SKVC

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SOFTWARE ENGINEERING FIELD OF STUDY

at Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Expert panel:
1. Panel chair: FH-Prof. Mag. DI Dr. Friedrich Praus ………………………...
   (signature)
2. Academic member: Prof. (FH) Dr. Johannes Lüthi
3. Academic member: Asist. Prof. Roman Danel
4. Social partner representative: Vilma Narkevičienė
5. Student representative: Matas Zaloga

SKVC coordinator: Gabrielė Čėplaitė

Report prepared in 2025
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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. OUTLINE OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

The field of study evaluations in Lithuanian higher education institutions (HEIs) are based on the following:

- Procedure for the External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, Evaluation Areas and Indicators, approved by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport;

- Methodology of External Evaluation of Study Fields approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC);

- Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

The evaluation is intended to support HEIs in continuous enhancement of their study process and to inform the public about the quality of programmes within the field of study.

The object of the evaluation is all programmes within a specific field of study. A separate assessment is given for each study cycle.

The evaluation process consists of the following main steps: 1) Self-evaluation and production of a self-evaluation report (SER) prepared by an HEI; 2) A site visit by the review panel to the HEI; 3) The external evaluation report (EER) production by the review panel; 4) EER review by the HEI; 5) EER review by the Study Evaluation Committee; 6) Accreditation decision taken by SKVC; 7) Appeal procedure (if initiated by the HEI); 8) Follow-up activities, which include the production of a Progress Report on Recommendations Implementation by the HEI.

The main outcome of the evaluation process is the EER prepared by the review panel. The HEI is forwarded the draft EER for feedback on any factual mistakes. The draft report is then subject to approval by the external Study Evaluation Committee, operating under SKVC. Once approved, the EER serves as the basis for an accreditation decision. If an HEI disagrees with the outcome of the evaluation, it can file an appeal.On the basis of the approved EER, SKVC takes one of the following accreditation decisions:

- **Accreditation granted for 7 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points), or good (3 points).

- **Accreditation granted for 3 years** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points).

- **Not accredited** if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as unsatisfactory (1 point).

If the field of study and cycle were **previously accredited for 3 years**, the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle is initiated no earlier than after 2 years. After the re-evaluation of the field of study and cycle, SKVC takes one of the following decisions regarding the accreditation of the field of study and cycle:

- To be accredited for the remaining term until the next evaluation of the field of study and cycle, but no longer than 4 years, if all evaluation areas are evaluated as exceptional (5 points), very good (4 points) or good (3 points).

- To not be accredited, if at least one evaluation area is evaluated as satisfactory (2 points) or unsatisfactory (1 point).

1.2. REVIEW PANEL

The review panel was appointed in accordance with the Reviewer Selection Procedure as approved by the Director of SKVC.

The composition of the review panel was as follows:

1. Panel chair: FH-Prof. Mag. DI Dr. Friedrich Praus, Professor at Vienna University of Applied Sciences (FH Technikum Wien);

2. Academic member: Prof. (FH) Dr. Johannes Lüthi, Professor and former Head of the Academic Council at the Kufstein University of Applied Sciences (FH Kufstein);

3. Academic member: Asist. Prof. Roman Danel, Assistant Professor at Institute of Technology and Business in České Budějovice (VŠTE in České Budějovice), Assistant Professor at Technical University of Ostrava (VŠB);

4. Social partner representative: Vilma Narkevičienė, IT Function Owner, UAB Hyand Lithuania;

5. Student representative: Matas Zaloga, Third-year student of the first-cycle study program "Computer Software Engineering" at Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, member of the Lithuanian Students' Union.

1.3. SITE VISIT

The site visit was organised on 27 February 2025 on-site.

Meetings with the following members of the staff and stakeholders took place during the site visit:

- Senior management and administrative staff of the faculty(ies);
- Team responsible for preparation of the SER;
- Teaching staff;
- Students;
- Alumni and social stakeholders including employers.

There was a need for translation during the meetings.

1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE REVIEW

Overview of the HEI

Šiaulių valstybinė kolegija (ŠVK) is a public, state higher education institution. It was established in 2002. It is organised in the two academic units: Faculty of Health Care (3 departments) and Faculty of Business and Technologies (5 departments). ŠVK has ~1631 students in the faculty of Business and Technologies, ~67 students (2023-2024) in the Software Engineering programme. In 2023-2024 a. y. 1631 students are studying at the ŠVK (in Faculty of Business and Technologies (hereinafter - the Faculty) – 1055).

Overview of the study field

The HEI offers the first cycle, level 6 Software Engineering program within the study field Software Engineering, which awards a professional bachelor's degree in Computing.

The program's aim and intended learning outcomes align with the institution's strategic action plan, focusing on developing competitive software engineering specialists through science-based studies, international experience, creativity, community engagement, and ethical and social responsibility.

The program is closely related to the Šiauliai City strategic development plan for 2015–2024, which prioritizes an innovative engineering industry, investment-driven logistics services, accessible high-quality public services through IT, and the development of skilled professionals creating competitive products.

Previous external evaluations

The Software Engineering programme has been registered in 2019. 7 recommendations have been given. The program was updated in 2021 taking into account the Description of Informatics Sciences Study Fields Group. In 2024 the study plan was adjusted based on proposals of social stakeholders and the results of a student survey.

The programme has been organised as full-time and part-time since 2019. Due to low interest, admission to the part-time form has been canceled in 2021 and is offered exclusively in full-time mode from 2022.

Documents and information used in the review

The following documents and/or information have been requested/provided by the HEI before or during the site visit:

- Self-evaluation report and its annexes
- Final theses
- Data on student employability (monitoring)

- Data on how many were real products / projects implemented with companies and their examples.

- Updated data from self-assessment tables

- Data completion from the self-assessment: page 14, missing information on the implementation of recommendation No. 2.

Additional sources of information used by the review panel:

The following additional sources of information have been used by the review panel:

- Strategic Development Plan of Šiauliai City for year 2015–2024;
- Lithuanian Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2030";
- Lithuanian Progress Strategy "Lithuania 2050"
- Invest Lithuania https://investlithuania.com/

II. STUDY PROGRAMMES IN THE FIELD

First cycle/LTQF 6

Title of the study programme	**Software Engineering**	
State code	6531BX044	
Type of study (college/university)	College	
Mode of study (full time/part time) and nominal duration (in years)	Full-time, 3 years, Part-time, 4 years	
Workload in ECTS	180	
Award (degree and/or professional qualification)	Professional Bachelor in Computing	
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	
Admission requirements	Secondary Education	
First registration date	17 05 2019	
Comments (including remarks on joint or interdisciplinary nature of the programme, mode of provision)	-	

III. ASSESSMENT IN POINTS BY CYCLE AND EVALUATION AREAS

The **first cycle** of the Software Engineering field of study is given a **positive** evaluation.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation points[1][*]
1.	Study aims, learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between scientific (or artistic) research and higher education	4
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student assessment, and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Quality assurance and public information	4
	Total:	28

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[1]

IV. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

AREA 1: STUDY AIMS, LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

1.1.	Programmes are aligned with the country's economic and societal needs and the strategy of the HEI

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.1.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the needs of the society and/or the labour market

The Software Engineering (hereinafter referred to as "SE") program at HEI is designed to prepare students for the growing demands of the modern technological landscape. The program aims to equip students with the skills necessary to identify organizational needs, design, program, test and implement software systems, as well as apply security solutions. These competencies are essential to meet the needs of society and ensure graduates are well-prepared for the dynamic labor market.

As mentioned in the SER, the SE program aligns with both national and European (hereinafter referred to as "EU") strategic goals for technological advancement. Lithuania's "Lithuania 2030" and "Lithuania 2050" strategies emphasize the importance of creating a modern, dynamic society capable of adapting to change and leveraging technological advancements. The program helps foster lifelong learning, creativity and teamwork skills that are crucial in today's rapidly evolving world. Moreover, it supports the "Smarter Lithuania" initiative which aims to maximize digitalization across various sectors for citizens, businesses and public authorities. This approach ensures that students are prepared to engage with emerging technologies and contribute to Lithuania's integration into the global economy.

A significant strength of the SE program is its focus on regional needs, particularly in the Šiauliai area, where there is a growing demand for information technology specialists. The SE programme aligns with the Šiauliai City Strategic Development Plan (2015–2024) by aiming to develop an innovative educational and cultural environment that fosters active, creative and professionally capable individuals, supporting the city's vision for growth in innovative engineering, logistics, IT-based public service and the development of competitive professionals.

The program tailors its curriculum to provide expertise in key areas such as Web Application Systems, Software Systems in Organization's Local Networks and Software Systems for Smart Devices. These specialized fields correspond to the Šiauliai Strategic Development Plan that highlights the development of high quality public services through information technology and the growth of innovative industries in the region. As a result, graduates are highly employable within the local job market benefiting from a curriculum that meets the specific demands of regional information and communication technology (hereinafter referred to as "ICT") companies.

The SE program is continuously updated to stay aligned with labor market trends and social partner expectations. Intended learning outcomes as indicated in the SER are regularly reviewed based on feedback from stakeholders, ensuring that the curriculum remains relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the technology industry. This adaptability ensures that students are prepared to face real-world challenges with the most current knowledge and skills.

The Software Engineering program at HEI is designed to meet both local and international labor market needs while aligning with Lithuania's national strategic goals. By continually reviewing and adapting the curriculum based on industry demands and stakeholder feedback, the program ensures that graduates are well-equipped for success in a competitive and evolving job market. With a strong emphasis on practical skills, research and specialization, the SE program at HEI prepares students to contribute to technological innovation and economic development in Lithuania and beyond.

1.1.2. Programme aims and learning outcomes are aligned with the HEI's mission, goals, and strategy

The aims and intended learning outcomes of the SE program at HEI are aligned with the mission and strategic objectives of the HEI. The program is designed to foster practical skills and future competencies, contributing to knowledge creation and transfer in line with HEI's commitment to lifelong learning. The strategic action plan for 2022-2024, developed with consideration for the region's needs, outlines key priorities including the development of competitive software engineering specialists through the integration of science-based studies, creativity, community involvement and ethical responsibility.

These objectives are consistent with HEI's broader mission which emphasizes providing educational experiences that are both practical and oriented for the future. The program also aligns with the strategic goals defined by HEI such as focusing on student sustainability, applied research, internationalization and social responsibility. These pillars work together to ensure the development of innovative, competitive professionals who are prepared for the demands of the labor market and global challenges. Through these aligned efforts, the SE program supports HEI's goal of preparing students for leadership roles in the professional world while contributing to scientific and practical advancements in the region.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.1.)

The SE program at HEI demonstrates a strong alignment with both national economic and societal needs as well as the strategic goals of the institution. The program is carefully designed to meet the demands of a rapidly changing labor market, particularly in the fields of software systems, security solutions and technological innovation. This alignment ensures that graduates possess the technical competencies required to thrive in today's competitive job market, particularly in Lithuania and the broader EU context.

At the national level, the SE program supports Lithuania's strategic initiatives such as "Lithuania 2030" and "Lithuania 2050", which emphasize the importance of fostering a smart, modern society through technological advancements. By focusing on key areas like Web Application Systems, Smart Devices and Software Systems in Local Networks, the program aligns with regional development plans, particularly in Šiauliai, where there is a growing demand for IT professionals. The program ensures students are equipped to contribute to both local and international economic and technological progress, creating highly employable graduates who meet the specific needs of regional IT companies.

The integration of social partners into the curriculum development process is another strength of the SE program. Regular engagement with businesses, local municipalities, and industry stakeholders helps to ensure the program remains responsive to the evolving needs of the labor market. This collaboration not only influences curriculum content but also ensures the continuous improvement of practical learning experiences such as internships, research projects and industry

collaborations. Moreover, the flexibility in the program with options for specialization, ensures students can tailor their learning to their career goals.

A strong example of individualization and practical learning at the HEI is the development of a customized system for Šiauliai TV, where students automated manual processes and replaced error-prone Excel workflows with more efficient digital solutions. This project enabled students to gain valuable hands-on experience, applying their technical knowledge to solve real-world problems. Notably, the initiative also highlighted successful cross-functional collaboration between the multimedia and software programming study programmes. According to the student representative during the on-site visit, this interdisciplinary teamwork is a valuable and commendable practice that enhances learning outcomes and better prepares students for the collaborative nature of modern workplaces.

The Software Engineering program at HEI is positioned well to meet both local and global labor market demands, ensuring its graduates are competitive and capable of addressing the dynamic challenges of the technology sector. The alignment with Lithuania's national strategies and the institution's mission, alongside active collaboration with social partners, ensures that the program is both relevant and forward thinking. By continuously reviewing and updating its curriculum based on feedback from stakeholders, the program stays adapted to the needs of the industry and contributes to the technological and economic development of the region.

1.2.	Programmes comply with legal requirements, while curriculum design, curriculum, teaching/learning and assessment methods enable students to achieve study aims and learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

1.2.1. Programmes comply with legal requirements

The SE programme, as a first cycle/Level 6 programme, complies with the legal requirements: the total workload is 180 ECTS, 141 ECTS (minimum required is 120) are allocated to learning outcomes of the study field, 44% (required at least 33%) are credits for practice based learning, 30 ECTS (minimum required 30) are allocated to internships, 12 ECTS (minimum required 9) are credits for the final Graduation Project (hereinafter referred to as "GP"), 49.5% of the total hours are contact hours, and more than 50% of the workload (minimum 30%) is allocated to independent student work.

1.2.2 Programme aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods are aligned

The HEI developed a Strategic Action Plan for 2022-2024 with the aim to achieve consistency between learning outcomes and development of competitive software engineering specialists. Strategic pillars to improve the efficiency are: focus on students, dimension of application, internationalization of activities and social responsibility.

During a semester students study 6 subjects maximum. Credits are made on the basis of workload and learning outcomes. Each learning outcome of the Programme is achieved by studying 3 to 8 subjects. Learning outcomes generally consist of knowledge and its application, research skills, special and social skills. Students' learning achievements are assessed by following methods: control work, defense of laboratory work, project development and defense, presentation of

individual research work, assessment of a practice report, and others. Compulsory and elective subjects of study fields have 120 to 141 credits. Elective subjects and practices for deeping in the study field have 15 to 20 credits. Subjects of general and digital competencies are in the range of 15 - 25 credits.

During the visit, it has been confirmed that social partners are involved in committees that help implement the proposals of social partners to programmes in order to assure the relevance of study programs.

The results of the study programme (learning outcomes) are adequate for the bachelor's degree and comply with the aim and objectives of the study program.

A document about usage of Artificial Intelligence (hereinafter referred to as "AI") tools by students (within study and at final theses) was published a year ago. The school's strategy for students is to use AI in an ethical manner. Also a document about guidance on how to write a thesis has been published.

1.2.3 Curriculum ensures consistent development of student competences

Study plans of the Programme have been prepared with systematic and logical sequence of the study subjects. Consistent development of student's competencies take place horizontally (integrity, coherence and synergy of the content of different subjects) and vertically (development of knowledge and skills in a deeper sense).

The order of subjects is coherent, the subjects in each semester follow each other logically. However, the range of elective subjects and the possibility of specialization into a certain specialization is not high.

The curriculum is set up so that students gain complete knowledge of information systems analysis and design, are familiar with available hardware and software, have knowledge of project management and system implementation, knowledge of programming languages and databases. It also includes the ability to solve problems in the field of information systems and software development, communication skills, teamwork and other necessary soft skills. The presented curriculum meets the current requirements for the education of IT professionals.

HEI's strategic commitment to student-centered learning is evident in the SE programme. The introduction of flexible study formats, including blended distance learning, accommodates diverse student needs, including working professionals. This approach reduces student wastage and helps improve retention rates by offering a structure that allows for self-paced learning within a guided framework.

Companies offer internships for students (some of them are international). The school organizes student conferences where students can present the results of their research activities. The HEI tries to encourage students' involvement in science and research.

Part time study has been cancelled. This step was explained during a site visit. The reason given was a problem with time management among students and lower achievement. During the visit, it was explained that the replacement for the abolition of part-time study is greater flexibility and also a blended study program.

Students know about the possibility to study abroad within Erasmus+. However, awareness of the possibilities of participating in Blended Intensive Programmes (hereinafter referred to as "BIP") is not high.

1.2.4 Opportunities for students to personalise curriculum according to their personal learning goals and intended learning outcomes are ensured

Students may choose from different possibilities to personalise their curriculum: Students can develop general competencies by selecting a professional foreign language (English, Russian, or German) and subjects in general and digital competencies, such as Communication Psychology or Professional Ethics, and Sociology or Philosophy of Technology.

In the fourth semester students can specialize in one of three field-specific alternatives: 1) Web Application Systems, 2) Software Systems in Organization Local Networks, or 3) Software Systems for Smart Devices.

Besides, the SER mentions Erasmus+, additional practices outside the study programme and the graduation topic as further individualisation possibilities.

1.2.5 Final theses (applied projects) comply with the requirements for the field and cycle

Requirements for the final theses/GPs are regulated by the Description of the Graduation Project Development, Defense and Assessment Procedure of Informatics Engineering and Software Engineering Study Fields.

The head of department organises and supervises the development of the final theses. The supervisor is chosen by the student, who assists in defining the topic and developing the final thesis.

The topic is selected by the student based on its relevance to their professional field, the study programme's aim, and intended learning outcomes. It is developed in collaboration with a supervisor, following a jointly prepared calendar work plan aligned with the assessment schedule set by the Head of the Department. The topics in 2023 included e.g. a "RESTful API Approach for Data Administration Across Different Servers", "Data Management System for Technical Inspection of Public Vehicles" or "Creation of Distance Calculation App for Mobile Phones Using PWA Technology", which align with to the study field.

The result is checked adhering to the policy using the Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library Information System. The student is responsible for the development, formalization and accuracy of the data and results. The Department evaluates the completed thesis to determine its eligibility for review and defense before the Qualification Committee. Finally, the work is peer reviewed and presented to a committee of 5 persons.

The SER states an average grading of 8.13/10 points. Final theses are also developed in cooperation with social partners (e.g. by orders of companies, within the INOSTART programme).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 1.2.)

The Software Engineering programme complies with the legal requirements.

The individualized study process, flexibility and emphasis on practical experience ensure that students are not only well-prepared academically but also equipped with the soft skills needed to succeed in the workplace. The program's adaptability and proactive approach to emerging trends,

such as the integration of AI, guarantee that graduates are prepared for the future challenges of the industry. Overall, the SE program effectively integrates theoretical knowledge with real-world applications, making it a valuable program that supports both student success and regional development.

The HEI allows students to customize their studies according to their career goals, strengthening their competencies in the fields most relevant to their professional ambitions by offering specialisations or free elective courses.

Final theses/GPs demonstrate students' acquired knowledge, professional skills, research abilities and personal competencies, ensuring they meet the first study cycle requirements. 3 out of 8 theses in 2023 have been developed on topics relevant to social partners or other organizations.

4 recommendations have been given in the previous evaluation of the SE programme. 3 have been addressed and discussed within the SER. Recommendation 2 has not been discussed in the SER, but in the additionally requested document. Finally, all recommendations of the previous evaluation were addressed.

AREA 1: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 1	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The integration of the INOSTART project funded by the municipality is a remarkable example of successful collaboration between the municipality, business partners, lecturers, and students. The initiative has fostered a cooperative environment that benefits all stakeholders.

2. The program's focus on both social skills and technical competencies ensures graduates are well-prepared professionals, strengthening both technical knowledge and essential interpersonal skills for success.

3. Graduates are prepared not only for local and regional social partners' workforce requirements but they are also ready to enter the global market.

4. The involvement of social partners in final thesis defenses and internships ensures a deep, practical engagement with industry needs.

5. Graduates enjoy numerous internship opportunities and are well-prepared with critical thinking, soft skills and English proficiency, making them attractive to employers.

6. The ongoing implementation of social partner feedback into the study program approved by the Academic Council demonstrates a dynamic and adaptable curriculum.

7. The municipality plays a crucial role in regional development by providing support through funding and practical assistance, leading to a 20-25% reduction in unemployment, which benefits both the program and the local economy.

8. The Chamber of Commerce's role in equipping regional businesses with skilled IT professionals ensures sustainable workforce development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No further recommendations have been made by the members of the evaluation board.

AREA 2: LINKS BETWEEN SCIENTIFIC (OR ARTISTIC) RESEARCH AND
HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1.	Higher education integrates the latest developments in scientific (or artistic) research and technology and enables students to develop skills for scientific (or artistic) research

FACTUAL SITUATION

2.1.1. Research within the field of study is at a sufficient level

According to the HEI's website, 14 key research areas approved by the academic council have been defined, Information systems and their implementation being one of them. The quality of research and studies at the HEI was recognized in the 2022 U-Multirank, where the institution earned four top (A – very good) ratings in areas such as study activities, digitization investments, timely completion, regional impact and internationality. These indicators directly correlate with indicators of the quality assessment on the study programs offered at the HEI.

The SER mentions the following research and development (hereinafter referred to as "R&D") activities during the assessment period related to the study programme of Software Engineering.

Teachers developed 32 scientific articles, 9 papers at national and 23 international conferences, 53 papers at national seminars, workshops or trainings and 1 at an international seminar. The topics included e.g., "The Research of the Effectiveness of the Automated Production Line", "Opportunities for the Application of Artificial Intelligence Models", "Electronic Platform of Students' Social Competencies Development as a Learning Management System" or "Stalling in Queuing Systems With Heterogeneous Channels". In overall, topics align with the study field.

Besides, international scientific-practical conferences have been organised and 29 projects and third-party funded research have been implemented. Between 2021 and 2024, the HEI actively collaborated with the Šiauliai City Municipality (9 projects, e.g. "Opportunity Festival YOUR PIN CODE", "Creation of Premises Occupancy Management System of Šiauliai Culture Centre", "LAB Academy"), long-term external partners, and maintained continuous participation in the INOSTART Programme (10 projects, e.g., "Centralized Warehouse Accounting System Based on Cloud Computing", "Development of Company Resources Planning (ERP) System of PC Arvėriva", "Programmes Planning System (PPS) for Šiauliai County TV").

Teachers are members in associations and thematic networks and are active in expert and consulting activities such as reviewing articles or work in international committees.

The HEI is strategically implementing its updated 2023 Scientific Activity Development Plan to enhance research in software and computer science engineering, resulting in a nearly fivefold increase in publications, a doubling of third-party funded research, and growing academic engagement through seminars and conferences.

2.1.2. Curriculum is linked to the latest developments in science, art, and technology

According to the SER, content of study subjects is constantly updated with a variety of methods and scientific sources used for gathering new knowledge. Lecturers must have at least 3 years of practical work experience in the field of the taught subjects.

The HEI encourages academic staff to participate in project activities. There are several funding sources to support scientific and project activities. There is a strong cooperation with municipalities in this area (funding 2 to 3 projects every year). Based on scientific topics discussed in articles and conferences, new topics are integrated into the content of the subjects. Interviews with teachers revealed that all teachers have research activities. Teachers also improve practical competencies in internships at partner companies.

The HEI encourages students to take part in research activities. There is an internal conference with several sections where students can present their work organized every year. Students are encouraged to make use of the extensive collections of books in the university library and subscription electronic resources.

In the last year the subject Applied Research Methodology is taught for development of student's research competencies.

Stakeholder involvement in the programme is strong, multi-level and well integrated - from curriculum design and teaching content to direct participation in GP supervision, ordering and assessment. Social partners, external experts and graduates take part in lessons and have interest in cooperation and receiving students for applied research during their internship and preparation of final theses. This collaboration strengthens the practical orientation, relevance and quality of the study programme and fosters valuable connections between students and the labour market.

The links between science and study are greatly influenced by the internationalization aspect of the curriculum. Involvement in international activities is related to the confidence of lecturers to present their research at international events and to lecture courses in a foreign language abroad (study visits at universities abroad, teaching at other HEI e.g. Tallinn University, Trakia University or academic internships like LIKTA).

2.1.3. Opportunities for students to engage in research are consistent with the cycle

Already at the beginning of their studies, students are introduced to the library resources, and consequently actively led to use library resources in the context of writing course papers. In the course of their studies, they are encouraged to read and analyze scientific publications during various study subjects. Students are encouraged to attend local as well as international student conferences (such as e.g. the "Business, New Technologies and Smart Society" Conference) to present their research findings and engage with other researchers. They have the opportunity to collaborate on ongoing research projects led by faculty members, gaining practical experience and insights into scientific work. Some students published their research results in the HEI periodical peer-reviewed scientific journal Applied Scientific Research. The HEI organizes or participates in scientific competitions where students can showcase their projects and win awards. An example of such an activity includes participation of Software Engineering students in the hackathon "MieSTieses" organized by Statistics Lithuania (winning the 1st prize).

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 2.1.)

The HEI clearly demonstrates a strong commitment and strategic focus on R&D, both in regional and national (funded) projects. As learned from the site visit, 2 additional researchers have been hired in the field of engineering, additional contracts for R&D have been signed and the faculty is dedicating 50 hours of annual work to research activities.. All of the 23 teachers in the programme are involved in scientific activities.

The HEI has achieved considerable success in its key research areas, including Information Systems Solutions. An opportunity for improvement is to enhance the involvement of teachers in the development and implementation of international scientific and bigger national R&D projects. According to the SER, the number of student publications, conference participations, as well as project collaborations show that opportunities for students to engage in research activities seem to be well available. This impression was also validated in the interviews during the site visit.

Apparently, students are encouraged to get in contact with scientific literature from the beginning of their studies when they are introduced to the library resources. During many study subjects, students have to read and analyze scientific publications, carry out research activities and self-study tasks. Competitions, external projects, co-authorship in publications round up the activities. As the evaluation board learned during the site visit, a special situation is an ongoing cooperation with the local municipality: when lecturers file an application to fund a project within this cooperation, it is mandatory to involve students as well as local companies in the project. This way, this ongoing cooperation appears to be a win-win-win-win (students, the HEI, companies, and municipality) situation.

No recommendations have been given in the previous evaluation of the Software Engineering programme.

AREA 2: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 2	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The collaboration with the local municipality appears to be an outstanding example of a win-win-win-win situation. Projects that involve local companies, faculty members, and students are funded, consequently also supporting the local community and region.

2. Research is highly encouraged and plays an important role, with the university's R&D activities making a substantial impact at both regional and national levels.

3. The integration of real-world projects and cross-functional collaboration between the multimedia and software programming study programmes at the HEI is a commendable practice that enriches the learning experience, fosters practical skills and teamwork that are essential qualities for future professionals

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. The HEI should participate in larger national or international (EU funded) and third party R&D projects to further strengthen its research activities.

AREA 3: STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

3.1.	Student selection and admission is in line with the learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

3.1.1. Student selection and admission criteria and procedures are adequate and transparent

According to the SER, Admission to the first cycle studies is carried out through the national Lithuanian higher education admission system LAMA BPO. The specific admission criteria and process are outlined on the [HEI's website](#).

In 2022, 28 full-time students applied, 98 preferences for this HEI were submitted in total, and 28 applicants chose the Programme as their first priority. 14 students were admitted to state-funded (SF) places and 14 to non-state-funded (hereinafter referred to as "SNF") places. In 2023, again 28 students applied for full-time studies and submitted 114 preferences, of which 25 were first-priority choices. Of those, 15 were admitted to SNF places, 14 to SF, and one to a part-time SF place. This indicates a consistent intake size, while first-priority selections slightly decreased. Competitive scores of admitted students are also provided. In 2022, only part-time SF students were admitted, with the highest score being 9.39, the lowest 4.32, and the average 6.00. In 2023, for full-time SF students, the highest score was 7.68, the lowest 2.24, and the average 5.61. For SNF students the same year, the highest score was 7.85, the lowest 2.03, and the average 4.14. The data shows a broader range of competitive scores among full-time students, especially for non-state-funded places, suggesting more variance in academic preparedness. A third of students chose the SE Programme as their first priority out of all requests submitted, which indicates the decision of future students to choose the HEI Programme. It is obvious that in all years of admittance, the average competitive score of the entrants to the SF study places of the Programme is higher than the minimum state established score. The average competitive score of entrants to SNF study places is also higher than the minimum set by the HEI. Reduction of the competitive score for SNF places is likely due to higher number of the entrants.

The competitive score is calculated using a national system. It includes school grades, exam results, and other achievements. Extra points can be added if the applicant meets certain conditions. This process follows clear and legal rules. It ensures that everyone is treated fairly. All information is made public through official channels. This helps applicants understand the process and prepare better.

Additional challenges have arisen, such as the uneven level of preparation of students for studies. The Programme is proactive in publicizing activities. They visit schools and gymnasiums, invite students and their teachers to participate in events and practical activities organized by the HEI. During Open Door Days, pupils get the chance to gain interest and get acquainted with the Programme.

Overall, the admission system at the HEI is fair and transparent. It follows the law and uses a clear scoring system.

3.1.2. Recognition of foreign qualifications, periods of study, and prior learning (established provisions and procedures)

As noted in the SER, the HEI has a well-defined procedure for the recognition of foreign qualifications for both: partial studies, and prior non-formal and informal learning. The procedure follows national legal requirements, therefore up to 75% of the program's scope can be eligible for crediting, excluding the final thesis. For students who have studied at other Lithuanian or foreign higher education institutions (prior learning), the HEI credits the learning outcomes achieved. This is done as long as the learning outcomes align with the requirements of the study program. The Head of the Department assesses the compliance of the learning outcomes. The Head then performs the crediting.

During the analyzed period, described in the SER, the HEI made several study recognitions. In 2021, 6 students were credited 60 credits. In 2022, 5 students were credited 75 credits. In 2023, 9 students were credited 342 credits. The HEI also credits the learning outcomes of students who have acquired a qualification in vocational education institutions. It also credits competences acquired through non-formal education and informal learning. This crediting process facilitates students' access to the desired qualification.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.1.)

Based on the data provided in the SER, the student selection and admission criteria for the Software Engineering programme at the HEI demonstrate adequacy and transparency, with notable strengths. As seen in the SER statistics, the minimal admission scores for state funded spots are low (below 5 points) and for non-funded studies are very low (below 2.5 points for admissions during year 2022 and after) which indicates very high accessibility for students.

The HEI has great accessibility in regards to student admission and the process of foreign qualifications is used frequently. This information was also confirmed during the site visit and the study program shows high sustainability potential.

3.2.	There is an effective student support system enabling students to maximise their learning progress

FACTUAL SITUATION

3.2.1. Opportunities for student academic mobility are ensured

According to SER, The International Relations Unit conducts the Erasmus+ selection contest for students twice a year, as outlined in the 2022 selection procedure. Information about mobility opportunities is shared on the HEI website, social media, and through direct communication with students during lectures. Participants can choose from [13 institutions across 10 countries](#). Incoming and outgoing students receive support through seminars, mentorship, and language instruction. The HEI also hosts an International Week every year for sharing experiences related to the Erasmus+ programme.

The HEI has no international students from abroad. During the evaluation period, only one student took part in the Erasmus+ BIP and practice opportunities, which is attributed to the limited

admission to part-time studies until 2022. Many students also have jobs and family commitments that restrict their mobility. Graduates can complete their graduation practice through the Erasmus+ program after finishing their studies. For full-time students, participation in the Erasmus+ programme is available only from the second year onward. In total, seven students joined the Programme over the evaluated years, with varying numbers each academic year.

3.2.2. Academic, financial, social, psychological, and personal support provided to students is relevant, adequate, and effective

According to the SER, various types of support are provided, including academic assistance, social adaptation for first-year students, and consultations with faculty and staff. Academic support includes individualized study plans, consultations, and development of competencies. The Library and Self-study Center offers guidance on library services, while the Student Admission and Career Center helps with career planning. Financial support is available through scholarships based on academic performance and social needs, with targeted incentives for students in high-demand fields like Informatics, Engineering, Mathematics (hereinafter referred to as "STEM").

Financial support mechanisms are aligned with the HEI Scholarship Awarding Regulations (2020). Incentive scholarships are granted to students demonstrating excellent or typical academic performance, while one-off scholarships are available for exceptional contributions in scientific, cultural, athletic, or social domains, or in cases of personal hardship. These scholarships are reviewed by Faculty Scholarship Committees and administered through the Dean's Office. Social and study scholarships are provided by the State Studies Foundation based on academic merit or socio-economic need. Nominal scholarships, sponsored by government entities and private organizations such as Telia Lietuva and Cherry Servers, recognize academic excellence and civic engagement. Students in high-demand STEM fields are eligible for targeted incentive scholarships (€200/month), notably funded by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation, with increasing uptake each year. Additional financial aid includes state-supported loans for study or living expenses, as well as support for students with disabilities. Tuition discounts (e.g., 50% for alumni pursuing a second degree) further enhance financial accessibility.

Regarding personal support, students are encouraged to participate in scientific, cultural, and athletic activities, contributing to both personal development and institutional achievements. Notably, in 2023, students of the Programme secured multiple medals and top team placements in national sports competitions. The Student Representative Body (SRB) plays a pivotal role in improving student welfare, addressing concerns, and fostering a sense of community. Accommodation is available in modernized dormitories, with capacity fully meeting student demand. Psychological assistance is coordinated by the Study Record and Student Support Unit, with access to confidential counseling services promoted through official online platforms. While HEI does not employ a permanent psychologist, staff members provide informal support, and students are encouraged to engage with departmental leadership when issues arise. A dedicated relaxation space was established in 2022 to support mental well-being. In 2023, a mental health project introduced student mentorship and a peer-to-peer consultation platform to further promote emotional resilience and academic success. Students can park their car for free in the College parking lot or in city parking lots.

Students also engage in extracurricular activities, including sports, where they have achieved notable success in competitions. The Student Union works to enhance the learning environment and address student concerns. Accommodation is provided in modern dormitories, and

psychological assistance is available through the Study Record and Student Support Unit, which connects students to resources for mental health support.

3.2.3. Higher education information and student counselling are sufficient

Information about studies at the HEI is disseminated through various channels, including teachers, curators, the Informatics Sciences Department, and the Dean's Office. Group curators play a key role in orienting first-year students by explaining the study system. Curators get students acquainted with study plans, schedules, assessment procedures, support options and other matters of student life. To facilitate integration, a "Freshman camp" and introduction days are organized, along with a Freshman's Guide and Information Leaflet that highlight essential information for new students.

First-year students receive a [freshman's guide](#) with all the necessary information. The freshman's guide consists of a structured compilation of resources designed to streamline their transition into academic and social life at the HEI. It outlines academic terminology, faculty structures, and administrative procedures, clarifying concepts such as state-funded versus non-state-funded studies, credit systems, and rotational evaluation processes. The guide emphasizes practical necessities, including class schedules, mandatory attendance policies, and the use of the MOODLE platform for remote learning. It details institutional frameworks, dividing the HEI into the Health Care and Business and Technology faculties, each with distinct departments and programs, supported by deans and academic coordinators. Students are introduced to essential services like obtaining a Lithuanian Student ID (LSP) or an International Student Identity Card (ISIC), both critical for accessing discounts and academic resources. The guide highlights the role of the Student Union in fostering community through events and support networks, while providing contacts for leadership positions. Financial aid options, scholarships, and housing details—such as dormitory costs and application processes—are outlined to alleviate logistical burdens. Emphasis is placed on international opportunities, including Erasmus+ exchanges and internships, with criteria stressing academic performance and language proficiency.

Beyond academics, the guide encourages engagement through sports, cultural activities, and career services, linking students to platforms like [karjerasiauliuose.lt](#) for local job opportunities. Practical advice for non-residents includes exploring the city's cultural landmarks and utilizing public transport. The guide equips students with the knowledge to navigate academic rigor, integrate into campus life, and leverage institutional support, ensuring a cohesive and informed start to their higher education journey.

The Vice Dean oversees student transitions to state-funded study places and organizes consultation meetings. Communication with students occurs through multiple platforms, such as the HEI website, social media, and email, with academic consultations scheduled and published online. The Student Admission and Career Center offers guidance on career management and organizes relevant seminars. The library also provides personal consultations and group training to help students navigate its resources. This comprehensive support system promotes students' emotional well-being and academic success.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 3.2.)

During the site visit, this factual situation was confirmed. Recent initiatives have included creating a relaxation space and establishing a peer consultation system to further support students' well-being. Several students have participated in the Erasmus programme. All students reported a smooth and positive overall experience. Students were also highly satisfied with their studies. The International Relations Unit at the HEI oversees biannual Erasmus+ selections, disseminating

opportunities through digital platforms, lectures, and direct outreach. Participants access 13 partner institutions across 10 countries, supported by seminars, mentorship, and language training, contributing to their consistently positive feedback and smooth academic experiences. Annual International Week events further strengthen engagement by fostering knowledge exchange among participants.

Despite these robust support structures, participation remains limited, with only seven students enrolling over multiple academic years. Structural barriers, including part-time study restrictions until 2022 and eligibility for full-time students only from the second year onward, significantly constrained mobility. These limitations, compounded by students' employment and family obligations, reduced capacity for extended international engagement. While graduates retain post-study access to Erasmus+ practice opportunities, uptake remains minimal. Although existing mechanisms successfully ensure participant satisfaction, addressing these barriers through revised admission frameworks and enhanced flexibility could align institutional resources with student needs, unlocking the program's further potential to foster greater internationalization and mobility.

No recommendations have been given in the previous evaluation of the Software Engineering programme.

AREA 3: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 3	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Student housing is provided.

2. Students are tightly connected with the community on the HEI and the municipal level.

3. Recent initiatives like creating a relaxation space and establishing a peer consultation system to further support students' well-being.

4. Municipality is actively involved in activities and supports the HEI in funding, lecturing and even introducing free parking for the students in the city centre. This demonstrates that the students are able to negotiate and collaborate with the municipal government effectively.

5. Freshman's guide is highly detailed and provides more than enough information for students.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Continue to encourage students to participate in the Erasmus program.

AREA 4: TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT ASSESSMENT, AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

4.1.	Students are prepared for independent professional activity

FACTUAL SITUATION

4.1.1. Teaching and learning address the needs of students and enable them to achieve intended learning outcomes

The Software Engineering programme has been organised in full-time as well as part-time mode.

Organisation as part-time studies has been cancelled due to low interest, high drop out and inability to combine studies and work. It has not been possible for the part-time students to reach the learning outcomes since most part-time students were fully employed and had to study at the cost of vacation. A new form of blended distance studies with a separate schedule, which allows leaning on pace has been established instead.

According to the SER, study plans are implemented through lecture and study schedules, which are approved by the Dean for each academic year and include lecture times, practice sessions, exam periods, final thesis development, and holidays. Timetables are drawn for each semester to plan lectures, practical work and self-study times.

Students can choose individual studies, as outlined in the Individual Study Procedure, if needed, due to reasons such as illness, work, childcare, or other important circumstances.

Teaching methods include both presentation techniques (lectures, workshops, seminars, etc.) and active learning methods (practical work, teamwork, case studies), aiming to engage students as active participants in the learning process. These methods focus on applying knowledge, formulating opinions, and justifying them, aligning with student-oriented study principles to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Students have the freedom to choose projects, topics for reports, and discussion subjects in various courses, and can suggest companies to visit for excursions or select their practice placements. Part-time students make greater use of flexible teaching methods, including consultative discussions, self-preparation, literature review, and case analyses based on practical examples.

Independent work tasks and deadlines are set to promote students' responsibility and initiative, with hours for independent study specified in the subject's description. The workload is planned and evenly distributed throughout the semester, with coordination and attestation by the teachers to ensure consistency and manage student workload effectively.

Assessment methods are selected based on the intended learning outcomes and criteria of each subject, with subject teachers developing the assessment formula, which is then approved by the Committee. At the start of the course, teachers inform students about the subject goals, learning outcomes, and assessment system, and final student achievements are graded and linked to achievement levels. The final assessment of practice results is based on both the student's

performance during practical activities at the host institution and the public defense of their practice report.

The Study Regulations have established a cumulative, student-centered assessment system using a ten-point scale and an individual cumulative index, where students are evaluated through various interim and final assessments to ensure continuous engagement, academic integrity, and objective evaluation of learning outcomes.

Graduates of the Programme are equipped to work in various roles such as software designers, programmers, testers, system installers, administrators, and developers across sectors, and may also pursue second cycle studies in informatics-related fields both in Lithuania and abroad.

4.1.2. Access to higher education for socially vulnerable groups and students with individual needs is ensured

The Study Record and Student Support Unit offer consultations specifically for students with special needs, focusing on building trust and understanding their unique requirements. During student-oriented studies for teachers, they are trained to identify students who may need individualized study content, adjusted pacing, or additional support, ensuring that all students are assessed based on the same criteria.

To accommodate students with disabilities, various methods are employed, such as adjusting font sizes, speaking at a slower pace, and extending assessment times. During the evaluation period, one student with special needs was enrolled in the Programme. There is adaptation of physical resources, including libraries and IT infrastructure. Financial assistance, further outlined in area 3 for vulnerable groups is provided. Students have access to psychological support services.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.1.)

The Software Engineering programme started at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, the evaluation period falls in an uncertain time, when education had to be changed and studies had to be organised in a distant way.

Part-time studies had to be cancelled. It is difficult to assess whether the teaching and learning was appropriate to the students' needs and what impact the COVID-19 measures had on the study.

Teaching and learning for full-time study addresses the needs of the students and allows them to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The Study Record and Student Support Unit provided tailored consultations for students with disabilities or individual needs, while faculty training emphasized identifying learners requiring adjusted pacing or modified content. Practical accommodations like altered assessment durations, adaptive teaching materials, and accessible IT infrastructure were implemented alongside financial aid and psychological services. Though only 1 student with documented special needs was enrolled during the evaluation, these measures reflect a broader institutional commitment to students with disabilities. Various teaching and learning methods are implemented in the courses depending on the learning outcomes. Alumnis report that they have been well prepared during their study and developed the ability to independently seek and find additional information, enhancing their (research) skills.

4.2.	There is an effective and transparent system for student assessment, progress monitoring, and assuring academic integrity

FACTUAL SITUATION

4.2.1. Monitoring of learning progress and feedback to students to promote self-assessment and learning progress planning is systematic

According to the SER, teachers and students discuss aspects of student-centered learning, such as workload, progress, and feedback on learning outcomes regularly throughout a course. Feedback is provided in various forms, including written comments, group discussions, and individual consultations, allowing students to reflect on their progress and receive guidance for improvement.

The Deanery records and controls students' learning outcomes, monitoring interim assessments through the HEI's electronic exam sheets system. The results are discussed in Department and Deanery meetings throughout the semester, with student support measures reviewed mid-semester and study results analyzed after the semester.

Students are individually informed of their cumulative and final subject assessments via email from the electronic exam sheets system, with public results presented in a generalized format. If a student disagrees with the assessment, they can appeal to the Dean.

At the end of each semester, students complete an evaluation questionnaire about the Programme, providing feedback on all subjects and additional comments. The results are used to improve the Programme's quality and teaching to better achieve the intended outcomes.

4.2.2. Graduate employability and career are monitored

The HEI systematically monitors graduate employability through both internal and external data sources. Since 2023, career tracking is done via Education Management Information System (hereinafter referred to as "EMIS") providing interactive, national-level data. Additionally, the department conducts direct interviews with graduates approximately 8 months after graduation.

There was one cohort of 2023 based on SER during the evaluation period, which indicated that 75% of graduates were employed in positions requiring higher education, 12.5% continued further studies and 12.5% were employed in jobs not requiring higher education. These figures suggest strong employability and relevance of the programme to the labour market.

Graduates benefit from numerous internship opportunities that are integral to their preparation for the workforce. These internships, combined with the development of critical thinking, soft skills and strong English proficiency, make them highly attractive to employers. Positive feedback from regional employers highlights the success of these internship experiences, further enhancing the employability of graduates. This direct involvement with industry helps students build the necessary skills and networks to thrive in their careers.

Regular communication with graduates helps assess their satisfaction and identify what professional or soft skills may still be lacking. Employer feedback indicates that graduate performance generally meets expectations, confirming that the programme is preparing students well for professional roles.

4.2.3. Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are implemented

Academic integrity, tolerance, and non-discrimination are addressed by the HEI in several ways: The institution has a comprehensive Code of Academic Ethics that outlines the principles of academic integrity. Every student has to sign a Student Declaration of Integrity with which he or she pledges to stick to the rules of academic integrity. In addition to signing the Student Declaration, at the beginning of subject studies, when students are introduced to the assessment procedures, the responsibilities for the assignments including exam dis/honesty are explained. Possibly violations of academic fairness, such as plagiarism, cheating, or assisting others who commit dishonest academic activities, are considered. There is a staged variety of penalties, ranging from the option that a subject has to be repeated up to the possibility that a student may be expelled from the HEI due to dishonesty in achieving the learning outcomes.

Severe violations are reported to the Academic Ethics Committee. Penalties are imposed in accordance with the Study regulations and "Description of Procedure for Awarding Incentives and Imposing Disciplinary Measures to Students". Since 2012, the HEI has also been a member of the United Nations Global Compact, seeking to uphold the principles of respect for human values in its relation to society. During the evaluation period, no student violations of the Code of Academic Ethics have been reported.

4.2.4. Procedures for submitting and processing appeals and complaints are effective

According to the SER, the Students Appeals Regulations define a standardized, transparent, and objective process to deal with appeals and complaints of students. Students have a formal way to appeal against administrative and academic decisions. In the SER the HEI states that the administrative staff and teachers of the respective Faculty have to make sure that students who file an appeal do not suffer any harm due to an appeal. A reasoned appeal is submitted to the Dean and subsequently registered at the Office of the HEI. When the Dean has verified the validity and informed the student, an appeal procedure is initiated. The appeal is handled by the Appeal Board. In cases of disagreement with appeal decisions, students can submit their issue to a Dispute Resolution Commission. No information about the communication of these regulations to the students is mentioned in the SER or the webpage of the HEI.

In the SER, no appeal or complaints have been reported. However, in the time between authoring of the SER and the evaluation visit, one case of an appeal that has been settled has been reported.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 4.2.)

As noticed in the SER, an area for improvement at the HEI is to reduce drop-outs, which seem to be too high. Teaching and learning has been adapted to address this issue and as learned in the site visit a new form of blended distance studies has been established. The monitoring of the learning progress and feedback to the student system seems to be very basic. A more systematic and consequent way could be established in order to try to address the dropout rates.

The HEI demonstrates a structured and improving approach to monitoring graduate employability and collecting feedback for programme enhancement. Use of EMIS and follow-up interviews ensures comprehensive tracking of graduate outcomes. While feedback mechanisms during studies exist, they could be more explicitly formalized to better support student self-assessment and academic planning.

Internships play a crucial role in enhancing employability by developing key skills that make graduates competitive in the job market. Employer feedback from the on-site meetings further affirms that the programme prepares students well for professional roles, reinforcing the importance of practical experience in building the skills necessary for success.

The HEI has a detailed Academic Ethics Code that outlines the principles of academic honesty, including the topics such as plagiarism, cheating, or assisting others who commit dishonest academic activities. Both faculty and students are required to sign honesty declarations, committing to uphold academic integrity throughout their tenure. The Ethics Code also emphasizes equality, respect, and non-discrimination, ensuring that all members of the academic community are treated fairly and without bias. There are clear procedures for reporting and addressing violations of these principles. An Academic Ethics Committee is responsible for overseeing the adherence to these policies, investigating reported violations, and recommending disciplinary actions. The process for handling violations is transparent, with decisions and actions being documented and communicated appropriately.

The procedures for the submission and examination of appeals and complaints at the HEI are designed to be thorough and fair. An Appeal Board is responsible for the decisions, and a Dispute Resolution Commission is available to deal with disagreements that could not be settled in the first place. During the site visit, it has been reported that in most cases, issues and/or disagreements can be solved on a low level (e.g. by directly contacting the responsible lecturer or the Head of Study Programmes). However, occasionally also the formal procedures seem to be applied, but this seems to be a rare event. Although in principle this may be a good sign, eventually the awareness of such formal processes may not be too high enough.

All in all, HEI appears to live a self-reflective, and self-critical but positively constructive culture of dealing with complaints and eventual conflicts.

All recommendations from the previous evaluation of the Software Engineering programme were addressed.

AREA 4: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 4	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. A transparent process for processing appeals and complaints is available. An Appeals Board and a Dispute Resolution Commission would be available for these cases.

2. Positive feedback from regional employers highlights the program's successful internships, enhancing students' employability.

3. The shift to a blended learning format has reduced student wastage, leading to fewer dropouts and more efficient learning.

4. Transportation and other support for students with disabilities is provided.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Active communication of the regulations and options for reporting appeals and complaints is recommended. These options should be well-known to the students and also be made visible on the website of the HEI.

2. Student drop-out should be monitored more effectively. Appropriate measures (e.g. tutoring and peer support, early intervention, social events, counseling services, tracking attendance and performance) need to be taken.

AREA 5: TEACHING STAFF

5.1.	Teaching staff is adequate to achieve learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

5.1.1. The number, qualification, and competence (scientific, didactic, professional) of teaching staff is sufficient to achieve learning outcomes

There are 23 teachers at the Study Programme, 14 of them teach study field subjects (13 of them have 10 years or more of pedagogical experience). 93 % of field subject teachers are permanent staff with more than three years working and minimum workload of 0.5 of full-time position. During the assessment period no change in staff was done. For new members of staff, a competition is carried out in compliance with documents 'Procedure of Teachers and Scientific Researchers Attestation and Contest for Position Taking' (2024) and 'Description of Posts Qualification Requirements of Teaching Staff'. In 2023/2024 46 % of study subjects are taught by teachers with scientific degrees (1 professor and 6 doctor of science). 65 % of teachers speak English at least at the level B2. The Programme teachers deliver lectures for Erasmus+ students in English.

Current ratio between the number of subject field teachers and students is 1 : 4.8. Laboratory and practical classes are provided with no more than 20 students. Practices are carried out in partner organisations.

There is a document 'ŠVK Description of the Workload Design of Teacher's Post' from 2023 defining workload planning procedures, amount of hours per year and number of contact hours with students. Draft of hours planning is known in advance (e.g. April for the winter semester). According to the meeting with school representatives if a teacher is also working on a scientific project, this is addressed by an additional contract. Most teachers are involved in research activities. Number of theses supervised by the teacher is limited (3 to 4).

Teachers are provided with opportunities to do scientific activities (there is a possibility to take part in projects funded by the municipality), to go to internships and conferences. A document 'Description of General Requirements for the Implementation of Studies' specifies that at least 10 % of study field subjects should be taught by scientists. More than half of teachers have to have not less than 3 years of practical work experience in the subject of the area they are teaching (all teachers in the HEI fulfil this requirement).

The replacement of teachers in the event of their sudden unavailability during the semester is not formally established. Video lessons are provided for study field subjects.

Teachers' approach to students with disabilities is on an individual level, there is no general management or exactly given rules (e.g. defined time prolonging for students with dyslexia). Students can record lessons and teachers provide additional material via Moodle.

During interviews with students and the SER authors, it was confirmed that the HEI has established a process in place to resolve student complaints regarding the way individual subjects are taught (in a form of questionnaire) and is also prepared for situations where a student disagrees with the evaluation received. Relevancy of students' complaints to teachers' approach

are evaluated by an internal committee. Also anonymous feedback via QR (hereinafter referred to as quick response) code is possible.

The HEI is aware of the importance of teaching students soft skills. During interviews with alumni and social partners, the soft skills of graduates were assessed positively and it was stated that the level of soft skills has improved in recent years.

Acquiring new resources (books, software licenses) is a planned process (at the end of the academic year). During the interview, teachers confirmed that there are rules for purchasing new literature and computer equipment, and purchasing in smaller amounts is not a problem.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.1.)

The HEI addresses the funding of scientific activities and encourages staff to publish. There are several research or project funding resources (the most important is a cooperation with a municipality that provides funding 2-3 projects per year).

Based on information provided by the SER and during the interview, it is obvious that the academic staff is stable and professionally competent for teaching the assessed study programme. The workload (amount of lessons per week, contact hour with students, amount of theses led) of teachers is managed. Most teachers have experience through work in companies. Strong cooperation with practice and social partners is included in the teaching (these topics, practical lessons, experts as guest teachers) and it is one of the strong sides of the HEI.

An area where there is a space for further improvement is student feedback on the course of teaching. This is an important tool for continuous improvement of the pedagogical process, which should be set up appropriately. Generally this area is well solved, but it is recommended to set up the whole procedure carefully - not every student complaint is relevant, teachers must be given enough opportunity to comment on comments and then assess whether and how the comments will be implemented in teaching.

There is also space for improving work with students with disabilities, where the HEI successfully addresses students with mobility problems, but less space is devoted to students with specific reading and writing disorders.

It is also recommended to have backup plans ready in case of sudden indisposition of teachers (how will continuity of teaching be ensured and, in the event of a longer-term absence, other activities, such as guaranteeing subjects, etc.).

5.2.	Teaching staff is ensured opportunities to develop competences, and they are periodically evaluated

FACTUAL SITUATION

5.2.1. Opportunities for academic mobility of teaching staff are ensured

In 2021, the HEI developed an Internationalisation Development Plan (2021-2027) to promote mobility, activate international cooperation, develop international partnerships, and also improve the language skills of teachers.

The process for selecting academics for mobility within Erasmus+ is formalized in a document from 2022 ('ŠVK Student, Teacher and Administrative Staff Mobility Coordination Description Procedure'). The SER states that in the analyzed period 21 mobilities were implemented: 9 teachers (64 %) take part in mobilities ranging from 3 to 5 days (Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain, Kosovo, Latvia, Hungary) and 12 study visits (Albania, the Dominican Republic, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Hungary, Germany) were realised. During the analyzed period 8 teachers from abroad came for teaching visits. Teachers from Hungary, Portugal and Kosovo were invited to teach topics from artificial intelligence and image processing with financial support of Šiaulai City Municipality. Best practices from these mobilities and visits by foreign lecturers are shared.

5.2.2.   Opportunities for the development of the teaching staff are ensured

Possibilities for developing teacher competences and training are described in detail in document 'Human Resources Management procedure' (2020). The need for competencies developing of teaching staff is planned annually (within Department annually plan)

Before the start of the academic year, each teacher plans the development of competencies with the Department management (according to the document 'Description of Teacher's Full Time Working Day Workload' established in 2022). For improving the competencies of teachers there also serve documents 'The Description of Procedures of Staff Internships' (2018) and 'Description of Procedure of Staff Academic Visit' (2014). The SER also states the patrons have been allocating funds for the improvement of the teacher's qualification. Expenditure for development of teaching staff is financed from the state budget, revenue generated by the HEI and Erasmus+.

According to 'The Description of Order of Teacher's Practical Internship' (2019) it is expected that teachers improve their practical competences at least every 7 years. Every year internal training is carried out at the HEI in certain fields (e.g. cybersecurity or lesson 'From Mathematics to Artificial Intelligence'). Teachers are members of various associations, commissions and working groups.

The HEI organizes English language training for teachers (2019-2023) and also encourages teachers to take part in BIP and Erasmus+.

At the end of the academic year teacher's performance in accordance with the individual teacher's plan is discussed and evaluated. Based on this evaluation, a system of teacher accreditations has been introduced here.

Teachers are promoted for significant scientific results and activities by bonuses to wages every year.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 5.2.)

Sufficient attention is paid to increasing teachers' competences, as evidenced by a number of documents specifying the conditions and methods of evaluation.

The HEI actively uses the possibilities of funding teacher's participation on projects, research and mobilities from the municipality and state budget. This can be considered as a strong point of the school.

Another strong point of the HEI is internationalization and support for Erasmus+ teacher exchange, the number of mobility is at a high level.

Due to the HEI's emphasis towards the internationalization of teaching, it is an important aspect to ensure continuous support for the development of the language competences of lecturers.

Recommendations from the previous evaluation of the Software Engineering programme (especially to create conditions for teacher language ability improvement) were addressed.

AREA 5: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 5	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The range of workload of lecturers is controlled, extra hours are covered by additional contract

2. A high level of funding for teachers participation on research and projects, the school actively cooperates with the city municipality.

3. High rate of use of Erasmus teaching exchange

4. Teacher mobility helps international collaboration, bringing fresh perspectives and best practices to enrich the learning environment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Establish procedure (document) of substitutability solution in case of long-term or sudden absence of a teacher (teaching but also other teacher's activity like subject guaranteeing)

2. Define a procedure for working with students with disabilities (especially disabilities such as dysgraphia, dyslexia - here it is recommended, for example, to set a longer time for completing tests and exams)

3. Further expansion of internationalization, including the provision of subjects taught in English for local students (due to potential work in foreign companies) i.e. emphasis on teachers' ability to teach these subjects in English.

AREA 6: LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

6.1.	Facilities, informational and financial resources are sufficient and enable achieving learning outcomes

FACTUAL SITUATION

6.1.1. Facilities, informational and financial resources are adequate and sufficient for an effective learning process

The HEI has a sufficient number of computer classrooms and specialized laboratories (Design Laboratory, Computer Networks Laboratory, Information Technologies Laboratory, Computer Graphics Lab, Computer architecture Laboratory, Programming Laboratory, Database Management Laboratory and Human Safety Laboratory). According to the SER, laboratories with computers have 16 to 22 workplaces. The HEI also uses virtualization based on Hyper-V and user connection management via Active Directory. The real state of laboratories, demonstrated during the material base tour, corresponds to the description provided in the SER. During the meeting with students it was said that a deficiency is the insufficient use of frameworks in the teaching of web programming. This was refuted during the tour as the Laravel PHP framework was presented in the Programming Laboratory.

During the site visit, it was evident that all lecture facilities had computers that are more than capable running the software that students need for their studies. For example, the AI lecture room that was shown in the facilities tour was equipped with dedicated graphics cards (NVIDIA RTX 4080 has been presented), latest CPUs and dual monitor setups. Other lecture rooms such as for software testing also had appropriate hardware for the subject. Students were also satisfied with the hardware in the facilities.

As outlined in the [HEI website](#), students and the staff are able to contact IT support regarding technical questions and issues via the email gedimai@svako.lt. It is necessary to describe the problem in the subject line of the email. In the email itself, mention details that could have an impact and help resolve the issue quickly. In case of emergencies, there is a possibility to contact the IT support in-person or via the phone number provided on the website.

As highlighted in the SER, web hosting services are provided for students and teachers if the relevant course requires presenting material in the cloud. Services include Google Cloud, virtual hosting server and private cloud with virtual operating systems, VirtualBox, VmWare virtualization platforms.

The HEI is a member of the Lithuanian LieDM Consortium (Association of Distance and e-Learning) uses its capabilities and centrally provided services.

There is a virtual study environment available through Google for Education since 2014 for students and teachers.

For students with disabilities there are parking spaces near buildings and close to a lift. A building structure is adapted for students with special needs. The HEI uses specialized height and angle adjustable tables, alternative computer mice and keyboards. image magnification tools and Braille devices.

Students can take part in practices with social partners having access to the newest IT technologies.

The well-funded library has a sufficient quantity and quality of up-to-date scholarly resources, both paper and digital, as well as extensive subscriptions and interlibrary links available to all students and faculty. The library currently places emphasis on expanding its electronic resources (Skillsoft, Open free, Springer, Ebsco Publishing, Emerald Management, Taylor and Francis and also ebooks from Lithuanian universities (Vilnius Gediminas Technical Universities, Kaunas University of Technology).

6.1.2. There is continuous planning for and upgrading of resources.

According to the SER, based on the initiative of the Department, a budget for updating and upgrading required resources is planned annually. Students as well as lecturers can deposit their needs at the department. The Dean of the Faculty decides based on discussions in committee meetings. During the evaluation period, computer hardware and software was updated in computer laboratories. Also, a computer network has been updated to ensure sufficient bandwidth. Specialized server rooms have been installed.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 6.1.)

Laboratory equipment is sufficient to carry out the Programme. For example, during the site visit, the evaluation board could see that all computer lecture rooms are equipped with 2 monitors per student, significantly enhancing the student productivity.

The computers in the computer labs are at the current technological level and IT support is provided in case of technical difficulties related with hardware or software issues.

The planning process for the continuous updates/upgrades of study resources are performed bottom-up. Students and lecturers have opportunities to report their requirements. In meetings of the Study Programme Committee, applications are made to the department. The final procurement is done by the IT center. No specific numbers about the invested volume have been provided. However, during the site visit, students as well as lecturers report that usually their needs are met via this process.

Web hosting services are provided for students and teachers if the relevant course requires presenting a website or a web-based application.

The library provides students and teachers with extensive information resources in the form of printed publications, eBooks, electronic resources, and has extensive access to scientific databases.

No recommendations have been given in the previous evaluation of the Software Engineering programme.

AREA 6: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 6	Unsatisfactory - 1	Satisfactory - 2	Good - 3	Very good - 4	Exceptional - 5
	Does not meet the requirements	Meets the requirements,	Meets the requirements, but there are	Very well nationally and	Exceptionally well nationally

		but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	shortcomings to be eliminated	internationally without any shortcomings	and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. The planning process for resource updates seems to be working well in order to meet the needs of lecturers and students by annually reviewing the hardware needs for the study programme.

2. The IT department's reliable support ensures students have the tools they need for success, even though no major issues have been reported.

3. Facilities and laboratory equipment are more than adequate with dual monitor setups and powerful hardware.

4. Web hosting services are provided for students and teachers.

5. The welcoming, well equipped environment fosters academic and personal growth, enhancing the overall student experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

No further recommendations are given by the members of the evaluation board.

AREA 7: QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

7.1.	The development of the field of study is based on an internal quality assurance system involving all stakeholders and continuous monitoring, transparency and public information

FACTUAL SITUATION

7.1.1. Internal quality assurance system for the programmes is effective

The quality assurance of studies at the HEI is based on the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) and is implemented through the PDCA (plan-do-check-act) cycle, as outlined in the Quality Manual (10th ed., 2023). This manual governs continuous and systematic improvement of study processes, supports student-centered learning and teaching, and ensures alignment with intended learning outcomes. It also addresses key areas such as academic ethics and integrity, stakeholder involvement, and teacher performance monitoring.

The management of studies at the HEI is governed by the statute and internal regulations, including the Studies Regulations, and various council and committee regulations. The HEI Council, Academic Council, and Director determine the strategy, oversee the implementation of studies, and monitor activities. The Faculty Council approves study programmes, self-assessment reports, and measures based on external evaluations, while the Dean's Office manages decisions related to the organization of studies.

The Programme is implemented by the Department, with responsibilities outlined in the Regulations of the Department Activities and Head of the Department Regulations. The Department organizes monthly meetings for teachers to approve course papers, GPs, present research, review annual reports, and discuss proposals for improving study quality.

The Study Program Committee is responsible for ensuring the quality assurance of the programme, including continuous monitoring, self-assessment, content updates, and evaluation of subject descriptions. It involves students, employers, and faculty members, meeting two to three times a year to make decisions and propose improvements for the Programme's quality. The self-assessment report, prepared by a working group of faculty, a student, and a social partner, is reviewed at multiple governance levels and documented in the HEI's internal systems.

7.1.2. Involvement of stakeholders (students and others) in internal quality assurance is effective

The HEI demonstrates effective stakeholder involvement in the evaluation and development of study programmes. Social partners actively contribute to programme improvement by participating in curriculum development, organizing professional practices, proposing and reviewing GP topics and serving on Qualification Commision and Committee. They also engage in joint projects and events, supporting the overall quality of studies.

According to the SER, the HEI's management structure includes representatives from all key stakeholder groups. Social partners actively contribute to programme development, student internships and staff qualification enhancement. Internally, student representation is ensured

through the ŠVK Student Representative Body which plays a significant role in governance. Students are delegated to participate in key decision-making bodies such as the HEI Council, Academic Council, Faculty Council and the Academic Ethics Committee. Their involvement extends to programme updates, self-assessment processes and discussions on study-related matters, ensuring their voices influence decisions and contribute meaningfully to the continuous improvement of academic quality.

Academic ethics and integrity are explicitly embedded in the HEI's QA system. The Academic Ethics Committee is a body responsible for promoting and monitoring ethical conduct. It addresses ethical issues related to studies, research, and teaching practices. Students are formally represented in this committee. Ethical principles are integrated into the institution's regulatory documents. The committee's role within the broader QA system ensures that ethical compliance is not isolated but is actively monitored as part of continuous quality improvement.

As noted in the SER, the study process includes teamwork with social partners, particularly in subjects conducted within partner organisations, such as during internships or practical placements. A stable core of permanent faculty members ensures consistent quality in the delivery of field subjects, while the involvement of new teaching staff fosters opportunities for creative and methodological collaboration.

The HEI demonstrates a strong and systematic engagement of social stakeholders in the evaluation, improvement, and development of study programmes. Social partners are actively involved in various academic processes, including participation in programme governance, curriculum design, final thesis evaluation and internship supervision. Their feedback is collected both formally and informally, especially after internships, and is used to make targeted improvements, such as addressing curriculum gaps and enhancing practical skill components.

Regular meetings with partners, including prominent companies in the region like Telia Lietuva, SC and JSC Cherry Server, ensure that programmes remain aligned with industry demands. Feedback from these collaborations directly influences thesis topics and practical assignments, reinforcing the relevance and employability of graduates. Internships also serve as a recruitment pathway, with approximately 20–30% of students being hired by partners.

Moreover, social partners contribute to the self-evaluation process and participate in academic councils and meetings, supporting continuous quality enhancement. Collaborative projects and conferences further strengthen the bridge between the academic community and IT industry. The HEI also promotes hands-on research and international collaboration, involving students and faculty in applied research projects such as the INOSTART funded project, where students work alongside professors on practical research topics. Following research may later lead to publication, providing students with valuable academic exposure.

HEI stands out as a model for effective stakeholder collaboration through its partnership with Šiauliai City Municipality and regional businesses via the INOSTART programme by inviting students to apply for funding for the preparation and development of projects for information technology software products and engineering solutions.The goal of the program is to promote cooperation between students, scientists and business partners to create innovations, deepen students' knowledge and improve skills by developing a product according to a specific company order.This initiative funds and supports student-led IT and engineering projects that address real-world business challenges, fostering a strong link between academic knowledge and industry practice.

Under the INOSTART framework, students are guided by lecturers and in partnership with companies develop GPs tailored to specific organizational needs. Successful examples mentioned in the SER include the creation of a RESTful API system for data administration for JSC Vandenvala and JSC "Šiaulių tauro ryšiai" centralized warehouse inventory accounting system based on cloud computing. These projects provide practical experience, while directly contributing to regional economic development.

The quality management system is effectively applied in the study programme through systematic information collection, scheduled (self)evaluations, and continuous programme updates. The study process ensures relevance and fosters a supportive learning environment for students. All social stakeholders are actively involved in the evaluation and enhancement of the programme.

7.1.3. Information on the programmes, their external evaluation, improvement processes, and outcomes is collected, used and made publicly available

As stated in the SER, to ensure the quality of study implementation, the Department continuously monitors data related to teachers' qualifications, scientific activities, and student outcomes. They analyse student admission rates, reasons for dropout, graduation results, and the relevance of GP topics. The Dean collects annual information on the Programme's material needs, while the Library and Self-study Center tracks necessary literature and resources. Internal evaluations of the study process are conducted, and feedback is gathered from social partners, employers, and students through various surveys and events.

According to the SER, feedback from students is collected each semester through post-subject and post-practice surveys, which are analyzed in departmental meetings to plan improvement actions. Group curators facilitate discussions with students, allowing them to voice proposals and concerns regarding study quality. The head of the Department communicates the actions taken based on student feedback, and information about Programme assessments is shared publicly in meetings. The HEI has developed computerized systems for managing study information, ensuring effective resource allocation and continuous improvement of study programmes, with identified measures incorporated into future work plans.

The development, assessment, and updating of the study programme are governed by the 2023 Procedure Description and align with external legislative requirements, expert recommendations, and stakeholder feedback. Following the 2020 Faculty Council meeting, a plan for implementing external evaluation recommendations was approved, and a Progress Report was submitted to CQAHE in 2021. The programme was updated in September 2021. A self-assessment report was prepared by a working group of faculty, a student, and a social partner, and its findings were discussed in several internal meetings. All decisions and documents are archived and publicly accessible through the HEI's internal systems and website.

7.1.4. Student feedback is collected and analysed

Student feedback at HEI is collected through periodic surveys conducted after each semester focusing on subjects and teaching quality. While students have positively rated aspects such as teacher professionalism and subject coherence, participation in these surveys is around 50%, as involvement is voluntary. The feedback is discussed within the Department and Study Program Committee, and updates on how student comments have been addressed are published on the website. After each lecture, students are also able to provide anonymous feedback through the letterbox present in each lecture room as well as QR codes that provide anonymous forms.

Constructive changes are made based on student assessments, such as rescheduling the Applied Research Methodology subject to better align with course paper development. During the site visit, students have also expressed a preference for focusing more on specialty subjects, leading to efforts to clarify the importance of general competencies for their future careers.

As an additional feedback tool, boxes have been installed where anonymous feedback can be provided at any time during the semester.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION (regarding 7.1.)

The HEI as an institution has a strong quality management system, which includes all relevant documentation and processes. This quality management system has also been successfully applied to the Software Engineering programme. Surveys are done after each semester about the study subjects and the quality of teaching. As reported during the site visit, the participation rate is approximately 50% which appears to be good and reasonable.

During the site visit, students also confirm that they feel heard these instruments: positive changes after critical comments can usually be observed. Also the available anonymous feedback box is actively used by the students. The feedback process is further enriched by QR-code based anonymous forms and structured discussions facilitated by group curators ensures diverse channels for student input.

The HEI's computerized systems track and publicly report on actions taken in response to feedback, while the Academic Ethics Committee ensures ethical standards are upheld in these processes. Collaboration with social partners and municipality-supported project fund further strengthen the programme's relevance and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

Overall, the feedback process encourages students to share their suggestions and concerns, fostering a culture of continuous improvement in the study experience.

The HEI effectively integrates stakeholder input into programme design, delivery and review, ensuring responsiveness to labour market needs and promoting a practice-oriented learning environment. The HEI stands out as a model for effective stakeholder collaboration through its partnership with the Šiauliai City Municipality and regional businesses via the INOSTART programme.

Business representatives and municipal leaders actively participate in programme design as noticed during on site visit and meetings with the companies' representatives, thesis evaluations, and governance bodies ensuring that the curriculum remains aligned with labour market demands. Regular feedback is gathered post-internship and during collaborative projects, resulting in continuous programme enhancement. The HEI nurtures student talent and drives innovation in the region, making it a key contributor to both education and local development.

All recommendations from the previous evaluation of the Software Engineering programme were addressed.

AREA 7: CONCLUSIONS

AREA 7	Unsatisfactory - 1 Does not meet the requirements	Satisfactory - 2 Meets the requirements, but there are substantial shortcomings to be eliminated	Good - 3 Meets the requirements, but there are shortcomings to be eliminated	Very good - 4 Very well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings	Exceptional - 5 Exceptionally well nationally and internationally without any shortcomings
First cycle				X	

COMMENDATIONS

1. Regular collaboration between the Academic and HEI Councils ensures continuous curriculum improvement and addresses gaps effectively.

2. Great amount of anonymous feedback collection methods: letterboxes, QR codes with forms, moodle course feedback, student leader meetings are more than sufficient to improve study quality. These methods help students effectively implement changes that improve the quality of their education.

3. HEI analyses student feedback to make sure its programs meet their needs creating a more engaging and effective learning environment. Good feedback rate of 50%.

4. The HEI's website is well structured and makes it easy for stakeholders to access important information.

5. HEI's well-functioning academic committee ensures high standards in academic quality and decision-making processes.

6. The student program committee is represented effectively in the study quality improvement, further improving the study quality.

7. The program's strong connections with businesses and real case scenarios effectively integrate students' theory and practice, particularly through municipality-funded projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For further improvement

1. Further improve the feedback rate. The surveys should not be made mandatory, but their impact on study quality could be even further communicated for students to improve the student interest.

2. Consider introducing a teaching award to recognize teachers who design and deliver exceptional, impactful courses.

V. SUMMARY

ŠVK is a small, but valued HEI that plays a significant role in supporting the people, community, and businesses of the region. The HEI's aim of this reaccreditation is to have an up-to-date Software Engineering programme that meets the needs of students and the labour market. Advice on the content is welcome. The programme is very important for the HEI as it is multidimensional and of great importance for the region.

The HEI as an organisation and its staff appear to be very self-reflective and self-critical in a positive and constructive way. There is an active, well-known and widely used feedback culture, and students and other stakeholders seem to feel heard. Formal complaints and appeals are rare, but tools for fair dispute resolution are available.

The main development actions after the start of the programme are an update of the curriculum with alternatives within the programme. Feedback from social partners, graduates, formal surveys have been integrated with a focus on improving the study content and individualisation of the programme.

The SER was easy to follow and to the point. Only a few questions remained (e.g. updated table numbers for 2024), which were answered in additional documents and the site visit. The SER could be enhanced by providing more evidence such as volume of projects or number of full-time-equivalents in teaching and research.

The HEI presented an updated curriculum, which is internally renewed every 3 years and has been enhanced with alternatives in the study. There is a good relationship between teachers and students, where it is easy to reach the teachers via email, chat or in the office.

The HEI has a strong focus on R&D with a good connection to social partners and a vision to even improve scientific activities.

The HEI has a proven quality process with a good idea and handling of quality. It could be improved by, for example, a teaching award for exceptional courses. However, current and future AI tools need to be taken into account in the future.

The HEI has a good perspective on internationalisation. Teacher mobility is well established (e.g. through Erasmus exchanges). However, student mobility could be improved through measures such as success stories or experience exchange events.

In summary, there is a strong awareness of the responsibilities that come with the institution's significance to the local region. A clear commitment to quality is evident—whether in study programs, student support, or academic processes. While there may be minor areas for improvement, the overall impression is highly positive. The dedication and passion for the HEI are truly noticeable, and it is encouraging to see such a strong and promising direction being pursued.

We sincerely appreciate the HEI for providing a well-written, high-quality report and for the warm welcome during the site visit. The HEI fosters a highly cooperative environment with a strong and positive culture.

VI. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

The INOSTART programme stands out as an exemplary model of effective collaboration between Šiauliai City Municipality, business partners, academia, and students. Funded by the municipality and driven by real business needs, it enables students to work alongside companies and researchers to develop innovative IT and engineering solutions. This initiative not only enhances students' practical skills and employability but also supports regional innovation and economic development. The programme has led to the successful implementation of numerous commissioned projects, demonstrating a sustainable, multi-stakeholder approach to applied research and education.