being extended to all the dormitories during 2014-15.

Governance

13. LUHS's senior management bodies comprise a Council and a Senate. Membership of the governing bodies is representative of all the key areas of the University's activities – teaching and research, and human and animal health care. The Team was told that this provides cohesion across all areas of study, science, human and animal healthcare, as well as focusing the uniqueness of LUHS for the benefit of both the region and the whole country.

14. The Council is the primary management body of the University. The Council consists of 11 members: one member is appointed by the Students' Representative Office, five members (at least two from each of the University's two academies) are elected by the representatives of the teaching staff and researchers employed at the University, and five members are selected from the candidates outside the University.

15. The Senate consists of 49 members. The Rector and the chancellors are *ex officio* members of the Senate. Ten members are appointed by the Students' Representative Office. Elected members of the Senate (36) are elected in accordance with the principle of parity from amongst the employees whose principal activities are teaching, research, and human or animal health care. The Senate is the body responsible for the management of the academic affairs of the University. The University Senate approves the regulations of all University's structural subdivisions, including the clinical departments.

16. The Rector is the Head of the institution and is responsible for all aspects of the University's management and performance; the Rector is elected and appointed by the Council for 5 years, renewable for a maximum second term. The Rector is supported by four Vice-Rectors, each

responsible for Studies, Research, Veterinary Medicine and Clinical Medicine respectively. The Rector is supported by an advisory group, the Rectorate, which comprises 29 members, including two student members. The Rectorate consists of the Rector, the two Academy Chancellors, and the Vice-Rectors, Deans of Faculties, Directors of Research Institutes and two members delegated by the Student Representative Office.

17. Students are represented on all the key bodies. The Student Representative Office appoints one member of the Council, ten members of the Senate, two members of the Rectorate and 20% of the members of each of the Faculty Councils.

18. The University is jointly involved with the Minister of Health in the appointment of the head of the University's Hospital (Director General of Kaunas Clinics). The Director General of Kaunas Clinics is the Vice-Rector of the University for Clinical Medicine. The Clinical Department of the University Hospital is a joint structural unit of the University and of Kaunas Clinics which conducts studies, research and provides healthcare services.

Purpose of the University

19. The mission and role of the University is extensively defined in its Charter as follows:

- *to create, collect, organize and disseminate scientific knowledge and latest achievements of science and research, to teach and nurture creative, honest, proactive, well-educated, independent and entrepreneurial personalities, to cherish democracy, prosperity and develop a healthy and educated society, and in these activities to promote economic and cultural prosperity of the country, competitiveness of economic activities, social cohesion regardless of the gender, race, political or religious beliefs, nationality and citizenship of the staff, students and listeners.*

The objectives of the University are:

- *to deliver studies that provide the higher university education based on scientific research, the current level of modern knowledge and technologies, higher education qualification, to develop fully educated, ethically responsible, creative and entrepreneurial personalities;*
- *harmoniously development scientific cognition of different areas of knowledge, to conduct high-level research and experimental (social, cultural) development, to train scientists, to carry out a broad range of practical activities, and to co-operate with domestic and foreign partners in research and other areas;*
- *in collaboration with partners of the public and economy, to promote the regional development and development of the whole country through scientific, educational, artistic and other cultural activities;*
- *to develop the society receptive of education, science, art and culture, able of effectively using science and competing in the market of high-level technology, products and services.*

The key tasks of the University are defined as:

- *training professionals and scientists of biomedicine and other areas;*
- *performing scientific research and applying the results of scientific research;*
- *participating in the provision of health care services;*
- *delivery of animal growing, breeding, manufacture of animal production, disease prevention, treatment and food safety services;*
- *improving professionals through their continuous training and retraining;*
- *preparation and publication of books, monographs, educational textbooks, academic magazines and other publications, organisation of scientific conferences and seminars;*

- *development of international co-operation in key areas of activities.*

Programmes of study

20. LUHS offered 107 programmes in 2013 (4 integrated; 14 first cycles; 11 second cycles; 69 residencies); and 9 doctoral programmes, as follows:

Programs awarding qualification degrees and professional qualifications	
<i>First-cycle and integrated studies</i>	
Medicine	Master of Medicine, physician
Odontology	Master of Odontology, physician odontologist
Oral Hygiene	Bachelor of Oral Hygiene, oral hygienist
Pharmacy	Master of Pharmacy, pharmacist
Social Work in Medicine	Bachelor of Social Work, social worker
Nursing	Bachelor of Nursing, general practice nurse
Midwifery	Bachelor of Nursing, midwife
Kinesitherapy	Bachelor of Rehabilitation, kinesitherapist
Occupational therapy	Bachelor of Rehabilitation, occupational therapist
Veterinary Medicine	Master of Veterinary Medicine, veterinary physician

Programs awarding qualification degrees	
<i>First-cycle and integrated studies</i>	
Medical and Veterinary Genetics	Bachelor of Medical and Veterinary Genetics
Medical and Veterinary Biochemistry	Bachelor of Medical and Veterinary Biochemistry
Public Health	Bachelor of Public Health
Health Psychology	Bachelor of Psychology
Veterinary Food Safety	Bachelor of Public Health
Food Sciences	Bachelor of Food Sciences
Technology of Animal Husbandry	Bachelor of Agricultural Sciences
Animal Sciences	Bachelor of Animal Sciences
<i>Second-cycle studies</i>	
Biology of Laboratory Medicine	Master of Medical Biology
Public Health	Master of Public Health
Public Health Management	Master of Public Health
Clinical Nursing	Master of Nursing
Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation	Master of Rehabilitation
Health Promotion and Rehabilitation through Physical Exercise	Master of Rehabilitation
Art Therapy	Master of Medicine and Health
Veterinary Food Safety	Master of Public Health
Animal Husbandry Technology	Master of Agricultural Sciences
Bio-Business Management	Master of Business
Livestock Resource Management	Master of Animal Sciences

Student population

21. Student numbers are distributed as follows:

Cycle	1.10.2010		1.10.2011		1.10.2012		1.10.2013	
	Number of programs	Number of students	Number of programs	Number of students	Number of programs	Number of students	Number of programs	Number of students
First-cycle studies	9	1285	11	1264	12	1252	14	1351
Integrated studies	4	4045	4	4282	4	4407	4	4496
Second-cycle studies	9	415	9	428	9	544	11	600
Non-degree-awarding (residency) studies	69	943	66	1015	68	1100	69	1074
Third-cycle (Doctoral) studies	9	287	9	275	9	270	9	254
Total	100	6975	99	7264	104	7573	107	7775

22. Overall admission numbers have increased in almost all study cycles, despite a significant national demographic fall in the age group; LUHS has a strong brand. Fee paying students comprise 81% Lithuanian nationals and 19% are international students. Student dropout for the 2012 intake was around 4.2 %; this is low as compared with other institutions in Lithuania. LUHS's graduate employability profile is good. The annual report for 2012 indicates that 92% of graduates have found employment after 1 year of graduation. The SER indicates that in 2013, fewer than 3.6% of its graduates are unemployed.

23. The current academic staffing profile is:

Teaching staff in 2012:	
Professors, Associate Professors, lecturers	642
Researchers	132
Assistants	451
Junior researchers	96
Total:	1321

24. The characteristics of the staffing profile are:

- 60% hold a PhD;
- 20% are older than 55 years;
- Turnover runs at approximately 250 vacancies per year (72% recruited by public competition, others by short-term contracts).

The student: staff ratio is favorable at 5.7: 1.

25. Income has risen from 139 393 900 LTL in 2010, to 167 415 800 in 2011 and to 182 839 400 in 2012.

26. Total income for 2012 was 182 839 400 Lt., which was sourced as follows:

- 80 891 700 Lt (44%) from direct state budget (of which 79% for studies, 13% for research, 8% for administration and facilities)
- 51 546 100 Lt (28%) from earned income (tuition fees (including international students), other income-generating activities and services).
- 50 401 600 Lt (28%) from contracts for projects, programs and earmarked funds (of which 87% from EU, 13% from LSC)

Expenditure was apportioned as follows:

- Salaries: 46%;
- Goods and services 23%;
- Scholarships 11%.
- Acquisitions 20%

The University's operating surplus for 2012 was 1 814 700 Lt. The University's financial position is sound, with a surplus having been achieved for each of the last three years.

III. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT

27. The review team explored the strategic management of LUHS with reference to the criteria set out in the review methodology and considered the strategic plan's fitness for purpose, arrangements for the plan's publicity and its availability to stakeholders and the public at large, guarantees for its implementation, and management effectiveness.

28. In regard to **fitness for purpose**, LUHS's strategy for 2011 – 2016 essentially reflects the main Bologna process guidelines set out in the Bologna Declaration and subsequent communiqués; namely the three-cycle qualification system, mobility of students and teachers, student support, and the expansion of scientific research. The Team was presented with strategy documents and annual action plans with targets which reflected national study, health and science policy priorities, national requirements for qualified manpower in health sciences and which also reflected the expectations of the European Areas of Higher Education and Scientific Research. LUHS uses a full range of indicators to monitor and measure its own performance, all of which were outlined in the SER.

29. Governance arrangements at LUHS are set out within a statutory framework as described in Para 13 above. The original merger was based on a clear vision and excellent progress has been made with the merger to date. The merger process continues based on a clear programme of work; some legacy structural issues remain from the two former institutions, including for example the retention of a two academy structure and of institutes of research independent of faculties, but these structural anomalies are expected to be resolved over time. The Council, Senate and Rectorate have a clear sense of direction and purpose and clearly understand the challenge involved in modernizing the University's approach to teaching and research. The University has a clear implementation plan with clearly defined targets. Decisions are taken in a consultative manner. Any member of the community can put forward proposals concerning improvement of LUHS's activities. Strategically important decisions are referred to the Council of LUHS. Students and all stakeholders are formally involved at all levels of the decision-

making process, although not all students felt fully involved in the decision making process. Information on progress with the implementation of the Strategy Plan is presented to LUHS community in different forms. The detailed annual report to the LUHS Council, which concludes an annual monitoring process, is made widely available to all stakeholders and provides a comprehensive overview. The lines of communication across the University have been strengthened through the establishment of a University PR office. LUHS is providing very attractive study programmes, which could be more actively promoted through the media.

30. In regard to resources, LUHS has successfully diversified its sources of income over recent years, to the extent that in 2012:

- 44% came from the state budget
- 28% came from LUHS's own revenues (fees and services)
- 28% came from contracts and project funding for projects, programs and target funds

This healthy financial position nevertheless carries an increased element of risk in regard to the security of some funding streams (such as EU programme funding), which will require active monitoring and review.

The Team recommends that:

the LUHS Council should consider adoption of a Code of Good Governance which will allow it to keep its own performance, particularly in relation to its own effectiveness and to the management of financial risk (and financial sustainability), under review.

31. The Team has reviewed **the effectiveness of the developing internal QA system**, including student feedback arrangements, programme monitoring arrangements and the management of HR. LUHS, in common with all Lithuanian HEIs, has had to respond to a large number of legal and regulatory changes, including adjustment to the concept of three cycle studies and compliance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (Part 1). Procedures for the development of new and revision of existing programmes take into account the national and European qualification frameworks. Study programmes are reviewed on a regular basis by Programme Committees which include in their membership representatives from the appropriate professional stakeholders; these report in turn to the Faculty Councils. New and updated programmes are approved by the Senate.

32. As part of quality assurance, student surveys are conducted periodically. The Team noted that in 2011, 14,214 questionnaires were completed by 4,648 students and that in 2012, 8,229 questionnaires were completed by 3,104 students. The Internal Audit Service also had made 12 recommendations in 2012; all had been accepted and 5 were being implemented. Annual reports from departments also identified problems and proposed recommendations or improvement strategies. The Team heard that any actions taken as follow-up from student questionnaires were not always fully articulated to the student body and that this could act as a disincentive for future student engagement with the process. Whilst the results of student questionnaires are analysed and (as far as the Team could observe) acted upon, there is no formal reporting back process to the student body, for example by publication of strategies or action plans.

The Team recommends that:

LUHS review the operation and timing of its student feedback model, so as to more systematically enhance student participation and to meet the expectations of the “you said, we did” approach

(both for teaching & learning and the learning environment)

33. The University operates a transparent staff recruitment policy with academic staff appointed on either 2 or (mainly) 5 year renewable contracts. **The framework for the management of human resources** is a key issue for the new University. In its SWOT analysis, the University

indicated that it needed to improve the competences of its staff to develop the quality of both its teaching and research. It has set up a Centre for Teachers' Educational Competence to support this activity. The Team would concur in this view and has observed that the student-centred approach to teaching and learning is not yet fully embedded. Over 50% of current staff are under the age of 45. The current age profile of the University indicates that approximately 20% of teaching staff will retire over the next ten years. This presents the University with an opportunity to refresh its staffing and skills profile. The University may also wish to review its current workload model for academic staff, so as to provide increased flexibility between the teaching and research elements of staff activity. The teaching load for some teaching staff can be very high and limit their capacity for research activity.

The Team recommends that:

the University should adopt a more structured approach to the performance management of staff and to staff promotion, and that it should adopt a more diagnostic approach to staff development needs (e.g. through more structured annual appraisal). Updating of staff in the creative use of the VLE / IT to support teaching and learning should also be included in this process.

34. In regard to **learning resources**, the physical infrastructure of LUHS is well managed. The University has been extremely successful in attracting EU project funding to modernise its estate through new buildings (e.g. Library, Pharmacy building, animal husbandry research facilities) and through a programme of refurbishment of existing buildings. 'First Class' has been adopted as the learning platform and is in use at a very basic level for transmission of teaching materials. The life-span of the system itself was uncertain but increased staff training in its use for higher level tasks would be welcomed.

35. LUHS operates a **Code of Ethics**, approved by Senate in 2013. The main provisions of ethical behaviour are set out in a number of internal regulations, based on principles of honesty, integrity and responsibility. Students and staff who met the Team were aware of the Code and had been properly inducted and introduced to the University's expectations on first arrival. Students consulted by the Team were clear about the practical consequences of academic misconduct (with particular reference to plagiarism). Supporting documentation was however not always simultaneously available in English. The Team believes that it would be timely for the University to extend its code of ethics to cover more explicitly good research practice and clinical governance, including a framework for clinical trials.

The Team recommends that:

the current Ethics Code be supplemented by inclusion of good practice in clinical research. It should be simultaneously available in both Lithuanian and English.

36. The Team has received and considered, as contextual information, the evaluation of LUHS's Learning Resources and Associated Infrastructure conducted by the Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA) under the auspices of the Ministry of Education and Science. This evaluation had concluded that LUHS meets the prescribed thresholds.

Judgement on the area: Strategic Management is given a positive evaluation.

IV. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING

37. The review team explored academic studies and life-long learning of LUHS with reference to the criteria set out in the methodology and considered their compliance with the requirements for

Lithuanian higher education and harmonization with the principles of the European Higher Education Area.

38. The team noted that overall the programmes and life-long learning provision offered were compliant with the University's mission and contributed towards meeting the needs of Lithuania's national economy, its public health agenda and its social and cultural development. The University's suite of academic programmes relating to biomedical sciences maps well to the strategy of both the University and the state of Lithuania. Taking advantage of the increased capacity delivered through the merger, the University is taking the opportunity to update its professional programmes and also to develop new multi-disciplinary programmes; for example in biochemistry, genetics and public health. The University's portfolio of study programmes is consistent with the University's mission and with the state priorities indicated in the strategic documents of the Republic of Lithuania - to create a learning society through ensuring lifelong learning and also to meet the needs of society by training professional staff for the labour market. The learning outcomes formulated in the first- and second-cycle and integrated programmes of study are consistent with the study cycle description. Outcomes are also defined for the third cycle.

39. The University's graduate employment record is one of the best compared with other Lithuanian universities. LUHS graduates have a good employment profile. The number of LUHS graduates registered in the Lithuanian Labour Exchange remains consistently low: in 2010 it was 3.2%; in 2011 – it was 3.6%; and in 2012 it was 3.6%. All study programmes are monitored for their employability, using a variety of assessment instruments and forms to collect information, including for international students. The graduate employability and career information is collected by surveys conducted by the LUHS Career Centre. Survey results are discussed at the LUHS study quality monitoring and assurance committee, reported to the Rectorate, presented to the study programme committees and to other University's departments, and made publicly available on the University website and in the weekly newspaper. Upon entry into force of the new Procedure for the collection and organisation of student consents for graduate careers monitoring purposes, survey data will be enhanced with additional data from the careers of graduates from public institutions. LUHS is involved in the project "Development and implementation of education of higher school students for career and career tracking models, qualification improvement of vocational orientation specialists working with students, and development of tools for them." The aim of the project is to develop a system based on the best international practice to help students learn to manage their own career, to make appropriate decisions, to solve career problems in a timely and efficient manner, and to improve and implement the personal career goals.

40. This development should assist the University in embedding the work of the Careers Centre more deeply within the institution. The Careers service is not currently widely used outside Veterinary Sciences. The Team heard that the Alumni association has also recently been re-invigorated with support from the University and is seeking to engage with both graduate and student stakeholders; it is intended that it will further develop its role as a key source of reference and careers advice for current students. The Alumni Association will be able to track the careers of its graduates. This may also lead to more systematic and formalized links with those external stakeholders represented by graduates.

The Team would commend the University for its plans to embed careers planning and employability more deeply within its curricula and to further energise its Alumni organisation.

41. The University actively cooperates with social and business partners in developing new study programmes, improving existing study programmes, and developing lifelong learning.

Employers and professional associations are involved in the programme committees. Stakeholders who met the Team were satisfied with the quality of the graduates. The Team would encourage the University to maintain its collaboration with partners and other stakeholders in the monitoring and updating of its teaching programmes. The current style and content of teaching seemed to the Team to be rather traditional, but recognized that this was in a state of transition with the introduction of problem based learning (PBL) and reform consequent upon the articulation of learning outcomes. As mentioned in Para. 33 above, the University has plans in place to enhance the quality of staff development. A full revision of the balance between theory and practice in many of the teaching programmes has yet to be fully achieved.

The Team would recommend that the university should review the balance between the theoretical and practical components of its undergraduate programmes.

42. The Team heard that an increase in the level of exposure to practical work particularly in the medical and veterinary programmes was deemed necessary by both students and employers. The existing facilities within the teaching hospital and the animal hospitals would appear to have sufficient capacity to allow for this to be accommodated.

The Team therefore recommends that LUHS undertakes an early review of the exposure of undergraduate students to practical training in its undergraduate clinical programmes.

43. Students who met the Team reported that (except as reported above) they are generally well supported, although there were some instances where this is not always the case. Students also generally receive good support from the central student support services. They felt generally well supported by their teachers and were aware of how to seek feedback on their work and progress. They were aware of their 'rights', including how to complain or appeal. The Team felt that some additional investment in the support structures for the growing number of international students would now be appropriate. Students who participate in institutional governance, programme management and quality assurance activities felt that their views are taken seriously.

44. The Team has noted that the University aspires to increase its international standing and has embarked upon an **internationalisation strategy**. The University encourages the mobility of both students and teachers. The International Relations and Study Centre IRSC organises studies for foreign students, exchange programmes for University students and teachers, the development of staff and other health care personnel, collaboration with other institutions of higher education, and information for the University's community about international co-operation and financing opportunities. To implement student and teacher exchange, LUHS chooses partner institutions with the most compatible study programmes and with a strong academic ranking. Students are selected according to key criteria: overall academic performance, motivation, foreign language proficiency, and communication skills in a foreign language. For student and teacher exchanges, inter-institutional agreements are made mainly within the ERASMUS and *Nordplus* programmes. The number of inter-institutional agreements is increasing, and over its three years of operation, has risen to 120. The number of LUHS students leaving for exchange programmes abroad is growing: in the academic year 2010-2011, it comprised a total of 108 students; in 2011-2012, it comprised a total of 101; and in 2012-2013, it comprised a total of 124. Every year, 40-50 students come to LUHS on academic exchange programmes. The average ratio between the outgoing and incoming students is 2.4:1, Individuals leaving for teaching and internship from LUHS on exchange programmes numbered 53 teachers in 2010-2011, (49 in 2011-2012; and 39 in 2012-2013). The number of teachers arriving to LUHS in 2010-2011 was 20, and 18 in each of the academic years 2011-2012 and 2012-2013. The University has also signed 17 inter-institutional agreements (in addition to the co-operation with the Kazakhstan authorities below) under which the LUHS teachers can engage in a range of academic activities in the partner universities, and their teachers can come to LUHS. Arising from teacher mobility, new programme components have been introduced at LUHS. The

University recognises that both the number of students participating in exchange programmes and the teacher mobility is increasing, but that it is not high relative to the University's size and ambitions; the University is focusing on further strategies to improve its performance.

45. In 2010-2013, the University signed six co-operation agreements with institutions of higher education in Kazakhstan and 14 memoranda of co-operation. Under these contracts, for the period of 2010–2013, the University has organised training courses in Russian for doctors and nurses in Kazakhstan and Lithuania. In total, about 1000 health care professionals attended these courses.

46. The University is successfully recruiting an increasing number of international students (currently 579 students, comprising 9.5% of the student population, drawn mainly from Germany, Spain, Israel, Sweden) and is conducting more and more of its teaching in English (Medicine, Odontology, Pharmacy, Veterinary Medicine, Master in Public Health); there is a plan to also conduct teaching in Russian. International students generate substantial fee income, but also act as ambassadors for LUHS in their home countries and will have an impact on the health of the home population.

47. The Team welcomes the implementation of LUHS's internationalisation policy.

However, the Team would recommend that LUHS articulate a more comprehensive and more integrated internationalization strategy, including staff and student mobility, curriculum development (including full use of the recognition of professional qualifications), careers planning and research (including international research networks, and international publications).

48. The Team has detected some concerns amongst students about the levels of foreign language competence demonstrated by some teachers and also in relation to the simultaneous availability of source teaching and administrative documents in both target languages. The University will need to invest further in its infrastructure for the support of international students on campus and also to invest in further support for staff and students to ensure that teaching in English is fully supported and securely embedded.

The Team recommends that:

LUHS reviews its infrastructure for teaching in a foreign language both in terms of developing staff language competence where necessary, and in ensuring the availability of source materials in the target languages to students in a timely manner.

Judgement on the area: Academic Studies and Life-long Learning is given a positive evaluation.

V. RESEARCH AND (OR) ART

49. The review team explored the research activities at LUHS with reference to the criteria set out in the methodology and has considered the relevance, international links and harmonisation of research activities in the University with the provisions of the European Research Area.

50. LUHS has a strategic goal for the "Sustainable development of scientific discoveries in different areas of knowledge, to conduct high-level research and experimental (social, cultural) development, to train scientists, to carry out a broad range of practices, and to co-operate with national and foreign partners in research and other areas". It conducts research in biomedicine, agriculture, humanities and social sciences. The results are published in prestigious international

journals and implemented in practice. Its researchers are involved in international projects and research contracts for business.

51. Strategic research development tasks identified by the LUHS for 2011-2016 are:

- To develop a modern infrastructure for basic and applied research and business demand and to use it rationally;
- To train high-level researchers and create an environment to improve their scientific excellence;
- To promote the international collaboration in research for successful integration into the European Research Area;
- To develop links between research and business and to increase commercialization of research data;
- To promote educational activities based on science achievements and to increase the prestige and visibility of science.

52. Key success indicators were presented by LUHS and the Team can broadly confirm their fulfillment:

- The scientific activities of the University are consistent with the provisions of the strategic documents of LUHS and are an important component of the strategic goals for the University. LUHS research activity is closely related to the priorities of the National Research Programmes, and its development is closely linked to the national development objectives outlined in the strategic state documents;
- The University's strategic documents regulating research are in conformity with the provisions of the European Research Area;
- The quality of research is confirmed by a successful output of doctorate awards in the biomedical and agricultural fields. The growing international dimension of the University research is reflected by an increasing number of publications in prestigious journals and a significant increase in citations in scientific publications;
- Co-operation of the University's researchers with other institutions of higher education supports sustainable research development in various fields, and promotes interdisciplinary research. Collaboration with health care institutions and economic entities generates new fields of translational research;
- The University is co-operating with business, for example through the establishment of two open-access centres in Integrated Science, Studies and Business Centres (Science Parks) "Santaka" and "Nemunas" valleys;
- The topics of international research projects undertaken at the University meet the mission and strategic goals of the institution;
- A range of international mobility opportunities for University researchers supports the initiation of new research projects and the enhancement of international co-operation. The University supports the participation of doctoral students and researchers in international conferences.

53. A major driver for the original merger of the two institutions was a strategy to enhance the institutions' combined research power and impact. The University has identified a defined number of major research priorities which should enable it to achieve increasing international impact. It has an explicit policy of developing further research collaboration with other institutions, especially with Kaunas University of Technology, which has complementary major strengths in the basic sciences.

54. Research priorities for 2010–2013 are:

- (in medical sciences) the development of neuroscience, oncology, digestive system research and consolidation of public health research;
- (in agricultural sciences) animal disease prevention, animal breeding and raw material quality and food safety.

55. The University operates nine approved doctoral programmes in: Biology, Biophysics, Medicine, Odontology, Pharmacy, Public Health, Nursing, Veterinary Science and Animal Husbandry respectively.

The number of defended theses averages 44 per year (50% of which are in medicine) (2010 - 54; 2012 - 45; 2013 – 36).

In 2012 there were 264 registered PhD students, including 54 new entrants. The annual number of graduates averages around 45. In terms of completion rates, 69 students were first registered in 2008, of whom 52 had completed by 2012; this implies a completion rate of 75% after 5 years.

56. Other significant indicators include:

- 201 scientific conferences were organized by LUHS in 2013, with 51.467 attendees;
- a 31.6% success rate in applications to RCL (3rd most successful nationally) ;
- from 2010 to 2013, the University has on average taken part in about 30 EU programmes per year (6 FP, 7 FP, COST, EUREKA and other schemes).

57. Data in the SER confirms the positive trends in LUHS's performance in international publication and citation indices. LUHS is ranked first for publications in biomedical sciences in Lithuania.

The University is committed to raising research quality. This is reflected in a growing number of scientific publications and the increase of citation rates of the University's researchers, especially in the biomedical sciences. The University is aware of the need to

- increase the number of international projects where the University is the overall coordinating body;
- focus on its links with business and industry to enhance the attractiveness of its scientific research to business.

The excellent facilities now becoming available at LUHS should also enable the University to increase the number of its public/private partnerships.

58. Overall research strategy.

The Team welcomed in particular:

- **the articulation by the new University of an integrated research policy and plan and the energy with which the developing strategy is being pursued and monitored**
- **the identification by the University of its key research strengths, reinforced by a programme of selective investment.**
- **adoption of a selective strategy which should enable the University to compete in research performance in due course at an international level.**

Judgement on the area: Research and (or) Art is given a positive evaluation.

VI. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

59. The review team explored the impact of LUHS on regional and national development with reference to the criteria set out in the methodology and considered the effectiveness and relevance of its contribution and impact on the economic, cultural, social and environmental development.

60. The University is an active member of the political, social, and cultural life of Kaunas city, the region, and the entire country. The University is the largest higher university-level education institution in the field of biomedicine in Lithuania. It is the only institution that prepares pharmacists, veterinary physicians, and zootechnicians (animal husbandry), and has a significant impact on regional and countrywide development through the development of talented professionals, the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, education and training of specialists and scientists of the highest qualification in the fields of biomedicine and social sciences for the good of the society. It makes a major contribution to the health and wellbeing of the regional population.

61. The University encourages staff to participate in various voluntary activities in the local community.

The University's scientists actively participate in science popularisation and public education while organising forums, practical conferences, seminars, discussions, radio and television shows, and publish scientific publications. Material on a healthy lifestyle and the importance of risks to human health is prepared and introduced while cooperating with social partners in a form acceptable to the society. The results of the research conducted at the Faculty of Public Health are followed by official state institutions, such as the Statistics Lithuania under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, Drug, Tobacco, and Alcohol Control Department, State Mental Health Centre, etc. Researchers of the Faculty participated in the preparation of the new Lithuanian Health Programme for the years 2013–2020, and in the implementation and assessment of the state programmes, such as the State Tobacco Control and State Alcohol Control programmes. University personnel participate in the shaping of national policy: researchers of the University contributed in the preparation of the Lithuanian Health Programme for the years of 2013–2020, participated in the National Health Council, in the assessment of national branch programmes and fields of national health policy, from personal health to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle, and to the assessment of the implementation of national programmes. LUHS academic personnel are experts on the Committee on Health Affairs of the Seimas on issues related to citizens' health and its preservation (LUHS provides experts of the Committee on Health Affairs of the Seimas, participate in Working Groups formed by MH, submits offers on health care service organisation and amendment or the updating of legislative acts. Employees of the animal hospitals provide consultations to animal breeders; veterinary physicians serve farmers, companies, stud farms, zoos, etc. They organise seminars, engage in educational activities, and participate in exhibitions. The LUHS Centre of Continuing Veterinary Training and Consultation disseminates scientific knowledge, innovation, the latest achievements in study and science, and implements educational projects which are aimed at increasing agricultural competitiveness while reinforcing human resources and introducing modern technologies and innovations in Lithuanian rural areas.

62. The Students' Scientific Society (SSS) consistently plays a role in education and the propagation of science. At the moment, there are 46 different circles in the field of biomedical sciences at SSS that unite more than 1,000 members who present reports and open lectures, and organise meetings with LUHS Alumni and prominent LUHS scientists. Members of SSS present and disseminate their scientific university activities in national scientific festivals. Through their regularly organised campaigns, students exercise an initiative that is set forth in the "*Lithuania 2030*" strategy: "to develop a healthy lifestyle as a prerequisite of a dynamic society (...), and increase public awareness in regards to the benefits of a healthy lifestyle".

63. The University organises various refresher and improvement short courses. Programmes (funded by EU) for long life learning/distance learning are well attended. LUHS delivers a major programme of lifelong learning, including:

- In 2012: EU –funded courses for 2,118 health care professionals and 244 pharmacists
- from 2010 to 2013, the veterinary centre provided 382 training courses for 70.244 attendees, (farmers, land workers etc.)
- from 2010 to 2013, 36 distance learning courses comprising postgraduate refresher courses for 1007 participants.

64. The University has a clear strategy for engagement with the local community. Cultural and artistic activities at the University are organised by the Culture Centre. As indicated in the Guidelines Plan, it involves academic youth, employees of organisations and the society in these creative activities. During the reporting period, the Culture Centre organised 215 events of artistic activity, and the majority of them took place outside the University. The University also currently has three working museums: the Museum of the Institute of Anatomy, the Museum of the History of Lithuanian Medicine and Pharmacy, and the Museum of the Veterinary Academy. Each year, since the beginning of the reporting period, the Students' Representative Office of the University organises a festival of the beginning of the academic year,

65. The Team was informed that clinical year students of the Faculty of Medicine, who perform clinical internships, are less likely to choose for their placements regional hospitals away from the large medical centres. Part of the reason for this is that there is no central co-ordination of the hospital placement process.

The Team recommends that:

the University should consider taking a more proactive role in managing a network of regional hospitals for the delivery of practical training for its students. A more formal and pro-active role could be taken by the University to ensure that students and interns seeking practical experience were mapped more closely to hospitals with spare capacity.

A similar approach could be taken to engagement with private veterinary clinics, so as to meet demand for access to clinical environments for veterinary students.

66. Stakeholders confirmed that the University participates in all aspects of health care and public health across the community. Both public and private sector partners were keen to develop closer relationships with the University and the Team noted the willingness of the stakeholders to co-operate with the university. However the Team would agree with the assessment in the self-evaluation that a more focused and targeted structure for collaboration with the local authorities and other partners should be implemented. Taking into consideration the importance and impact of the University on the society, the region, and Lithuania, it is essential to strengthen and formalise the University's cooperation with the bodies of regional governance and other organisational structures. The Team noted that the university also planned to collect supporting data on activity in a more systematic way in the future, quantifying more precisely its interactions with the region and with outside bodies. The University in its SWOT analysis had identified a particular need to remedy a position of insufficient engagement of the University with the formal structures of the regional government and that it proposed to rectify this in its forward strategic plan.

The Team recommends that:

the University should pursue its plan to interact in a more structured way with the formal structures of the regional government and with partners in the private sector.

Judgment on the area: Impact on Regional and National Development is given a positive evaluation.

VII. GOOD PRACTICE AND ENHANCEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Team would commend the University for:

1. its clarity of strategic vision and dynamic leadership;
2. its intention to collaborate with other HEIs in Kaunas and elsewhere, so as to enhance combined research power and impact (especially the complementarity of its research interests and skills with Kaunas University of Technology);
3. its success in securing external funding both to modernise its estate and to support teaching and research projects;
4. adoption of a selective strategy which should enable the University to compete in research performance in due course at an international level;
5. the articulation by the new University of an integrated research policy and plan and the energy with which the developing strategy is being pursued and monitored;
6. the identification by the University of its key research strengths, reinforced by a programme of selective investment;
7. its plans to embed careers planning and employability more deeply within its curricula and to further energise its Alumni organisation.

The Team recommends that:

1. LUHS Council should consider adoption of a Code of Good Governance which will allow it to keep its own performance, particularly in relation to its own effectiveness and to the management of financial risk (and financial sustainability), under review.
2. LUHS should review the operation and timing of its student feedback model, so as to more systematically enhance student participation to meet the expectations of the “you said, we did” approach.
3. LUHS should adopt a more structured approach to the performance management of staff and to staff promotion, and that it should adopt a more diagnostic approach to staff development needs (e.g. through more structured annual appraisal). Updating of staff in the creative use of the VLE / IT to support teaching and learning should also be included in this process.
4. LUHS’s current Ethics Code should be supplemented by inclusion of good practice in clinical research, including a framework for clinical trials.
5. LUHS should review the balance between the theoretical and practical components of its professional undergraduate programmes.
6. LUHS should undertake an early review and re-balancing of the exposure of its undergraduate students to practical training in its undergraduate clinical programmes
7. LUHS should articulate a more comprehensive and more integrated internationalization strategy, including staff and student mobility, curriculum development (including full use of the EHEA recognition framework), careers planning and research (including international research networks and international publications).
8. LUHS should review its infrastructure for teaching in a foreign language, both in terms of
 - developing staff language competence where necessary
 - ensuring the availability to students of source materials in the target languages in a timely manner.
9. LUHS should consider taking a more proactive role in managing a network of regional hospitals for the delivery of practical training for its students. A more formal and pro-active role could be taken by the University to ensure that students and interns seeking practical experience were mapped more closely to hospitals with spare capacity and that availability of these opportunities is more positively promoted.
10. LUHS should pursue its plan to interact in a more structured way with the formal structures of the regional government and with partners in the private sector.

VIII. JUDGEMENT

Lithuanian University of Health Sciences is given a positive evaluation.

Grupės vadovas: Team leader:	Prof. Dr. Jean Louis Vanherweghem
Grupės nariai: Team members:	Prof. Dr. Douwe Breimer Prof. Dr. Ivan Leban Olev Kalda Dr. Linas Rovas Delia Gologan
Vertinimo sekretorius: Review secretary:	Paul Mitchell

ANNEX 1

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(Lithuanian)

ANNEX 2
LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES RESPONSE TO REVIEW
REPORT



LIETUVOS SVEIKATOS MOKSLŲ UNIVERSITETAS
LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES

Public enterprise, A. Mickėvičiaus g. 9, 44307 Kaunas, tel. +370 37 327200, fax. (8 37) 220733, el. p. www.lsmuni.lt, rektoratas@lsmuni.lt
Data are collected and stored in the Register of Legal Entities, code 302536989

Norai Skaburskienei
l. e. direktoriaus p.
Studijų kokybės vertinimo centras
A. Goštauto g. 12
LT-01108 Vilnius

2014-06-09

Nr. *DVT-854*

THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW REPORT OF LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF
HEALTH SCIENCES

We would like to inform you that we have any comments for „Institutional review report of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences“ which have been given by the Review Team commissioned by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

Rector

prof. Remigijus Žaliūnas