



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT

STUDY FIELD of THEATRE

at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre

Expert panel:

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2. Doc. Dr. Hana Pruchova academic;
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4. Doc. dr. Rūta Mažeikienė, academic;
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Report language – English

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Study Field Data

Title of the study programme	Theatre Art ¹	History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts ²	Acting	Theatre Art ³
State code	6121PX004	6121PX006	6121PX047	6211PX002
Type of studies	University cycle studies	University cycle studies	University cycle studies	University cycle studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle studies	First cycle studies	First cycle studies	Second cycle studies
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time studies, 4 years	Full-time studies, 4 years	Full-time studies, 4 years	Full-time studies, 2 years
Credit volume	240	240	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor of Arts	Bachelor of Arts	Bachelor of Arts	Master of Arts
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Secondary education	Secondary education	Higher university education (Bachelor's Degree)
Registration date of the study programme	19-05-1997	06-05-2013	04-06-2003	09-11-2007

¹ This study programme consists of three specialisations: Directing, Acting, Theatre and Event Directing.

² This study programme consists of two specialisations: Film, Theatre.

³ This study programme consists of three specialisations: Directing, Acting, Applied Theatre.

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluation of study fields is based on the Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC) 31 December 2019 Order [No. V-149](#).

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on 13 May, 2021.

1. **Prof. dr. Jonathan Pitches (chair of the panel)**, *Head of School of Performance and Cultural Industries at University of Leeds, United Kingdom;*
2. **Doc. dr. Hana Pruchova (academic)**, *Vice-Dean for Research at Janacek Academy of Performing Arts, Theatre Faculty, Czech Republic;*
3. **Doc. dr. Stefan Aquilina (academic)**, *Director at School of Performing Arts and Senior Lecturer at the Department of Theatre Studies, University of Malta, Malta;*
4. **Doc. dr. Rūta Mažeikienė (academic)**, *Vice-dean of the Faculty of Arts and Associate professor at Theatre Studies Department, Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania;*
5. **Mr. Laurynas Nikelis (students' representative)**, *alumni of Master's programme 'Marketing and International Commerce' at Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	'Study fields: THEATRE (P04) SELF-EVALUATION REPORT (henceforth abbreviated as the SER)
2.	'Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (LMTA) Learning facilities and resources'
3.	Examples of theses and final projects (video and written material).
4.	Additional examples of descriptors of two modules ('M2175_MAGISTRO DARBAS' and 'M2176_Baigiamasis magistro darbas')
5.	'PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPERT RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE FIRST CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMME CONDUCTED IN 2014'
6.	'PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF EXPERT RECOMMENDATIONS IN THE EXTERNAL REVIEW OF THE SECOND CYCLE STUDY PROGRAMME CONDUCTED IN 2015'

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD POSITION/STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HEI

The Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre (hereinafter - LMTA, Academy) is a specialised higher education institution that delivers studies in arts (cinema, music, dance and theatre), humanities (history and theory of arts), and trains professional music, theatre, film and dance artists, art researchers and critics. Founded in 1933, LMTA currently has three faculties, two of which (Faculty of Theatre and Film and Faculty of Music) are based in Vilnius, one (Klaipėda Faculty) in Klaipėda. LMTA currently has approx. 1,000 students in three study cycles (BA, MA, PhD). Studies in the following fields are delivered at LMTA: Music, Theatre, Film, Dance, History and Theory of Art.

This evaluation covers four study programmes implemented in the field of Theatre:

- BA programme "Theatre Art" (specializations *Directing* and *Acting* are implemented in the Faculty of Theatre and Film, in Vilnius; specialization *Theatre and Event Directing* is implemented in Klaipėda Faculty, in Klaipėda);
- BA programme "Acting" implemented in Klaipėda Faculty, in Klaipėda;
- BA programme "History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts" (specializations *Film* and *Theatre* are implemented in the Faculty of Theatre and Film, in Vilnius);
- MA programme "Theatre Art" (specialisations *Directing* and *Acting* are implemented in the Faculty of Theatre and Film, in Vilnius; specialization *Applied Theatre* is implemented in Klaipėda Faculty, in Klaipėda).

BA programmes "Theatre Art" and "Acting" aim to educate professional theatre artists (actors and directors), BA programme "History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts" aim to educate professional theatre (specialization "Theatre") or film (specialization "Film")

critics and historians. MA programme “Theatre Art” aims to educate professional theatre artists (actors and directors).

During the last three years the study programmes offered by the LMTA were optimized and reorganized according to the recommendations of several external evaluations of the programmes of the field of Theatre. The first and second cycle study programmes “Acting” and “Directing”, which used to be separate by 2017, became the specialisations of the first and second cycle study programmes “Theatre Art”. Upon integration of Klaipėda Faculty into LMTA in 2018, the formerly independent first cycle study programme “Directing” delivered at Klaipėda Faculty was integrated into the study programme “Theatre Art” as its specialisation *Theatre and Event Directing*; the formerly independent second cycle study programme “Drama Directing” delivered at Klaipėda Faculty was integrated into the study programme “Theatre Art” as its specialisation *Applied Theatre*.

In the meantime, the LMTA is the only higher education institution in Lithuania which delivers university cycle studies (BA and MA) in the field of Theatre and offers such qualification degrees as Bachelor of Arts or Master of Arts. The study programmes in the field of Theatre delivered at LMTA train theatre artists who constitute the core of the Lithuanian professional theatre community.

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Theatre study field and first cycle at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	2
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	2
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	20

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

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

3 (good) - The area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (excellent) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

Theatre study field and second cycle at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre is given **positive** evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	3
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	25

*1 (unsatisfactory) - there are essential shortcomings that must be eliminated;

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

3 (good) - The area is being developed systematically, without any fundamental shortcomings;

4 (very good) - the field is evaluated very well in the national and international context, without any deficiencies;

5 (excellent) - the field is exceptionally good in the national and international context/environment.

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

Study aims, outcomes and content shall be assessed in accordance with the following indicators:

3.1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market (not applicable to HEIs operating in exile conditions)

(1) Factual situation

The field of theatre as assessed by the expert panel in May 2021 includes first and second cycle teaching provision across two faculties (Vilnius and Klaipeda). Its study programmes are: Theatre Art; History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts; and Acting (at first study cycle); and Theatre Art (at second study cycle). As the only University in the country dedicated to the Theatre field the institution's aims are appropriately lofty, as identified in the SER: to 'participate in the shaping of the national artistic education and cultural policy, foster spiritual harmony and national identity in society'. Graduates of the Theatre Art and Acting programmes work professionally in national and international artistic contexts, as actors, directors and event directors. Graduates of the History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts operate as critics and theoretical cultural specialists.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The expert panel found consistent evidence for the cultural and societal impact of LMTA and its essential contribution to the artistic ecology of the country. The academy plays an evident and pivotal cultural leadership role in the country and its plans for the new campus will buttress this position further. Its graduates play a significant part in the cultural life of the nation and the merger with Klaipeda provides a good foundation for further consolidation of this influence and pivotal role nationally.

3.1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI

(1) Factual situation

The last few years have seen significant changes, the most prominent being the merger of Klaipeda's Theatre study programmes with LMTA and the formation of a new faculty under the LMTA known as Klaipeda faculty. Along with changes in leadership, and necessary administrative adjustments, a holistic strategy is now emerging. Currently these changes are more evident in second cycle, postgraduate studies, than they are at first cycle. A complex mapping exercise between the LMTA mission and the programme aims and outcomes is detailed in the SER aligning all four programmes in the study field with knowledge, research, special, social and personal abilities. First and second cycle study is differentiated appropriately, for instance in Knowledge and understanding: "Graduates will understand the processes of theatre art and its significance in the general context" (first cycle); versus "Graduates will know well the context of theatre art, the most recent forms of

theatre, trends of shifts in performing art and culture; understand[ing] the meaning of artistic research” (second cycle).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Following the two reviews of 2014 and 2015, the academy undertook a serious and authentic response to its Theatre provision and has managed to effect a significant cultural shift, which permeates all its programmes. There is evidence of good communication between the two faculties and an emerging sense of common purpose. Senior leadership is strong, responsive and committed to the development of a shared vision, and the exchange of best practice between both centres. Recognition of areas for development is genuine and many changes are already evident, particularly at second cycle level. In relation to the strategic mapping, there are clear complementarities between the development of the **art and research aim** at institutional level and the programmes under consideration, expressly in the development of artistic research and its embedding within final thesis work. A culture of **openness** and **sustainability** can be developed further in the next phase of the LMTA's growth, particularly in relation to the support of students with special needs or disabilities (including more hidden disabilities such as dyslexia), the relevance of which the panel felt was being overlooked by some staff groups.

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

(1) Factual situation

The Description of the Field of Theatre had only recently been approved at National level at the time of the evaluation. In that context, several supporting documents are cited in the SER as providing legislative underpinning to the programme design. Legal compliance of the curriculum design is identified in the SER. Upon completion of the first cycle study programmes, graduates are awarded the Bachelor's Degree in Arts which corresponds to the sixth level of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework. Upon completion of the second cycle study programmes, graduates are awarded the Master's Degree in Arts which corresponds to the seventh level of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework. The data provided shows that the first cycle field study programmes are allocated from 153 to 210 credits, and in the second cycle from 90 to 100 credit depending on the study programme and/or specialisation.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The study plans for both the first and second cycle comply with legal requirements in relation to credit weighting, Field specialisation, contact hours and individual learning. The expert panel queried the positioning of the History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts programme within the theatre field (P04) rather than the humanities field (N15), where it is listed according to the ministry's classification. It was suggested by LMTA Staff that the programme enjoyed good collaborative relations with the other first cycle programmes and was meaningfully embedded but the rationale for its inclusion in the study field of Theatre remained under-developed in the opinion of the expert panel, beyond this point. In the experts' view the History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts programme is more related to the study field of History and Theory of Art as a) the learning outcomes of the

programme are more consistent with the Descriptor of the study field of History and Theory of Arts approved by Order No V-825 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania of 23 July 2015; b) the final (bachelor) work of this programme is a Research Paper (not a Creative project as it is supposed to be for the Art programmes) c) the specialization of Film does not fit the field of Theatre at all.

Given the practical nature of its programmes, an appropriate level of studio intensity is reflected in the programme study hours, both at first and second cycle, with a significant elevation of hours for MA studies, to facilitate artistic research.

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

(1) Factual situation

Four indicative examples are given in the SER of how programme learning outcomes are assessed. Study methods are identified and aligned with assessment methods across the range of programmes in the theatre field. Accumulative assessment (e.g. preparation and delivery of a presentation) and formative assessment methods (e.g. active work during lectures and seminars), are identified. Given the intensive nature of the academy's practice, a considerable number of learning outcomes in these examples are associated with "active work during classes", with a more limited number of seminar-based activities for research-based modules such as History of Theatre and Film Criticism and Language Studies. Second cycle study heightens complexity and autonomy of study, foregrounding what 'accumulative assessment' as a means to provide ongoing, organic and developmental feedback in relation to practice-based projects.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Assessment methods are necessarily diverse and importantly allow for cumulative and formative support for students' skills development. In terms of the students' awareness of assessment criteria, there were discrepancies across the two faculties and two cycles. Students engaged in first cycle study at Vilnius were not readily aware of course descriptions and assessment criteria, and overly reliant on tutor's verbal interpretation of these in relation to assessment. Since the merger, serious work has been undertaken to rationalise the programme provisions across the two faculties. There remains a need to overview the full suite of programmes at first cycle, in order to review the specialisations across the provision and to address any overlaps.

Positive developments at second cycle level were manifest and the MA programme (and its three specializations) is delivering appropriately challenging, content-rich material, both to satisfy complex learning outcomes (e.g. "to conduct artistic research which will convey detailed and new knowledge about a certain aspect of performing arts" or "to apply international standards and assess the importance of different cultures and theatre schools"). These provide a sound preparation for third cycle study.

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

(1) Factual situation

For first cycle studies, programmes have a combination of specialised modules and generalised options, with the majority of the study credits dedicated to the former, which also includes the final study thesis. With the exception of the programme History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts, students' specialisation modules blend experiential, studio-based learning with historical, theoretical and contextual learning. Professional practice, and near-industry experience characterise both acting and directing programmes, along with studies in dramaturgy and theatre history. Since 2019 for the directing programme and 2020 for the acting programme in Vilnius, Career Management and Entrepreneurship has been offered. This does not appear to be available for the Theatre and Event Directing programme in Klaipeda. Modules outside of the specialisms include options in psychology, aesthetics and philosophy and in Klaipeda a designated module on pedagogy. At the second cycle there are three layers to the study programmes: the study field subjects, the final Masters project, and options for deeper specialisation. The latter includes support for the composition of a research paper, cultural theory, and psychology of performing arts.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As the only university provision of theatre in the country, the holistic offering of theoretical, practical and research-based modules reflects the academic mission of the institution. Graduates emerging from these programmes are deeply skilled and highly respected in the industry, and these points are reflected in the clear employability and embeddedness of graduates in Lithuanian theatre culture. The enforced digital learning brought about by the pandemic, has led to more flexibility in delivering modules across the two faculties, and this could be further rationalised, to allow for both duplications and gaps to be addressed across programmes. It is recommended that further integrative mechanisms for the exchange of best practice between Klaipeda and Vilnius are designed, building on the first strong steps already taken.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students entering the first cycle of study programmes in theatre art can specialise either in directing or acting in Vilnius or in theatre and event directing in Klaipeda. History and criticism of performing in film arts has either a theatre or film specialisation, to be made after the second year of study. A 60-credit module dedicated to pedagogical studies is integrated into the Theatre and Event Directing specialised route. At the second cycle personalisation is delivered through the choice and topic of the final thesis and by study abroad opportunities, short or long-term.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In questioning students from the first cycle, the expert panel found that there were still clear barriers for them to choose long-term international mobility routes in the undergraduate programmes in Vilnius, and that there remained an unnecessary stigma associated with leaving the UG programmes for such international opportunities. Short-term mobility, notwithstanding the challenges posed by the pandemic, was better supported and

seen to be having a clear impact on students' experience. Second cycle students were less concerned in relation to this point and felt that the international possibilities were "clear".

There remains a lack of clarity over the general concept of specialisation: some specializations (e.g. Theatre or Film specialisations of History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts programme) have the same study subjects during the first two years and start specializing in the third year, while others (e.g. Directing or Acting specialisations of Theatre Art programme) have no common subjects and start specializing from the very first semester; some specialisations (History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts programme) have the same entrance criteria, the other (specialisations of BA and MA programmes Theatre Art) - different; some specialisations of the same programme have the same amount of credits allocated to study field subjects (BA programme Theatre Art), the other - different (specialisations MA programme Theatre Art).

In addition, there are overlaps between programmes and/or specialisations: the specialization Acting of BA programme Theatre Art implemented in Vilnius seems to overlap with BA programme Acting implemented in Klaipėda as the learning outcomes of these programmes are almost identical (Knowledge and its application, Research abilities - are identical).

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

(1) Factual situation

The examination of the final thesis both at first and second cycle is undertaken by competent professionals in the field of Theatre including teachers, artists and social partners, who comprise the commission for defence and assessment. Details of the projects are provided in the SER and include at BA level: 'Sauka's Room', based on paintings by Šarūnas Sauka and a reworking of the 'The Bald Soprano' and 'The Lesson' by Ionesco, both assessed as excellent. At MA level excellent work included: 'The Rest will Be Familiar to You from Cinema' by Martin Crimp and the musical performance 'The Little Longnose'.

Final projects are conducted in association with professional theatres. The final thesis at undergraduate level is a creative project, and at postgraduate level is a creative project and a complementary theoretical paper.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

In relation to its assessment, and the active engagement of a commission with professional representatives of the industry, the examination of the final thesis complies with legal requirements. Indeed, there was significant enthusiasm expressed in the expert panel meeting with social partners regarding the quality of finalist students' work. There is currently an anomaly at first cycle, in relation to the design of the final thesis and it is recommended that for Acting and Directing in Vilnius, the project includes a theoretical written component, bringing it in line with the undergraduate provision in Klaipėda. Positioning the final thesis at the second cycle as artistic research, will entail further embedding of artistic research understandings and protocols across the student and staff communities, including the LMTA professoriate. There is good practice and clear understandings of artistic research emerging from the MA Applied Theatre in Klaipėda which can be shared with colleagues in Vilnius.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong leadership and clear ambition to reap the full benefits from the recent merger between LMTA and Klaipeda;
2. Significant and tangible developments in the second cycle provision in Acting and Directing;
3. A model of good practice in understanding and theorising artistic research in relation to the MA applied Theatre in Klaipeda, with the potential to develop a common and distinctive offer in this area across the institution;
4. The professional work of the students and the final thesis projects are commended by social partners for their high quality.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Student awareness of assessment criteria and advance module content is low in the first cycle courses Acting and Directing;
2. The absence of a written theoretical component in the Final thesis of the BA courses in Acting and Directing at Vilnius;
3. The barriers to long-term student mobility possibilities at first cycle level;
4. Perceived anomalies in the specialisation routes between the two faculties;
5. Questions about the appropriateness of locating History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts in the Arts (Theatre) field rather than Humanities.

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

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

3.2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the science (applied science, art) activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research (art) related to the field of study

(1) Factual situation

The section in the SER about the link between science (art) and study activities makes reference to some outstanding prizes won by a number of teachers in their artistic fields (teaching staff at LMTA are consistently also professional practitioners). This list is augmented by other performance work carried out by the teachers, including festival participation - in meetings, it was clear that the experience of the teachers as professionals in the field is embedded in the study processes, both at BA and MA levels, and that this is the experience that teachers call upon in their work at LMTA. The emphasis on the teacher-practitioner, therefore, makes the staff in both faculties highly skilled teachers at what they do, with national and international visibility and recognition - students were also aware of this visibility and its implications for their studies.

The flipside is that expectations surrounding research, including artistic research, are not consistent at BA level. At times there is a loose interpretation of what research is, one that is rooted in processes that aim at producing performance work for a theatre audience rather

than generating transmittable knowledge directed towards other research communities. Improvement in this regard is necessary.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

If the Academy is serious about engaging in artistic research, a thorough and broad exercise is needed, based on the following:

1. reaching shared definitions of what research is within academic contexts and how it relates to practitioner-academics rather than practitioners;
2. embedding research in the day-to-day work of the faculty, cutting across first, second, and third cycles even if, of course, the expectations will be different. These expectations should be defined and made clear to everyone. For example, at BA level evidence of the ability to tackle existing literature is important (see also the recommendation in the next paragraph about the written/theoretical component), while at MA level critical and conceptual skills and how they facilitate a practical project are important.
3. Embedding research plans and expectations across different staff levels up to and including professorial level.

A systematic and consistent research strategy would trickle downwards into a lot of the activities carried out, and also contribute further to the synergies that are developing between Vilnius and Klaipeda – it would become a common ground. For example, it is suggested that the BA final thesis in Vilnius is aligned with its equivalent in Klaipeda faculty, in including an explicit written and theoretical component.

Similarly, a model of artistic research is emerging productively in the MA applied theatre. Research methodologies are shared with students, who are encouraged to analyse where the demands are for research, so that projects are immediately relevant. This MA could be a good model to adapt elsewhere.

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

(1) Factual situation

Currently, the Theatre Art programme has three specialisations (Directing, Acting, and Theatre and Event Directing – the first two in Vilnius, the third in Klaipeda). There are two other first cycle programmes in History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts (both in Vilnius) and an Acting (with no specialisation) in Klaipeda. Senior Management remarked that these specialisations are currently being revised. The Theatre Art programme at second cycle level (MA) has three specialisations (Directing and Acting, both at Vilnius, and Applied Theatre at Klaipeda).

Students are exposed to the latest developments in the science, art and technology of performance through connections with social partners. At both cycle levels, there are appropriate links between the Faculty and the social partners. That students are exposed to professional practice, at the faculty and with social partners, contributes to their knowledge of to up-to-date developments in theatre art. Links with social partners are created, among other

ways, through participation on programme committees and examination boards (the latter allows access to the students' work). Alumni felt very connected to social partners even when they were students. The social partners find alumni to be creative, daring, flexible and responsible, in the sense that they are responsible theatre-makers engaged in creating serious theatre. Alumni in other words become practitioners that manifest current theatre needs and trends.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel suggests that some thinking is still necessary in the area of specialisation, particularly when this appears too early in a cycle or when material seems to overlap between different programmes and specialisation. For example, there is an acting programme in Vilnius and another in Klaipeda, both at BA level, i.e. first cycle. With the two institutions merging, what are the possibilities of bringing these two programmes together? Links with social partners allow for plenty of employment possibilities for alumni – in one case, a whole graduating cohort was employed by one theatre.

In the SER there are a number of references to projects that suggest there is a link between the content of studies and the latest developments in the field. For example, students are exposed to actor training in a globalised world (a key concept), the performance of heritage, and art and politics - all important areas for BA level programmes. This link is augmented by the fact that the teachers are skilled professionals, as discussed above. Still, the area of research and what it means in its latest developments and nuances - practice research, practice-led research, artistic research - needs urgent attention and is earmarked here as an area that needs improvement.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students are widely engaged in a number of activities relevant to their studies. Student performances are shown outside the faculty, with concrete evidence of final performances being included in the repertoires of Lithuanian professional theatres, exposing students to the latest artistic and technological developments in the field. The number of performance activities taking place in LMTA is high.

The SER gives plenty of evidence of international work that is carried out, and this was confirmed in the various meetings held. Internationalisation takes various forms, from projects, festivals, staff exchanges, short-term mobilities, etc. The leadership in this area is clearly strong. Some BA students are also involved in the performances staged by a number of their teachers, in this way offering more performance activities as a way for the students to hone their skills.

A positive psychological atmosphere was noted among students, at both BA and MA level, and a student from the latter cohort underlined the improvement in this area over the past few years. The appointment of a psychologist has certainly assisted in the matter. The panel also notes some real improvements in this area. This is being mentioned here because a positive atmosphere is necessary as a first condition for students' engagement in the conditions of study. Moreover, another important basic condition for students to get involved in relevant activities is the very open and collegial atmosphere that is evident. Students feel

comfortable to discuss their needs with staff and Dean, formally (through anonymous surveys) and informally through meetings as needed. These are important and basic conditions to facilitate and nourish the students' participation in the learning activities, and LMTA has given attention to this.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel suggests that the system of BA students participating in their teachers' performances is reviewed. This refers to the teachers' private work outside of LMTA. Rather than hand-picking students, more inclusive and transparent measures (e.g. auditions) should be implemented. Give attention to 're-starting' internationalisation once it is safer to travel, so that the good work carried out in the past few years is not lost. For example, the international project *Actor Training in a Globalised World* offered students the chance to meet international peers, and this is commendable and a renewed objective once international networking is easier. Keep students informed of their international possibilities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Links with the professional world, either through social partners or through the teachers' own connections to it as well-known professional practitioners, exposes students to the latest developments in the field;
2. International opportunities for staff and students are wide-ranging, allowing both to immerse themselves in projects related to theatre art. An international project like *Actor Training in a Globalised World* underlines LMTA's desire to link its studies with the latest developments in the science of theatre;
3. MA in Applied Theatre emerges as an appropriate research model, especially with its focus to identify where the demands for research are.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Underdeveloped understanding of research, especially in its latest developments of practice research, practice-led research, artistic research, etc. This was particularly evident in relation to the teacher's own professional work at first cycle level;
2. Inconsistent implementation between the two faculties of the written and practical component of the BA dissertation;
3. Some students are given the chance to participate in their teachers' work outside LMTA, but there is no transparent system in place through which to choose how these students are selected to participate in this work;
4. The merger is understandably still a work in progress, and more effort is needed to systematise the integration of scientific work with teaching and learning opportunities for students between Vilnius and Klaipeda.

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The Academy admits students to first-cycle studies through the centralized LAMA BPO (Lietuvos aukštųjų mokyklų asociaciją bendrajam priėmimui organizuoti (eng. Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for organizing joint admission)) system. The entrant participates in an admission competition: the student must pass the entrance exams and meet the minimal competitive score. The schedule and requirements for entrance exams are published on the websites of LAMA BPO and the Academy. Students who have been educated in foreign schools must ensure the legality of such graduation documents. Applicants may participate in a competition for state-funded or non-state-funded studies, but there are different requirements.

Admission to the second-cycle study programme is organized by the Academy. Students are admitted on the basis of a competitive score, which consists of entrance exams, an entrance interview and the results of the first cycle studies. Students who have completed their undergraduate studies in a non-theatrical field must demonstrate one year of work experience in the field. The timetable of examination and requirements are published on the Academy's website. The Academy provides general information to those planning to join programmes in various ways: through different events, preparatory consultations or by publicizing admission regulations. In terms of enrolment, it remains stable in first and second cycle studies, with high-achieving students choosing studies. This is also proved by the national results of LAMA BPO, which state that LMTA is in first place in terms of students with the highest competitive score.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The student admission system is clear, study-field specific and open. The schedule and requirements for entrance examinations for both first and second cycles studies are public and accessible to all. The conditions are adjusted for foreign students as well as for those who have completed their first cycle studies outside the field of theatre studies. All these components help to maintain a stable number of entrants and a high competitive score.

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

(1) Factual situation

The Academy has a clear procedure for the recognition of foreign qualifications, and participates in the project KAPRIS-2: Strengthening the System of Academic Recognition. Participation in this project creates opportunities to recognize academic and higher education qualifications under the programmes of foreign countries and international organizations. Partial learning outcomes are recognized by the Academy, according to internal approved documents. The Programme coordinator estimates whether the study results achieved by the student in other HEIs correspond to the content of the current programme. All this procedure is described in the documents of the academy, which are public.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The Academy is well placed to recognize foreign, formal and non-formal qualifications and learning outcomes. Examples were provided of when students have been admitted to late courses based on their accumulated qualifications and experience. Also, the Academy does not face additional problems in recognizing students' study results in foreign higher education institutions.

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

(1) Factual situation

The academy has an international relations office that takes care of student counselling, information and all issues related to student mobility. Students find out about opportunities to get involved in Erasmus projects on the LMTA website, during ongoing meetings (at least twice a year) and during individual consultations. The Academy understands internationalism as one of its most important strategic areas making creative camps, faculty visits, intensive projects and internships equally accessible to all students. LMTA is also active in the Nordplus project, which opens up even more opportunities for students.

Only a small proportion of students choose to study abroad because of a language barrier or fear of being separated from their group. However, both first-cycle and second-cycle students are actively involved in short-term mobility. The consistency of the content of the programme with other higher education institutions also remains a problem. Foreign students do not often choose long-term studies at the Academy due to the language barrier. However, they have all the opportunities to study and the information can be found both on the website and by contacting the person responsible for admitting students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

From provided documents, the panel formed a view that the Academy strategically pays a lot of attention to student mobility and the establishment of partnerships. Unfortunately, after meetings with students and the administration, the view was formed that the first cycle study programme does not yet seem to be suitable for long-term student mobility. It is difficult for students to integrate into the group when they return after a semester of studying abroad. Student mobility should help students to deepen their competencies, gain more diverse experiences, but students refuse long-term mobility opportunities, as programmes are structured in a linear way and students, after their return, must follow-up with the group and ongoing process which could be hard in many cases.

Based on the information gathered from the self-evaluation report, second-cycle studies provide more academic mobility opportunities: students do not rule out the possibility of studying abroad and understand the benefits of such studies. The study process is well suited not only for short internships but also for long-term foreign studies. All in all, the mobility strategy chosen by the Academy to involve students in short internships, creative camps and visits by foreign teachers is effective. However, the panel found that the first cycle study programmes are less flexible and adaptable with the long-term international mobility, what must be addressed by Academy

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

(1) Factual situation

The Academy's administration and teachers make great efforts to inform students about academic subjects and changes, through various consultations, websites, emails and other means. College provides an opportunity for group and individual career guidance, led by teachers and social partners.

There are several options to get financial support: nominal scholarships for good academic results, active social activities, individual projects also finances travel expenses for international competitions and projects.

The academy also has a psychologist and a priest with whom students can consult when faced with personal problems. One of the most important aspects of support is atmosphere and community. Students feel safe interacting with both classmates and teachers. As for the community, there is close communication and cooperation at the course level, but Klaipeda and Vilnius students are united by only one festival and incoming teachers.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The academy really strives to provide all the necessary help when it comes to psychological subjects, through individual interviews with teachers or a psychologist. It is clear that all students are aware of the possibilities of financial support, and students who are active and demonstrate good academic results are encouraged by scholarships. The students celebrated the fact that the academy ensured conditions for contact learning, they were given all the necessary assistance during the second quarantine, and the pandemic situation showed that although it was a difficult experience for the teachers, the students did not feel forgotten. It is important to find more ways to form a cohort between students of Vilnius and Klaipeda faculties.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

The profiles of study programmes are published on the website of the Academy. All other information is available during individual and group consultations and at events organized by the Academy, such as open days and information days.

The administration has a number of formal and informal ways to provide advice through faculty administrators, the Study Information and Data Office, department coordinators, heads of the departments and teachers. Students are provided with information about the general formal counselling system and the opportunity to consult with academic and non-academic staff, in addition to which there is always the opportunity to receive informal counselling. The Academy strives to gather evidence of whether such consultations are sufficient through study evaluation questionnaires (twice a year), through teachers who have individual time with students, and through the mediation of the student council.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The process of providing information to the students seems to be smooth and assured. In addition to the factors mentioned in the self-evaluation report, it is important to mention that the social partners are also involved, not only in the learning process, but also in

counselling students, on career planning, necessary competencies in the labour market, etc. The examples of Klaipėda faculty should also be commended, following the good practices when the head of the department organizes meetings with students, during which the existing problems are discussed as well as the initiative of some lecturers in organizing surveys on individual subjects.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Individual attention is paid to each student, not only in the learning process, but also in solving problems related to the study program;
2. The blend of formal and informal feedback from students, including surveys, open meetings, and individual dialogues, ensures a clear communication between staff and students, with good practice evident in the actions of the new Dean in Klaipėda;
3. There are good examples of internationalism growing further, across multiple mechanisms: for instance in projects, festivals, staff exchanges, short-term mobilities, and the leadership in this area is strong;
4. The psychological atmosphere of the studio has been improved, and the appointment of the psychologist has had demonstrably beneficial results.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Small numbers (or absence – depends on the situation) of incoming long-term mobility students which could be direct result of the small internationalisation of the programmes (lack of courses in English);
2. First-cycle study programmes are not tailored enough for students to fully engage in long-term mobility.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

Studying, student performance and graduate employment shall be evaluated according to the following indicators:

3.4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to take into account the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes

(1) Factual situation

Teaching and learning methods in the study programmes are based on a mixture of different (more or less) traditional and active approaches chosen by teachers of subjects. Close relationships and discussions among teachers and students within individual and group classes enable tutors to identify each student's profile, his/her strengths and weaknesses and needs. Students' personal abilities are taken into consideration within the teaching process. On the other hand, the criteria which must be fulfilled by a student to succeed in a subject are set up and described. Self-study and individual work of students are involved in study plans. The expert panel noted several examples of concrete changes made in the programmes to

respond to students' needs (e. g. changes in the study programme History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts made upon feedback of the study programme committee; discussion on maximum workload of students in the specialisation Theatre and Event Directing and subsequent specification of requirements). Positive changes in recent years and the effort of the Academy to sort out problematic issues were mentioned and appreciated by student representatives at the visit. Especially in master studies, the expert panel noted a wide range of positive changes in teaching processes - implementation of artistic research methods and interconnection of practical creative work with theoretical reflection, supporting reflective competencies of students; methodological support in newly realized art-based research presentations to public (study programme Theatre Art, specialisation Applied Theatre, Klaipeda Faculty); more innovative methods and openness to experience from abroad mentioned by students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Due to the small number of students in the programmes and the feeling of openness, which is necessary to ensure secure feedback and discussion, the needs of students can be and factually are well monitored. The teaching and learning processes, including artistic work are individualized and take into consideration students' uniqueness and needs. The blend of formal and informal feedback from students (e. g. open meetings, individual dialogues with teachers, open consultation with the new dean of the Klaipeda faculty) ensures a clear communication between staff and students and enables problematic issues to be uncovered and reacted to swiftly.

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

(1) Factual situation

The system of different financial support is set up at the academy. Students in difficult financial situations can ask for a variety of social grants or state-supported grants. Those who come to the academy from other parts of Lithuania are offered a reduced fee at the students' dormitory. Students are provided a psychological consultation, if needed. Individual and personalised approach of teachers also plays an important role, when a student gets into a difficult situation and looks for some help. Teachers are aware of the high demanding character of the studies, and they are sensitive to the individual situations of their students. Even though it was declared that students with special needs are welcome at the academy within the expert panel visit, there are no such students studying now.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The academy provides a standard system of financial support to students in difficult situations. The psychological atmosphere of the studio has been improved, and the appointment of the psychologist has had demonstrably beneficial results. The academy must work harder to establish a culture of accessibility, inclusion and warmth of welcome to students with special needs and disabilities, working to align the regulatory framework of accessibility for the new campus with a parallel cultural shift of inclusive thinking.

3.4.3. Evaluation of the systematic nature of the monitoring of student study progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress

(1) Factual situation

Monitoring and assessment of students' study progress is based both on formal and informal methods and approaches. Assessment of learning outcomes and academic achievements is formalized. At the beginning of a subject/a project students are acquainted with expected outcomes and criteria upon which they will be assessed. Teachers monitor students' progress continually, provide them individual feedback and after the examination session they give a student a comprehensive summary on his/her performance, acquired competences and areas of improvement. After each semester, a student also gets feedback from the head of a department which reflects the student's delivery in his/her specialisation. More informal approaches based on mutual discussions between students and teachers are an integral part of the process.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The process of monitoring student study progress and feedback to students is formalized and implemented in practice. Students are aware of these processes and proved their implementation in practice. Also, individual and personalised approaches to feedback seem very important for students' orientation through possibilities of his/her improvement and further development.

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

(1) Factual situation

Information on graduates' employment and careers are collected by the Career and Competence Office in cooperation with the departments which are in close relationship with social partners, including employers. The system of monitoring and analysing necessary data is not formalized. Awareness of graduates' employment is based on observation, information arising from cooperation with social partners and close contacts with graduates, and data from the Employment Service.

The majority of graduates in the study field of Theatre work according to acquired qualification in the cultural and creative sector. Within the expert panel visit, alumni highly appreciated their studies at the academy, and they confirmed they had not had any problem to find a job after finishing the school. Employers acknowledged the high level of graduates' preparedness, progressivity, creative thinking and talent.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The academy needs to finally secure an effective process for career tracking of its alumni, including freelancers. A kind of alumni programme could be considered in the future. Students are meeting and demonstrably exceeding social partners' expectations and the transition to the labour market is incredibly strong for large numbers of students on the programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation

The principles concerning academic integrity and ethics defined in the *Code of Academic Ethics*. All members of the academy undertake to act in accordance with the code and principles of academic honesty. Violations of academic ethics and integrity are addressed and investigated by the Ethics Committee which acts upon the *Code of Academic Ethics* and *Regulations of Activities of LMTA Ethics Committee*. One case of violation of the code occurred and was sorted out within the monitored period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The policies to ensuring academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination are well set-up and implemented at the institution.

3.4.6. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the application of procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints regarding the study process within the field studies

(1) Factual situation

The process of appeals and complaints related to the study is described in the *Descriptor of the Procedure for Submission and Consideration of Appeals Regarding Learning Outcome at LMTA*. Relevant and irrelevant types of appeals (for example a violation of the procedures for assessment of study subject learning outcomes, or for thesis defence and assessment are relevant subjects of appeals; on the contrary, appeals concerning the assessment of the final thesis are not relevant) are defined there, as well as the way a student can submit a written request and how the Appeals Commission is appointed. The LMTA Dispute Resolution Commission as a final decisive body is determined. No appeals and complaints were submitted in the monitored period.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The formal process of submitting appeals and complaints regarding the study process is set up at the academy. Close relationships among staff, teachers and students probably prevents the situation when a problematic issue has to be sorted out on an official level.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The teaching and learning processes, including artistic work are individualized and take into consideration students' uniqueness and needs;
2. The psychological atmosphere of the studies has been improved, and the appointment of the psychologist has had demonstrably beneficial results;
3. Students are meeting and demonstrably exceeding social partners' expectations and the transition to the labour market is incredibly strong for large numbers of students on the programmes;
4. New and innovative methodologies continuously implemented in master studies, with a high level of openness to experience from external environment and abroad.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The academy must work harder to establish a culture of accessibility, inclusion and warmth of welcome to students with special needs and disabilities, working to align

- the regulatory framework of accessibility for the new campus with a parallel cultural shift of inclusive thinking;
2. The academy needs to finally secure an effective process for career tracking of its alumni, including freelancers.

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

Study field teaching staff shall be evaluated in accordance with the following indicators:

3.5.1. Evaluation of the adequacy of the number, qualification and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff within a field study programme(s) at the HEI in order to achieve the learning outcomes

(1) Factual situation

The number of staff working on the programmes at LMTA is detailed in Annex 5 of the SER. The global figure across first and second study cycles in both faculties is recorded as 90. The percentage of these lecturers working over 50% FTE (full-time equivalent), is just over 50%, leaving time for pedagogues to pursue their artistic careers and work in the industry. The staff-student ratio has remained broadly stable and is appropriately very low (1:6.25 in 2019), recognising the highly practical and intensive nature of the programmes. The spread of experience across the staff is well balanced, with c.55% working between 1 and 20 years, to complement the longer serving members of staff. The legal requirements for the qualification of staff are met and there is a high percentage of second cycle teachers holding scientific (artistic) degrees at 94%. Staff, generally, are pedagogically very well-experienced and nationally and internationally influential as artists, offering a gateway to the industry for their students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The staff's range of artistic activity, research and qualifications reflects LMTA's position as the landmark national institution for theatre in the country. There is a high proportion of established artists at professor level producing work of national importance, and these operate alongside a number of colleagues educated to doctoral level. The breadth and scope of the staff base gives students of the academy an unrivalled opportunity to work with renowned artists and scholars of theatre. High levels of productivity in scholarship and artistic research are manifest.

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

(1) Factual situation

LMTA enjoys large numbers of contracts with higher education institutions around the world (171, are identified in the SER). The academy participates in a range of higher education international program networks including Nordplus, Nordtrad, and Nortecas, alongside the Erasmus plus programme funded by the European Union. There is a healthy balance of outgoing and incoming staff exchange, with the majority (31/53) being of the outgoing variety (in 2019). From 2017 to 2019, more than 400 teacher visits took place for the purposes of teaching, learning mobility and participation in project activities of strategic partnerships.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The data show that staff are able to enjoy international exchange opportunities, and are funded to do so. There is strategic and institutional support to continue to build international relations. There is an annual process to gather the aspirations for international mobility and this is understood and engaged in by staff. Beyond the formal long-term mechanisms, there are multiple shorter-term international exchange activities at the heart of LMTA's activities, including international festivals, cultural events, conferences et cetera. The table of artistic and pedagogical activity at Annex 5 testifies to the staff's significant engagement in these fora.

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

(1) Factual situation

Support for the development of teaching staff's competences is detailed on the SER. These include infrastructural, financial and organisational support. There are three centres engaged in staff development: the international relations office, the art centre and the career and competence centre. Financial support via the Erasmus plus scheme is detailed on SER. It shows nearly a doubling of investment between 2017 and 2019 for teaching and learning mobility. The vast majority of the funds are being spent on international mobility, with professional development opportunities within the country remaining very small in terms of funding spend. Areas for development are identified as improving the incentives for personal development and addressing the opportunities for new technologies in teaching and learning.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Institutional policy and strategy are arranged so as to support systematically the ongoing development of competences within the academy's staff. There is clear evidence of widespread take-up of international schemes for professional and research development. During the visit the expert panel heard examples of training in relation to distanced learning being offered by the library team. There is now a pressing need to consolidate the lessons learned from the enforced digital learning experiment caused by the pandemic, and to consider what permanent changes in relation to delivery of modules are necessary and beneficial. This will involve significant cross-institutional discussions and personal development in relation to digital education, even for those tutors only involved in intensive practice. Drawing on earlier career tutors' experiences, as identified in the action plan in the SER, can help facilitate this important discussion and development opportunity.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The academy, in its size and national influence, is well funded and well organised to support staff development and is demonstrably doing so;
2. International mobility, both outgoing and incoming is well established, procedurally supported, and the take-up by Staff is high;
3. Exchange of best practice between faculties is emerging, in the early years of the merged institution and this can lead to the foundation of a more strategic and

organised programme of in-house staff development, in relation to - for instance - digital learning.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. A more formal incentivisation scheme for staff development still needs to be developed, drawing in all levels of LMTA staff from early career to Professor.

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

(1) Factual situation

SER provides sufficient data on the premises used for the field of studies. The study programmes in the study field take place in old historical buildings (both in Vilnius and in Klaipėda), which need renovation. During the meetings the Panel was given reliable information that the Faculty of Theatre and Cinema will be moved to the new LMTA campus as soon as it is constructed, while the main building of Klaipėda Faculty is going to be renovated.

SER provides extensive data on the premises used for the field studies: total list of premises used for studies at LMTA, the premises used for the study programmes in the field of Theatre delivered in Vilnius (classrooms for individual classes, self-study classrooms, group lecture classrooms and other premises in two buildings on T. Kosciuškos str., as well as the Balcony Theatre in the main LMTA building, on Gedimino av.–) and in Klaipėda (eleven classrooms and a Mock Theatre in Klaipėda faculty building on K. Donelaičio str.). SER presents clear specifications of the premises used, including the technical equipment of each. All premises are regularly available for students on every day of the week (including weekends) from 7:00 to 22:00. All students have a possibility to use classrooms and the equipment for self-study free of charge. LMTA has three reading rooms in Vilnius and one reading room in Klaipėda for individual students' work. The LMTA library resources are properly described in SER and were well presented during the meeting. They appear to be fully providing the field of studies with the needed material for studies.

According to SER, the examinations as well as public performances are held not only in LMTA premises (the Balcony Theatre, the Theatre Workshop and the Cinema hall in Vilnius, the Mock Theatre in Klaipėda), but also in the spaces of different professional theatres in Vilnius, Klaipėda and other cities as well as in other cultural public spaces (cultural centres, museums, galleries, open spaces). The study internships / practices can be successfully implemented outside the HEI due to the vast network of social partners as well.

The adaptation of the premises, facilities and equipment used for the field studies for students with special needs is not done yet. SER states that the Academy "aims at improving accessibility of studies and conditions for the students with disability and special needs at the Academy as far as it is practicable". During the meeting with Vilnius teachers the Panel was

told that “there is no need for such an adaptation of premises because there are no such students”. The impression received is that the Academy has a rather weak understanding of the culture of accessibility and inclusion to students with special needs and disabilities. However, during the meeting with Klaipėda teachers, the Panel was given several clear examples and evidence indicating that in Klaipėda Faculty the studies are adaptable for the students with special needs.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The premises, means and equipment used for the field studies, including software, are adequate for the current number of students and suitable to achieve the learning outcomes. Although the Panel was unable to visit the physical premises of the Academy - because of the COVID-19 pandemic - it was confirmed in the various meetings that the premises are “adequate”, “appropriate”, “decent”. The Panel believes this to be accurate and presumes that the new LMTA campus in Vilnius will strongly contribute not only to the quality of studies, but also to a culture of accessibility and inclusion.

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

(1) Factual situation

SER presents data on the annual (2017, 2018, 2019) expenses for upgrading learning facilities and methodological resources of LMTA and states that the improvement of infrastructure takes place according to the needs and recommendations of teachers and students. According to SER, “the needs for learning facilities and resources are considered twice a year and fulfilled in accordance with the priorities set and financial capacities” and the funding for the improvement of infrastructure is constantly growing. During the meetings this information was confirmed. SER does not present a clear financial plan for the improvement of the infrastructure required for the Theatre studies, but during the meetings the Panel was assured that a) the construction of the new LMTA campus in Vilnius is funded and it has just begun; b) there are clear plans for the renovation of Klaipėda Faculty building.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The team assesses this category as adequate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. LMTA has several well-equipped spaces for the public presentation of students’ works (the Balcony Theatre, the Theatre Workshop, the Mock Theatre in Klaipėda);
2. A vast network of social partners allows students to carry out study internships in different professional theatres and/or to present their graduation works publicly at professional theatre venues.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The LMTA buildings on T. Kosčiuskos street currently used for the field studies are in relatively poor condition and need renovation. Although the building of the new

- campus has begun, it is important to maintain an adequate state of the buildings currently used for studies;
2. The LMTA premises, facilities and equipment used for the field studies are not properly adapted for students with special needs and disabilities.

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

(1) Factual situation

LMTA internal quality assurance system is organized in accordance with *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*. It is reflected in two main internal documents (*Quality Manual* and *Policy on Quality Assurance in Higher Education, Scientific and Art Activities*), which are publicly available on the LMTA website. The top management of the Academy is in charge of shaping and implementing the *LMTA Policy on Quality Assurance*. SER describes in detail different ways and means used to ensure the quality of studies during different processes: design and approval of new study programmes; monitoring and periodical review of programmes; admission procedures; study process (learning, teaching, assessment); management of human and learning resources; collection, analysis and dissemination of data and information.

Constant monitoring of the field studies is governed by the *LMTA Regulations of Study Programmes*. According to this document, the study programmes are reviewed and / or updated at least every two years; proposals on updating study programmes can be submitted by different stakeholders (students, teachers, administrators, social partners) to study programmes' committees; updated study programmes are confirmed by Senate; study subject / modules (and their descriptors) are updated at least every two years by the teachers and approved by the respective department. The centralised internal monitoring of existing study programmes is performed by the Study Programmes Office. The participation in external quality assurance procedures is organized and coordinated by the Quality Management Office. All described policies and procedures seem consistent with good practice in study quality assurance and maintenance. During the meetings with different stakeholders the Panel was convinced that the basic quality assurance mechanisms are understood and implemented in practice, especially in Klaipėda Faculty.

The learning outcomes of the study programmes in the field of theatre are evaluated and improved by different Study Programme Committees (SPC): the SPC for the study programmes "Theatre Art" (both - BA and MA - programmes delivered in Vilnius); The SPC for the study programmes and/or specialisations delivered in Klaipėda (BA "Acting", BA "Theatre Art" specialization Theatre and Event Directing, MA "Theatre Art" specialization Applied Theatre; The SPC for the study programme "History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts" (the same SPC is responsible for the MA study programme "Theory of Art", implemented at LMTA in the field of History and Theory of Arts).

The delivery of the study programmes is coordinated by the Heads of respective Departments: *The Department of Acting and Directing* in Vilnius, which is responsible for the

implementation of BA and MA programmes “Theatre Art”; *The Department of Theatre* in Klaipėda Faculty, which is responsible for the implementation of the specializations of the programme “Theatre Art” delivered in Klaipėda (BA, *Theatre and Event Directing*, MA *Applied Theatre*) and the implementation of the BA programme “Acting”; *The Department of History and Theory of Art* in the Faculty of Theatre and Film, in Vilnius, which is responsible for the implementation of the programme “History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts”.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

According to the SER, related documentation, and the meetings, the Panel assesses that the LMTA internal quality assurance system is well designed and organized. All policies and procedures are documented and seem consistent with good practice in study quality assurance and maintenance.

The Panel considers that the structure of SPCs is not entirely appropriate. First of all, it is not clear, how different SPCs of the same programme (namely, SPC of the programme “Theatre Art” in Vilnius and SPC of the specialization of the same programme in Klaipėda) are working together on evaluation and improvement of the same learning outcomes and how different SPCs ensure that students achieve the same learning outcomes (while studying such different specializations as e.g. Directing and Applied Theatre on MA level). Secondly, some doubts arise concerning SPC in Klaipėda Faculty, which has to monitor learning outcomes of three rather different programmes and / or specialisations, namely, BA Theatre and Event Directing, BA Acting and MA Applied theatre. The panel finds the existing structure of SPC problematic and suggests rethinking the principles of forming SPC of the studies in the field of Theatre.

As mentioned before, the location of the programme “History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts” in the study field of theatre seems to be inappropriate. The aim, learning outcomes and study plan of the programme indicates that the programme corresponds to the study field of History and Theory of Art. The logical connection of this programme to the study field of History and Theory of Art is also evidenced by such facts that a) the programme is monitored by SPC, which consists entirely of specialists of history and theory of arts (theatre and film critics and historians), and which also monitors the MA study programme “Theory of Art”, implemented at LMTA in the field of History and Theory of Arts; b) the programme is delivered by the The Department of History and Theory of Art in the Faculty of Theatre and Film, in Vilnius, which also implements MA and PhD programmes in History and Theory of Arts.

In summary, Study programmes are monitored by different SPCs and delivered at different departments / faculties of LMTA. The Panel was convinced that the responsibilities of different bodies (SPC, Departments) are clearly defined. However, the Panel finds the existing arrangement of SPC problematic and suggests rethinking the principles of forming SPC of the studies in the field of Theatre. The location of the programme “History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts” in the study field of theatre needs to be addressed as well.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to SER different stakeholders actively participate in internal study quality assurance system in various forms: they participate in formal surveys on the quality of studies (students, graduates, social partners), they are members of SPC (students, teachers, social partners), they are members of final assessment committees (social partners), they are invited to teach (social partners, graduates), they are invited to participate in the process of self-evaluation (students, teachers, social partners).

During the meetings students confirmed that they are involved in the process of internal quality assurance (filling surveys, participating in SPC, contributing to the process of self-evaluation). The opinions of students on formal anonymous surveys differed: students from Klaipėda faculty confirmed that they practice both – formal (surveys) and informal (discussions) – ways of feedback, meanwhile students from Vilnius said that they hardly use anonymous surveys and value informal feedback as a faster and more effective form of communication. The Panel was convinced that students' opinions concerning teaching and learning processes are regularly asked and taken into account in both – formal and informal – ways.

The involvement of other stakeholders in internal study quality assurance processes was also strongly confirmed during the meeting with social partners and graduates. The panel was convinced that the social partners actively contribute to the implementation of theatre programmes in both cities (Vilnius and Klaipėda): they are members of final assessment committees, they accept students for internships, they express their opinion on studies (mostly in informal ways) to the managers of Academy, Departments and Study programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

According to the SER and the meetings, the Academy encourages the involvement of different stakeholders (students, graduates, social partners) in the internal quality assurance process.

The Academy has a huge network of social partners and cooperates with the majority of professional Lithuanian theatres, as well as many other important cultural institutions. The Panel was impressed by the number of participating social partners and graduates, their enthusiasm for theatre studies at LMTA, their willingness to contribute to the implementation of theatre studies at the Academy. Although no formal surveys of graduates and employers were organized during the reporting period (since 2017), it was clear to the Panel that both social partners and graduates find informal ways to express their opinions on the studies and feel able to contribute to the implementation of the programmes and to the improvement of study quality at LMTA.

However, the Panel notes that feedback from different stakeholders (students, graduates, social partners) needs to be gathered more systematically and, if possible, anonymously. Moreover, the Panel was not able to identify clear participation of social partners in the preparation of SER. The Panel thinks that participation of social partners in preparing the SER was not as extensive as it could usefully have been, and the Panel recommends a clearer contribution of social partners to future versions of the self-analysis of the study field.

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

(1) Factual situation

SER describes in detail what kind of information on studies is collected and stored at LMTA. According to SER different statistics and results of different surveys are collected and stored at the respective units (offices and centres) of LMTA. Although SER lacks information on how this data is analysed, during the meetings the Panel understood that regular analysis of data is done by different departments and units of the Academy. According to SER the overview of this analysis is provided in annual reports of LMTA, which are publicly available on Academy's website. On the same website LMTA makes publicly available the most important information on all programmes implemented in the field of theatre (aims and learning outcomes, admission requirements, qualification acquired, ect.)

As it was already mentioned, LMTA organizes regular surveys of different stakeholders. SER states that "the results of student and graduate surveys are used for the improvement of individual study subjects, the quality of their instruction, in particular" and presents several clear examples how the results of these surveys were used for the improvement of the studies implemented in the field of Theatre (e.g. 2018/2019 autumn semester Survey on the teaching quality of study subjects revealed "Inadequate psychological atmosphere in the department". According to SER, as a response to this situation "another person was appointed to the position of the head of the department by the Senate").

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The panel was convinced that LMTA collects and analyses different data on programmes, and organizes regular surveys of different stakeholders. There were some clear examples in the SER, how the results of the surveys help to develop the programmes. However, the Panel recommends to encourage students to participate more actively in the formal surveys and to conduct surveys of graduates and employers regularly (as no formal surveys of graduates and employers were organized since 2017). The Panel notes that the feedback data analysis has to be presented to all the stakeholders who have provided feedback, and it has to be publicized by using different channels.

The panel also notes that the Career and Competence Centre and the Postgraduate Studies Office need to secure an effective process for career tracking of its alumni, including freelancers.

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

(1) Factual situation

As it was already mentioned before, LMTA collects the opinion of the field students by using anonymous electronic surveys: "student surveys on the quality of teaching the study subject or the study programme studied are carried out constantly". It is also stated in SER, that "students are notified about the surveys being carried out by email containing a link to the questionnaire of the survey" and that "the general survey results are introduced to the teacher teaching the subject, the study programme committee, the management of the faculty and students". SER presents results of students' surveys and provides examples of how the results of surveys were used to improve the field studies (e.g. during Covid 19 quarantine in

spring 2020 students provided their observations and suggestions with regard to the final assessment. Having considered students' opinion, among other things, the LMTA Senate approved several resolutions on the organisation of the final assessment).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

During the meetings with students the Panel received evidence that the surveys are carried out constantly, but students are not very actively filling them out (especially, students of the Faculty of Theatre and Cinema in Vilnius). However, the Panel saw no evidence that the results of the surveys are introduced to the students and supposes that this may be one of the reasons why students don't fill out formal questionnaires. The Panel recommends the Academy to present the feedback data analysis to students regularly. During the meetings the Panel got the impression that the general opinion of the students (and also graduates) of LMTA (both Faculty of Theatre and Film in Vilnius and Faculty in Klaipėda) about the quality of the studies was very good. Therefore, it is not clear for the Panel why the students' opinion on the quality of the studies expressed in anonymous surveys is not good (According to SER, 41 % of respondents indicated that "the sufficiency of knowledge gained during the studies for the career" is "nearly sufficient", 22% indicated "not sufficient", 3% - "absolutely insufficient"). The panel has no doubt that students' opinions concerning teaching and learning processes are regularly asked and taken into account in both – formal and informal – ways. SER provides the results of the surveys and gives clear examples how the results of surveys were used to improve the field studies.

However, the Panel recommends analysing the results of the anonymous surveys more thoroughly in order to find out why the opinion of the students on the general quality of studies is not as good as it was expressed by students during the meetings with the Panel.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. LMTA has a rational internal quality assurance system: the quality assurance procedures are well documented, responsibilities are shared and clearly allocated, involvement of the stakeholders is encouraged;
2. The blend of formal and informal feedback from students ensures effective communication between staff and students and creates an appropriate psychological atmosphere for studies;
3. The Academy has an active and effective partnership with the majority of professional Lithuanian theatres, as well as many other important cultural institutions;
4. Graduates of the programmes of the field of theatre are meeting and demonstrably exceeding social partners' expectations.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The feedback from different stakeholders (students, graduates, social partners) needs to be gathered more systematically, analysed more thoroughly, presented to all the stakeholders who have provided feedback, and publicized;

2. The Career and Competence Centre and the Postgraduate Studies Office of the Academy need to secure an effective process for career tracking of its alumni, including freelancers;
3. The location of the study programme “History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts” in the study field of theatre needs to be addressed in order to fully meet the classification of study fields and the requirements of the Descriptor of the Fields of Theatre, Film and Dance;
4. The existing structure of Study Programme Committees (SPCs) is not entirely appropriate.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

Core definition: Excellence means exhibiting exceptional characteristics that are, implicitly, not achievable by all.

If, according to the expert panel, there are no such exceptional characteristics demonstrated by the HEI in this particular study field, this section should be skipped / left empty.

1. The academy is to be commended for the serious and authentic response to previous reviews and its efforts in effecting a significant cultural shift, which permeates all its programmes.
2. LMTA plays an evident and pivotal cultural leadership role in the country and its partnerships, nationally and internationally, enrich the student experience immeasurably, especially at second cycle.
3. LMTA's programmes are led by staff in both cities who are highly skilled teachers and artists in their own right, enjoying national and international visibility and recognition.
4. The final thesis work is of the highest quality and recognised as such in the industry.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement appropriate mechanisms to ensure the briefing of students in relation to assessment criteria and advance module content in the first cycle courses of Acting and Directing in Vilnius. 2. Introduce a written theoretical component in the Final thesis of the first cycle courses in Acting and Directing at Vilnius. 3. Continue the review of the first cycle specialisations/ programmes across the provision to address any overlaps.
Links between science (art) and studies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a strategy both to fully understand and realise the potential of artistic research, from first cycle through to 3rd cycle for students, and for staff up to and including the professoriate.
Student admission and support	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure long-term student mobility opportunities are possible across all the first cycle specialisations.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a culture of accessibility, inclusion and warmth of welcome to students with special needs and disabilities, working to align the regulatory framework of accessibility for the new campus with a parallel cultural shift of inclusive thinking. 2. Secure an effective process for career tracking of alumni, including freelancers using the agency of the Career and Competence Centre at LMTA.
Teaching staff	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and formalise an incentivisation scheme for staff development, drawing in all levels of LMTA staff from early career to Professor.
Learning facilities and resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement appropriate adaptations to the LMTA premises, facilities and equipment to make them accessible for students with special needs and disabilities.
Study quality management and public information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Gather, analyse, present and publicise feedback from different stakeholders (students, graduates, social partners) more systematically. 2. Address the anomaly of History and Criticism of Performing and Film Arts being outside of the recommended field of Humanities in order to fully meet the classification of study fields in Lithuanian Higher Education. 3. Revise the existing arrangement of Study Programme Committees to reflect the needs of the programmes and to

	ensure the learning outcomes are properly differentiated.
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VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the study field *Theatre at Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre:*

The academy, now constructed as three faculties given its merger with Klaipeda Theatre field, has undertaken a serious and authentic response to the previous reviews of 2014 and 2015 and has managed to effect a significant cultural shift, which permeates all its programmes. The merger has been managed sensitively and inclusively, and has collective support across all staff, with good practice evident in both areas. LMTA plays an evident and pivotal cultural leadership role in the country and its plans for the new campus will buttress this position further. Staff in both cities are highly skilled teachers with national and international visibility and recognition. Students are meeting and demonstrably exceeding social partners' expectations and the transition to the labour market is incredibly strong for large numbers of them on the programmes. There is a good blend of formal and informal feedback from students, including surveys, open meetings, and individual dialogues, and this ensures clear communications between staff and students, with good practice evident, for instance in the actions of the new Dean in Klaipeda. Examples of proactive internationalism are growing, across multiple mechanisms: in projects, festivals, staff exchanges, short-term mobilities, and the leadership in this area is strong. With new appointments, the psychological atmosphere of the studio has been improved, and the presence of a new psychologist has had demonstrably beneficial results. New campus developments have finally been ratified and the tenacity of the senior team in driving this forward is to be commended.

Merger has created some anomalies and these are being worked through by the Senior Team; viewed as a full suite of programmes at first cycle, the specialisations across the provision need to continue to be reviewed, addressing any overlaps and illegitimate programme locations. It is recommended that further integrative mechanisms for the exchange of best practice between Klaipeda faculty and Vilnius are designed, in keeping with the first strong steps already taken. In relation to staff research, it is recommended that the academy develops a strategy both to fully understand and realise the potential of artistic research, from first cycle through to 3rd cycle for students, and for staff up to and including its professoriate. While short-term mobility opportunities are now evident for students, it is recommended that programme design and staffing allows for genuine opportunities for long-term student mobility - semester and year long - in the future. There are opportunities for best practice exchange, for instance with the BA final thesis in Vilnius aligning with its equivalent in Klaipeda faculty, to include an explicit written and theoretical component. And the Academy must work further to embed students' understanding of course descriptions and assessment criteria, particularly for the first cycle Acting and Directing programmes in Vilnius. The panel found that the academy still needs to secure an effective process for career tracking of its alumni, including freelancers. Finally and most pointedly, the academy must work harder to establish a culture of accessibility, inclusion and warmth of welcome to

students with special needs and disabilities, working to align the regulatory framework of accessibility for the new campus with a parallel cultural shift of inclusive thinking.

The panel chair's signature:

Prof. dr. Jonathan Pitches, academic.