



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD of ARCHAEOLOGY
AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Expert panel:

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Vilnius
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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	Archaeology	Archaeology
State code	6121NX032	6211NX028
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First-cycle studies	Second-cycle studies
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full-time, 4 years	Full-time, 2 years
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor's Degree in Humanities. Study field: Archaeology	Master's Degree in Humanities. Study field: Archaeology
Language of instruction	Lithuanian	Lithuanian
Minimum education required		
Registration date of the study programme	Order No. 565 of the Minister of Education of 19 May 1997	Order No. 565 of the Minister of Education of 19 May 1997

** if there are **joint** / **two-fields** / **interdisciplinary** study programmes in the study field, please designate it in the foot-note*

CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS	4
1.2. EXPERT PANEL	4
1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION	5
1.4. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY FIELD/STUDY FIELD POSITION/STATUS AND SIGNIFICANCE IN THE HEI	5
II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT	6
III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS	7
3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM	7
3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES	12
3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT	14
3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT	18
3.5. TEACHING STAFF	22
3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES	24
3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION	26
IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE	29
V. RECOMMENDATIONS*	30
VI. SUMMARY.....	31

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). *The visit to the Vilnius University Faculty of History (FH) was organized on the 27th of October 2022.*

Prof. Dr. Jean-Luc Lamboley, *professor at the University of Lyon 2;*

Prof. Dr. Raquel Piqué Huerta, *professor at Autonomous University of Barcelona(UAB);*

Sigita Mikšaitė, *senior museologist at National Museum of Lithuania, Department of Prehistoric Archeology Collections;*

Tautvydas Gaižauskas, *1st year graduate of Creative Industries at Vytautas Magnus University.*

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	
2.	
...	

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

Vilnius University (VU) is the oldest and largest State University in Lithuania: 22 274 students, 3095 academic staff, 90 Bachelor's study programmes, 110 Master's study programmes, 30 research fields for doctoral studies, 63 residency study programmes, it is composed with 15 core academic units, 12 core non-academic units, and it is governed by a Rector, a Council and a Senate.

The two study programmes in archaeology are carried out, without any interruption since 1997, by the Department of Archaeology of the Faculty of History established in 1968. The key research areas of the faculty of history are the History of Lithuania in the East Central Europe, and the Archaeology of Lithuania from the Stone Age to the Modern times. Scientific results in the archaeological field are published annually in the scientific journal *Archaeologia Lituana*. Other two bachelors and two masters are offered by the faculty, as well as a joint doctorate with the Lithuanian Institute of History.

Archaeology is conceived in a traditional way and considered as an integral part of humanities. Consequently, focus is put not only on the technical aspects (methods of excavations, recording and conservation of the remains, protection of the monuments), but also on the awareness that a good understanding of past phenomena and of the links with present day develops enlightened citizens who are the best pillars of democracy.

The 1st cycle programme has been renewed in 2012: the structure of the programme changed from a subject structure to a module structure based on a competence-based teaching and learning model. The latest evaluation of the two programmes was conducted in 2014. The two programmes have been accredited on 11/02/2015 for 6 years. Changes implemented are presented in the present Self Evaluation Report (SER).

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Archaeology field study and first cycle at Vilnius University (VU) is given positive evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	5
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	29

*1 (unsatisfactory) - the area does not meet the minimum requirements, there are fundamental shortcomings that prevent the implementation of the field studies;

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

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

4 (very good) - the area is evaluated very well in the national context and internationally, without any shortcomings;

5 (excellent) - the area is evaluated exceptionally well in the national context and internationally.

Archaeology field study and second cycle at Vilnius University (VU) is given positive evaluation.

Study field and cycle assessment in points by evaluation areas

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an Area in points*
1.	Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	4
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	5
3.	Student admission and support	4
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	4
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	4
	Total:	29

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The second-cycle Programme in the study field of archaeology is the only one at the national level. Master student can continue their studies in 3rd cycle.

During the 1st cycle students have the possibility to acquire pedagogical qualification as a minor study programme.; The master students can acquire a similar qualification after completing one-year professional studies in pedagogy, which opens the opportunity to get positions in educational institutions.

The graduates are able to apply destructive archaeological methods and understand the requirements set to the preservation of cultural heritage in State institutions as well as in private sectors.

Needs of society and labour market are taken into account to update the aims and outcome results.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

No doubt that the learning outcomes of the two study programmes aim to a high level of competences in the archaeological field, and consequently graduates are able to exercise a professional activity observing the rules established by the Lithuanian law on the protection of the immovable cultural heritage.

The main issue is to know if the number of students enrolled in this field study is in accordance with the number of work places available in the country, but mechanisms for detecting the needs of society and labour market are not sufficiently defined. Faculty should carry out a survey to find out what the national needs are in the field of archaeology, and check that the number of students annually enrolled in archaeology meets the needs of the labour market.

The opportunity to acquire pedagogical qualification during the cursus contributes to the quality of the two programmes is a good initiative.

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

(1) Factual situation

The priorities of the strategic plan of Vilnius University for 2021-2025 is to contribute to the Lithuanian Society by strengthening and motivating its own community, and to advocate principles of sustainability and responsibility. The two study programmes seek to contribute to solving contemporary social issues through research-based formation, critical thinking, interdisciplinarity, coherence of practice and theory, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The statements are very general and global. As far as VU aims to train enlightened citizens, every programme in humanities contributes to this aim. Given that archaeology is designed in a traditional way (strong link with history), the two programmes meet the attended objectives that are those of humanities. Effectively, general and subject competences are well-designed and are clearly aligned with the mission and objectives of the HEI.

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

(1) Factual situation

The first and second cycle study programmes are performed in compliance with the Description of Study Cycles (Order No. V-1012 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2015) and the Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies (Order No. V-1168 of the Minister of Education, Science of the Republic of Lithuania, 2016) and *Descriptor of the Study field of Archaeology* (Order No V-1991 of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania of 3 November 2021).

Table No. 1. Compliance of the programme Archaeology and history with the general requirements for first cycle study programmes.

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	180, 210 or 240 ECTS	240
ECTS for the study field	No less than 120 ECTS	225
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 120 ECTS	15
ECTS for internship	No less than 15 ECTS	30
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 15 ECTS	15
Contact hours (including distance contact hours)	No less than 20 % of learning (unless otherwise stated in the descriptor of study field)	40 %

Table No. 2. Compliance of the programme Archaeology with general requirements for second cycle study programmes.

Criteria	Legal requirements	In the Programme
Scope of the programme in ECTS	90 or 120 ECTS	120
ECTS for the study field	No less than 60 ECTS	120
ECTS for studies specified by University or optional studies	No more than 30 ECTS	0
ECTS for final thesis (project)	No less than 30 ECTS	30

Contact hours (including distance contact hours)	No less than 10 % of learning (unless otherwise stated in the descriptor of study field)	22%
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(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

All legal requirements are observed and the programmes fit the main standards of the Bologna process. ECTS are allocated in a correct way with a good estimation of student workload (1 ECTS = 25-30 student working hours). The second cycle is designed in continuity with the Bachelor study programme which guarantees a good progression of the global curriculum.

The difference between the 1st cycle that is organized on the principle of a module system (a module that considers thematically related issues, is around 15 ECTS), and the 2nd cycle that is organised on the principle of a subject system (around 6 ECTS) is justified because Master studies are more linked to research competences and aim to deepen knowledge of specific subjects. The Bachelor programme fits with the level VI of qualification, and the Master programme with the level VII. The two programmes include a significant amount of practice in key areas according to the recommendations of the last External Evaluation Report (EER). The number of credits in the field areas is very high in the both programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation

The study aims and intended outcomes are listed in a very precise way (in annex 1 of SER). Each course is described in terms of learning outcomes with a clear distinction between general and subject competences, and all the results of the courses cover the expected results and goals of the whole study programme.

The description of each module or subject indicates the study results to be achieved and the assessment methods to be used. Once a year, the Study Programme Committee (SPC) reviews the study plans taking in consideration feedback from lecturers and students; methods of assessment may be improved on this occasion. Examination and cumulative assessment (through written works, participation in classrooms, and reporting), are the main strategy for the assessment of the students. Teaching learning methodologies include lectures, seminars and group discussions, field practices, analysis of cases or problems, and self-study. The weight of seminar preparation is higher in the master units.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is no doubt that in such broad programmes, multiple teaching learning techniques are applied and most of the intended outcomes should be successfully met. Assessment methods in general terms are diverse and well adapted to the specificities of the different modules in the bachelor programme.

According to the recommendation of the last EER, some learning outcomes of the Master programme have been reviewed and clarified giving more importance to practical training and related competences and it is now possible to ascertain that these learning outcomes can be achieved.

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

(1) Factual situation

The programmes comply with the requirements established for the 1st and 2nd cycle in the Description of the Archaeology field approved by the Ministry of Education.

The Bachelor programme shows a progression between a first stage (semesters I-V) and a second stage (semesters VI-VIII). During the first stage students acquire general university education, basic knowledge of archaeology and basic practical skills. During the second stage students choose specialised modules where they deepen specific disciplines of archaeology ; seminars are devoted to the development of research conducting skills and the preparation of the final thesis. So, the Bachelor programme contents are coherent with the aims of the study in a broad sense and ensure a good knowledge of the archaeological field. Topics are balanced and well justified with respect to the aims of the field. The contents of the bachelor programme guarantee the acquisition of the basic specific competences of the field archaeology, pedagogic aspects and research, as well as the historical context of the Lithuanian archaeological heritage.

The Master programme is in continuation with the Bachelor programme. The main form of work is seminars. The compulsory subjects develop competences of theoretical and practical research, with focus on methodology and interdisciplinarity. The programme also offers to explore the field of bioarchaeology. Social partners and practitioners in the archaeology field are drawn in the study programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Annex 3 (of SER) gives a good analysis of the consistency of the two programmes; for each course unit consistency between, teaching/learning, assessment and attended results is clearly highlighted.

Bachelor students are very well prepared to continue their studies in Master programme. Masters graduate students are well prepared to continue their studies in 3rd cycle and they have a good level of qualification to find a job in Archaeology and Cultural heritage institutions.

In the Bachelor programme, foreign languages courses are offered only the first semester, and only Russian and Polish are proposed. It is not sure that many students are interested in these languages: during the visit it was clear that professional English had their preference. Practices ensure a first approach to the work at the field and after excavation, but little detail is provided about how they are organized. The organization of the practices of optional courses are not enough described. The module Bachelor thesis includes lectures but the SER does not indicate how many contact hours are foreseen or how students choose the topics or the supervisor. The information about how the impartiality of the assessment is guaranteed and how the public defence is assessed is not easy to find.

The master programme is excellent because it gives a large space to practice and covers all the specialities of archaeology, but opportunities for foreign languages and Latin should be offered.

It could be suggested to give more importance to the compulsory course units of the 2nd semester with 18 instead of 12 credits (= 3 compulsory courses) and less importance to the optional course units with 12 instead of 18 credits(= only 2 optional courses). The teaching-learning methods of Unit "Master's Research Seminar. Lithuanian Archaeological Historiography: Theoretical and Methodological Research Models" are very ambitious: preparation of a scientific article to be published in the first semester seems unrealistic. In the

case of the master thesis, it is not very clear how the assessment process guarantees transparency and unbiasedness.

According to the information provided lecturers and students are members of the Study Programme Committee (SPC), but it is not detailed how these representatives convey the opinion of their collectives.

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

(1) Factual situation

Each study programme has credits devoted to option modules (78 ECTS for the 1st cycle) or subject (36 ECTS for the 2nd cycle). Participation in academic exchanges is also a way to personalise the study plan and students can choose free elective subjects from other study programmes of VU, especially foreign languages.

VU has a procedure for recognizing competences acquired through non-formal and self-education.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The HEI offers a wide range of opportunities for both programmes, which encourage decision-making and allows the adaptation of the study's results to the students' interests. The opportunities to personalize the structure of the field study at both programmes are ensured at different moments of the study programme.

The SER does not give information about student with special needs and the possibility to seek help from a tutor. The personalisation should take into consideration different categories of students whose learning needs are not always the same: disabled students, part-time students who are likely to constitute a major part of the cohorts, students who have already a diploma and look for additional qualifications, students who want to enrol joint honours study programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation

The regulation is approved by Vilnius university Senate and the Vice-Rector for Studies. Methodological guidelines are available online to help students. The module „Bachelor thesis“ provides the students with the criteria of assessment and the attended learning outcomes. Each thesis is monitored by a supervisor which is a lecturer of the related study programme. Other specialists can be invited to act as consultants and students are provided with the opportunity to consult any lecturer of the FH

Themes of the Bachelors' thesis are generally decided during the 3rd year and discussed during seminars (Module *Course Paper*). Themes of the Master's thesis are started to be discussed at the specific Master's research seminar.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The high quality of the thesis reflects the general quality of the study programmes and high qualification of the teachers, especially for archaeometric issues. The papers deal with all types of materials found on the Lithuanian territory (ceramics, glass, weapons, pottery, jewellery, bricks) which is a positive point. It shows that the studies interests of the students vary widely, there are a lot of different themes, not only on Iron Age and Medieval period, but also on contemporary issues. When reading the titles of the papers it is difficult to see the

difference of level between Bachelor and Master theses that should be more specialised in respect to Bachelor theses.

More attention should be paid to the monitoring of the bachelor students' progress in their works (3 theses have a low mark). The digital guidelines may be not sufficient, but it was not possible to check it during the visit

The link to the document with the procedures for the defence itself and the work assessment criteria doesn't work and is written in Lithuanian.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The Faculty of History has a very strong research profile with an excellent position in the national ranking of the field with respect publications and research contracts. There is a fruitful collaboration with the Lithuanian Institute of History.
2. Good involvement of students in research activities.
3. Fruitful cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine – publications and research contracts.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

3.2. LINKS BETWEEN SCIENCE (ART) AND STUDIES

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

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

(1) Factual situation

Research activity is assessed annually in the area of "History and Archaeology" at the national level. The research assessment is based on publications and contracts (commissioned research). The number of points obtained for the publications increased between 2018-2019 and decreased in 2020.

Assessment of a five-year period is conducted by international experts. In the 2013-2017 period the FH obtained the highest score.

The average of publications is 1.75 year/person, including monographs, journals, dissemination, and textbooks. The members of the FH have carried out 16 research projects and 11 research projects of scientific nature. 10 of them were led by the members of the FH. The members of the Department have also developed commissioned research projects together with other partners (private and public).

The FH collaborates regularly with external partners, among them the largest and strongest institution in the field of history and archaeology science in the country (Lithuanian Institute of History), museums and protected areas developing joint projects. The FH also maintains international research collaborations with several countries and has a strong international network.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The SER demonstrates that FH of Lithuania University is one of the leaders in Lithuania with respect to publications and research contracts. During the last three years (2018, 2019, 2020) has obtained a very good position in the national rankings of the field.

The position obtained by the FH in the five-year period assessment demonstrates their excellence at the national and international levels. Members of the FH are very active in research, as it is demonstrated by the number of research projects carried out and publications. The FH demonstrates collaborations with other national and international institutions. International cooperation is very strong.

Due to their good reputations, they have been invited as experts in international evaluation processes, commissions, working groups, etc. which confirms their competence and excellence in the field. Moreover, some members of the department have obtained prestigious awards, which confirm the high level of the department's research.

The influence of the FH staff in society is demonstrated – the FH members are involved in national governmental institutions and take part in the commissions and decision-making processes in the field.

The research carried out by the lecturers is coherent with the course's topics. The distribution of master and bachelor modules/units takes into account the profile of the lecturers (research interests and main publications), according to the information about the teaching staff provided.

Little information is provided with respect to the attraction of international scholars and their integration into the study programme; beyond the lectures of the visiting scientists there is no evidence of involvement in the formal courses which can be especially of interest in the master programme.

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

(1) Factual situation

FH is not formally planning research topics but the fields of research are related to the study programmes. In the case of the archaeology study field, research carried out encompasses the following fields: 1) archaeology of Lithuanian prehistory and historical times; 2) Bioarchaeology, 3) archaeology of Lithuanian conflict 20th century 4) heritage research, preservation and adaptation to society.

Lecturer selection is based on publications and research activities related to the study field.

Lecturers include the latest advances in the field in the modules/units updating recommended literature, and discussing relevant scientific literature during seminars and exercises in the classroom.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The SER demonstrates that members of the FH are actively involved in research and working on topics directly related to study programmes. For example, Bioarchaeology is a very strong area with an important research activity that has resulted in several publications in top international journals, commissioned research projects and competitive projects. The modules/units of Bioarchaeology take advantage of the top levels of the lecturers.

The SER demonstrates recent advances in the field are incorporated into the modules/units through the lecturers' research experience and competence in the field and relevant literature. The link between the content of studies and the latest development in science is well demonstrated.

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

(1) Factual situation

The programme offers several possibilities to get involved in scientific activities: mandatory and voluntary field practices in the frame of research projects, engaging in research projects, participation in summer schools, reports, and publications.

Participation is variable depending on the activity, field practices and engagement in research projects are the most popular activity.

Information on the possibilities to engage in research activities is informed in the module "Introduction to studies", information is also available on the FH website.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The possibilities of the involvement of students in research projects related to their studies are clearly demonstrated. During the last four years, the students have participated actively in different research through mandatory practices and other optional activities in the ongoing research projects.

The strategy to approach the research projects to the students is effective and successful as is demonstrated by the number of students involved in research activities. However, it is desirable to attract more students to non-mandatory activities.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Good involvement of students in the research activities.
2. Fruitful cooperation with the Faculty of Medicine.

...

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

3.3. STUDENT ADMISSION AND SUPPORT

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The admission process to first-cycle studies is organised within the LAMA BPO system by authorisation by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports (hereinafter, the Ministry). Applicants are placed in a competitive queue based on their admission grade. The indicators for the minimum required score for state-funded and non-state-funded study places are listed on the VU website, the LAMA BPO website and can be found during various study fairs. The VU Admission Rules also define instances when applicants can get additional points added to their admission grade based on their previous academic or non-institutional achievements.

The admission process for the second-cycle study programme is determined by the internal rules of VU which are approved by the University Senate and are available on the VU website. The applicants to the second-cycle study programme must be graduates of first-cycle study programmes in Humanities or Social sciences, or have passed bridging courses. The admission process also relies on the admission grade which has a predefined formula outlined in the Admissions Procedure for Second-Cycle Study Programmes.

The number of students admitted to the study field programmes has been declining since 2018, but in the SER, the University states that this could be caused by the demographic changes and influenced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Between 2018 and 2021, 48 State funded students and 21 non-State funded have been admitted in the 1st cycle study programme. 19% dropped out 35 SF students and 4 NSF

students have been admitted in the second cycle study programme, 28 % dropped out. Student who dropped out are mostly NSF.
6 bachelor students and 2 master students have been on partial studies abroad.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The indicators for calculating the applicants' admission grade are clear and publicly available. The admission process is appropriate and meets expectations. The Master's programme is being promoted within the Bachelor's programme, which is a good way for extending the student's academic path.

The fact that students return after many years to VU either after academic leave, or finishing their first or second-cycle studies at VU or elsewhere is very welcomed and shows that the University has a strong image within its community and the outside public. However, still yet, more emphasis should be put on maintaining and developing scientists of now rather than of the future.

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

(1) Factual situation

When applying to the first-cycle study programme, applicants can get awarded additional points for previous academic or non-institutional achievements, from being part of voluntary activities to winning highest places in Olympiads.

Foreign qualifications are credited at VU according to the Orders of the Ministry and other relevant laws as well as VU inner rules approved by the University Senate. Each person seeking their prior qualifications considered are treated on an individual basis and their qualifications are evaluated against the study programme's aims, objectives, content, outcomes and other relevant indicators. Any questions and issues regarding the crediting of prior qualifications is carried out by the Study Programme Committee. No more than 75% of the study programme can be credited from previous formal education and no more than 50% of the study programme can be credited from previous informal education

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The procedures of recognition of previous qualifications are clearly outlined in the relevant documents approved both by the Ministry and the University Senate. The rules ensure the bar for the quality of education is kept at a steady level and that everyone has equal opportunity to engage in academic activities.

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

(1) Factual situation

At the FH, the relevant staff regarding student mobility is the Vice-Dean for Studies and International Relations who coordinates international cooperation and handles related documents, informs and consults students and lecturers. VU provides opportunities to make use of the Erasmus+, ISEP, Nordplus exchange programmes and other bilateral agreements. Students in the study field programmes can spend up to half their study period in mobility programmes. VU is also a member of the European University Alliance ARQUS and the network of the oldest classical European universities COIMBRA. These networks provide even more destinations for student exchange.

The information regarding exchange possibilities is widely available through the VU and Faculty websites, regular newsletters, at various events and fairs.

Efforts are also put into events and lectures which can also broaden students' horizons without leaving Lithuania.

During the visit to the University, the experts were told that the Erasmus exchange program is being promoted heavily, students get a lot of emails regarding the exchange program.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Students and lecturers have many possibilities to take part in international mobility through a number of different programmes and other bilateral agreements. Having a dedicated person in charge of coordinating international mobility should ensure smooth processes and make it clear whom to turn to when regarding studies abroad.

Prior to taking part in exchange programmes, students are educated on the importance of the diversity of the study modules, especially how different languages can help in further professional research. This aspect of the study field (and, apparently, the whole VU) is greatly appreciated and shows the University's dedication to raising the quality of education.

Despite a small number of students going abroad, the exchange opportunities described in the SER are adequate and sufficient for student mobility. Even though the Faculty does not offer any lecture in English in the study field and thus cannot properly admit foreign students for partial studies, it does offer individual modules in English and has at least some experience to begin offering full study programmes in English in the future.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students are able to enrol into a mentorship programme which aims to encourage interdisciplinary work and learning, holistically develop their competences and gain valuable insights about their future professional life. Social support is provided mainly in the form of financial benefits: scholarships for best performance, social scholarships and other payments. The SER states that the incentive scholarships are not sufficient both in terms of the amount and the quantity. There is also a possibility to use the State funded loans as well as ask for a reduced tuition fee. Socio-economically disadvantaged students and students with disabilities are entitled to reduced accommodation fees. A number of nominal scholarships are granted to students who show extraordinary academic achievement.

The University offers psychological and spiritual counselling in the forms of professional consultations on a variety of matters, as well as spiritual guidance. The University also offers a wide range of art and sport related activities, students can engage in a number of different self-expression activities.

Students can turn to counsellors about personal career choices and how their professional goals could be reached. Training is offered in various topics on stress management, learning, self-representation, CV, career planning, etc. The University has a Students Representation body which represents students' interests, addresses various student's issues and their academic and social well-being. It helps students integrate into the VU community through various events and student traditions. Student corporation *Korp Tilia* is actively representing the Faculty within VU and outside it.

The information regarding all of the student support possibilities can be found on the VU website and the Faculty website.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The University apparently provides an appropriate amount of various student support. However, from the information provided in the SER, it seems that a relatively high drop-out rate in both first- and second-cycle studies is caused mainly by financial burdens and

study/work-life balance; thus, the University could re-evaluate the financial support possibilities and look for ways to help students keep balance of their studies and work. However, many students are working in their field and get more knowledge while studying. Students have taken part in some voluntary projects which are not required by the curriculum. This shows that the students are motivated and they are supported by lecturers who want to help them to improve and grow their knowledge.

During the visit, it was indicated that there is some sort of rivalry between history and archaeology students within the student representative association. The President of student representatives is very insistent every year and asks students to come to the association.

There are student mentors who help first-year students to get around and they seem more efficient than the student representatives.

Everything seems to be smooth with the lecturer's communication. Students do not have to wait a long time for an answer and every student gets enough attention from the lecturers and supervisors.

In general, the students are very motivated. There is a tight community and close relations with the teachers.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

During the first week of studies, the students get acknowledged with the study programmes, their aims, content, evaluation methods, individualization opportunities, forms of leisure, support and other relevant information. Most of the inquiries are carried out electronically through email or the VU website. If need be, students can consult with the lecturers during their appointed office hours.

Students can always find relevant information about their studies in a centralised information system, they also receive the most important information through their individual university email.

Students are regularly counselled on all matters related to studies. Academic counsellor is available on a regular single-window basis and can be approached for any questions regarding the studies at the Faculty. The counsellor is advised by the Vice-Dean for Academic Affairs, the employees of the Studies Division and lecturers. Special counselling groups are formed and advised online. In recent years more than 20.000 consultations have been given per year in a centralised way and this number is growing.

Students are always encouraged to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses which could be used in supporting them on their career choices.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The information is provided to the students in many different ways and there seems to be enough opportunities to get acquainted with the most important aspects of student life and study materials. According to the information in the SER, students are more likely to go seek information themselves and use the available counselling every year, though the questions about taking an academic leave or retaking exams being on the top of the list shouldn't be very welcome.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. A lot of possibilities for student mobility.
2. Close-knit community building through events and other voluntary activities.
3. Efficient informational support.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Low participation rates in student mobility programmes.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

(1) Factual situation

The teaching staff uses a student-centred teaching model which should not only educate students on the particular study programmes, but prepare them to live as an independent learner who is mindful and tolerant of others as well as creative. In the study programmes, carried out as full-time studies, a vast variety of teaching and learning as well as assessment methods are being used, both contact and non-contact methods. Master programme is more concentrated on subject competences, but teaching and learning processes are concentrated on general competencies as well as developing the methodological skills of the students. It is mentioned that the balance of contact hours and independent workload is very good for achieving the study results; The same with the balance between lectures and seminars. Because of the changes due to the pandemic, the significance of self-study hours has increased and more attention has been paid to student's individual work.

There are some initiatives to foster the motivation of the students, such as archaeological excavations, museum and laboratory works, internationality of studies. Bachelor students can pursue studies in Master, and Master students in Doctoral studies. It is also possible for students to switch from archaeology to history, or to move towards teacher training.

The cumulative grade is used for the final assessment of all examinations, while a formative assessment approach is strongly promoted all along the curriculum in both programmes.

Students are provided with various possibilities to personalise their studies enabling to achieve intended study results. Students of both cycles have opportunity to participate in academic exchange programmes, study foreign language necessary for understanding historiographic sources. An option to choose subjects from other study programmes at the Faculty of History, or other faculties at VU, creates the possibility of more individualized studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Student-centred learning and teaching are a very good method, but it has to be monitored very carefully. Students have to be taught how to manage their own time to be able to fulfill the requirements. Most of the approaches in teaching and learning still value the relationship between the teacher and the students, which discourages the students' creativity when applying their skills in circumstances other than University environment. Fostering the motivation and interest of the students is a very valuable practice, usually leading to best possible study results, new ideas, and even the students' engagement in pursuing further academic goals.

The ratio of students choosing practical training in the laboratory, archaeological excavations practice and applied practice with social partners would be useful for monitoring the needs of stakeholders and students itself.

More attention should be paid to the needs of the labour market when defining the attended learning outcomes so that students have the opportunity to create by themselves the foundations for future employment.

The list of institutions with which FH cooperated as student internships in 2018-2021 are presented in the SER. However, there is no data on the results of these involvements or intended practical achievements.

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

(1) Factual situation

On 2020 a five-year strategy on diversity and equal opportunities has been approved by the University. Individual plans have been developed at the FH in cooperation with the Disability Affairs Coordinators of VU. All information is available on VU website. The SER gives a list of all measures taken in favour of students with impairments. Students with reduced mobility have access to lecture rooms, other departments, and library. Considering the individual needs due to disability, certain audiences are adapted for this. Schedules of lectures and assessment forms are adjusted to individual needs.

Between 2018 and 2021 17 specific scholarships or awards have been reserved for students from disadvantaged backgrounds. Recently, a particular attention has been paid to students from Ukraine and Belorussia.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The facilitation of the studying process for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs is being carried out at a University as well as at faculty level. No cases of such student re reported in the SER.

As the difficult pandemic situation with Covid-19 has taught many new things relating to online teaching/learning, this new experience should also be taken into consideration to facilitate successful integration of such students into the study process.

It has not been provided how the issue of compulsory practice (field research or museum practice) is resolved for the students with special needs and how the quality of studies is ensured for vulnerable groups, whether they have remedial courses or additional learning materials.

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

(1) Factual situation

The monitoring is made at three levels:

- the course unit or module, the progress of students is evaluated by the lecturer
- at the end of each year for all students, the evaluation is made by the Studies Administration Division:
- at the end of the study programme, the monitoring is made by the SPC through feedbacks from the institutions where students work as interns.

At each level, feedback from students at lecturers is used.

Students are provided with feedback during each course, when discussing the final examination, in providing individual tutorials, during specialised seminars devoted to the preparing of final theses.

All students who want to terminate their studies, leave the University have to meet with an academic counsellor.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is obvious that the Department takes very good care of the students' learning process as students are not left alone with their failures. Diversity of actions to co-ordinate the students' progress, academic records and feedback for self-assessment seems efficient. If all what is written in the documentation also works in practice, the situation is very good. The means of controlling the reasons why students decide to terminate their studies are briefly specified in the SER, but there is a lack of data on the effectiveness and outcomes of such consultations.

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

(1) Factual situation

Graduate career tracking is implemented through the Career Tracking Information System (CTIS) that uses objective indicators from State information systems and government and departmental registers for five years after graduation, and subjective indicators of sociological alumni surveys. 50% of the graduates who completed the Bachelor studies and 80% of the graduates who completed Master studies have found an employment contract in Lithuania. The data about employability of graduates of the first-cycle of archaeology studies in 2019 and 2020 shows decreasing indicators of students who worked and continued studying and students who continued studies without being employed. The data about employability of graduates of the second-cycle of archaeology studies in 2019 and 2020 is incomplete, but provided numbers show increasing rates of students who combine studying and work.

The main aim and learning outcomes of the first-cycle and second-cycle studies in the field of archaeology are to train specialists well prepared theoretically and have practical skills necessary for future professions. Students of both cycles have mandatory field or research practices to achieve the basic practical skills. Practical training is strengthened by engaging students in research projects carried out by the Faculty of History lecturers, also possibilities to participate in laboratory works are possible.

Graduates get employed mainly in the private sector, smaller part gets employed in the public sector, enterprises carrying out contracted archaeological research, scientific institutions, research centres, institutions of higher education, archives, museums, different historical memory and heritage preservation institutions.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The data provided in the SER are not always clear – more precise statistic tables are needed to avoid confusion. For instance, according to the CTIS in 2020 68 % of students who have completed the Master programme have an employment contract, but it also indicated that 12% of the same graduates are engaged in “different forms of self-employed activities”. How to understand this difference ?

The SER does not give information about the recruitment of Master students in research activities. It is very difficult to know how many students who have completed the Bachelor programmes continue their studies in Master programme, how many terminate their studies and among them how many has found a job. It is also difficult to know how many months do students spend before finding a job. In order to establish stronger future professional relationships, to create a basis for future employment, it should be important to promote professional practice in relevant institutions directly connected with cultural heritage as well. It should be advisable to create conditions for practice not only in big cities, main museums, but also in smaller regional museums. This would provide opportunities for regional museums to attract new employees, for students to do internships and then to get jobs in their hometowns.

During the learning period graduates should develop motivation for continuing professional development, according to professional requirements and needs of the labour market. The discussion of needs and expectations with social partners and stakeholders, would be helpful to create stronger understanding of labour market.

There is a lack of information about the feedback of the employers. It seems however that employers give a positive evaluation of the qualifications acquired in the programmes (it was the case during the visit), and the level of placement of the graduates is likely to be high.

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

(1) Factual situation

A variety of measures is taken into consideration on an institutional and University-wide level to prevent academic misconduct in the examinations and when submitting essays. Students must adhere to the Academic Ethics Code of VU. There is an electronic plagiarism identification system for final theses and essays that enables the verification of potential plagiarism with papers stored in the database. An anonymous hotline to report any violations of academic ethics also exists. The theme of academic integrity is discussed every year at the meetings organized by the Student Representation of the FH. During the last three years no cases of violation of academic integrity, principles of tolerance and no-discrimination have been reported.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

No problems on this topic except the possibility for a personalised like/dislike-level evaluations which should be solved on a case-by-case basis. The Anonymous hotline is a very up-to-date solution.

The fact that most of the topics proposed for the theses are based on primary archaeological materials is a good way to avoid plagiarism.

The SER lacks information about the principles of tolerance and cases of discrimination, e.g., sexual harassment, racial or national intolerance, and solutions to these problems. It may be the proof that such problems do not happen in the FH, but how administration can be sure that it is well informed?

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

(1) Factual situation

The procedure for lodging appeals is determined by the University. Students who disagree with the examination procedure of the assessment can file a complaint with the Appeals Commission of the CAU within 5 days after the publication of examination results. The commission is composed by 3 lecturers and 3 representatives of students. A decision regarding the examination procedure can be contested to the VU Dispute Resolution Committee.

During the period two complaints have been lodged to the Commission. Only one was partly well-grounded.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

No problem identified. The procedures for appeal investigations are present and transparent.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Very good practices of the diversity of teaching and learning process, fostering close relationship between students and teachers.
2. A positive evaluation of the graduates skills by the employers.
3. The quality of the academic environment is excellent.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

3.5. TEACHING STAFF

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

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

(1) Factual situation

In 2020-2021 32 lecturers (excluding teachers of the General University Studies and speciality languages) taught in the two programmes (21 in the 1st cycle programme, 14 in the 2nd cycle programme, 9 in the two programmes); 78 % have a PhD ; 7 lecturers (22%) have no degree but they are working on their doctoral theses and they have a long experience of pedagogical work. 18 lecturers comply with the qualification requirements enabling them to participate in 3rd-cycle studies. 26 lecturers are full-time teachers and 6 are part-time.

All the subjects taught are in line with the field of the studies. Average of research experience is 23 years, average of pedagogical experience is 15 years. The average age of the lecturers is 45 years, young scientists (between 35 and 45 years) prevail in the programmes.

Two persons who have defended PhD theses have been recruited as assistants. 2 persons who got higher positions in VU administration have been replaced by two promising doctoral students. The number of associate professors remained unchanged during the period, 5 doctoral students joined in the teaching staff and currently are permanent lecturers.

The average experience in research work is 23 years (range 3-46), and the average of pedagogical work is 15 years (range 2-44). The average age of lecturers is 45.

Ratio students-lecturers are between 1.6-2.1 (0.5-0.6 master, 1.6-0.8 bachelor).

Table No. 3. Archaeology field lecturers' compliance with the requirements for the first cycle studies

Requirement stated in Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies	In the <i>Archaeology</i> study program of the first cycle
No less than 50% of the first-cycle university level subjects of study field must be taught by scientists/researchers or renowned artists (art subjects).	78% are doctors in Humanities or medical sciences. The evaluation commission for the Bachelor's final theses is composed of 7 active researches holding a science degree.

Table No. 4. Teachers meet the general requirements for the second cycle studies

Requirement stated in Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies	In <i>Archaeology</i> study program of the second cycle
No less than 80% of all study subjects teachers must have a scientific degree (or be renowned artists)	94 % of lecturers working in this programme hold a scientific degree. The evaluation commission for the Master's final theses is composed of 7 active researches holding a science degree.
The remaining share (20%) of teachers may be practitioners who, in the period of recent 7 years, have gained at least 3 years of experience in professional activities which correspond to the taught applied subjects.	Only one lecturer has not a PhD; she is employed for 8 contact hours (6 ECTS) ; she has 19 years of practical experience in archaeology and 4 years of pedagogical experience.
No less than 20% of major study field subjects' volume has to be taught by teachers occupying the position of a professors	28% of the field subjects are taught by lecturers in position of professors.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The number and percentage of professors and teaching staff with PhD degree meets the requirements for both the first and second cycle studies. It can be observed that there is a large difference between the average or research experience and pedagogical experience. Does it mean that young researchers have to wait a long time before being recruited as lecturers, or that a majority of researchers do not teach? Whatever the answer, this situation should be improved.

The programme studies have considered the generational change and have incorporated young teachers into the programme. The average of years of the teaching staff and the incorporation of young lecturers guarantees the continuity of the programme, but the number of associate professors remained unchanged during all the period and no promotion happened, it should be good to renew this corps and recruit new professors. It can be also observed that there is only on Prof. habil. which is low for of a prestigious HEI like VU.

The SER demonstrates the qualifications with respect to the degree, experience research and teaching according to the years of work. Moreover, the record of publications and research projects carried out by the lecturers are very important and suits the study programme.

Given the low number of students admitted in the study programmes, the ratio between students and lecturers is optimal in the two programmes: 1: 2,4 for the Bachelor programme and 1:1,5 for the Master programme. The teaching contact hours are very high in the case of some lecturers (two of them more than 300 hours, three of them more than 200 hours), and this can affect the quality of teaching and research activity. Some of the lecturers without degrees have an important number of credits and contact hours as well as the PhD students; the high charge of teaching hours can delay the presentation of the PhD.

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

(1) Factual situation

No specific paragraph is devoted to this issue in the SER. Information has to be found here and there through the pages of the SER. During 2018-2019, between 13-14 lecturers did mobility. It is understandable that the staff mobility was cancelled in 2020 because of the pandemic. However, the data for 2021-2022 has not been provided.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Few information is provided about the mobility of the lecturers. It seems that mobility of the teaching staff is almost no-existent. The programmes and the objectives of the mobility are not described.

Given that many of them are in the formative step of their career, a greater participation in mobility should be desirable.

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

(1) Factual situation

The lecturers can improve their competences by participating in Erasmus Programme, participating in international projects, and participating in training activities offered by Vilnius University and other institutions.

VU offers 16 specialized training programmes for improving pedagogical competences. During the pandemic, online educational seminars were offered.

Information about seminars is sent by email. Courses can be followed online and can be accessed after the events.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The offer of activities and actions to improve competences of the teaching staff is of high quality. The participation in H2020 SOPs4RI devoted to the issues of research integrity, Cost actions, and project CALOHEE (Measuring and Comparing Achievements of Learning Outcomes in Higher Education in Europe) are very good initiatives.

Participation in training programmes of Vilnius University is discrete (19 lecturers 2018-2021). However, the fact that seminars are available online can help to attract participants.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. High scientific and pedagogical qualification.
2. Young researchers are recruited.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

3.6. LEARNING FACILITIES AND RESOURCES

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The seating areas (15 rooms) are sufficient to host all the students. The number of working places and the working hours of the libraries fully satisfies the students' needs. The

equipment for distance teaching have been reinforced. Erudoam Internet access is free for both students and lecturers. A specific room is devoted to student representation and corporation. The open access Bioarchaeology Research Centre has significantly extended spaces, resources and study possibilities. The equipment of the laboratories is modern and specialised lectures of the Master programmes take place in the laboratories.

The Department of Archaeology has the main equipment for carrying out field research using the most recent technologies (for instance on the “school site” of Kernave). The laboratories of the Bioarchaeological Centre are provided with all kinds of modern equipment that allow Master students to carry practical activities and prepare their final projects in the place.

Students are acquainted with the principles of creating databases and the possibilities of analysing spatial data using Geographic Information System (GIS). They can use very important databases for national archaeology like the data of the National Land Service or the data of the LIDAR (Light Detection and Ranging).

Many practical activities are implemented thanks to projects with social partners, like the GIPL, the National Museum, the LIH, Pranas Gudynas Restoration Centre, Departments of the Faculty of Medicine etc...

In spite of the difficulties due to the location of the buildings in the historical city centre, the Faculty ensures spaces for persons with disabilities. The processes regarding physical space and information resources for persons with special needs are constantly updated.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Good conditions to study are ensured for students in both the study programmes. The different laboratories of the Bioarchaeological Research Centre, the presence of the LIH and the collaboration with State institutions in the field of cultural heritage create an excellent scientific environment with a lot of human and financial resources. Given the current number of students, the means and equipment are more than sufficient to achieve the intended learning outcomes.

Some premises are old with small rooms, but students can easily find workplaces with good digital equipment and good attention is paid to students with special needs.

The laboratories are located in a different building than the lecture rooms, which may cause problems for the disable students.

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

(1) Factual situation

VU Library is the largest and richest in the field of humanities. A large part of the literature that is relevant to students’ studies is available in digital form in virtual libraries. The FH library has amassed a rich collection of books and journals (about 3500) on the theme of archaeology. A large part of these publications can be found only there. The Bioarchaeological Research Centre has also specialized journals in the field of archaeometry. The books can be borrowed and taken home, and most of them are freely available (open access).

The upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field of studies is provided by the lecturers and the researchers.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The resources offered by the Bioarchaeological Research Centre, opens up great possibilities for the Master students to specialise in subjects like zooarchaeology, archaeobotanical which recently has become especially promising in archaeological science, from this point of view, the laboratory of osteology is quite remarkable.

The tables p. 76 of the SER shows that the acquisition of books acquired by the FH has considerably increased between 2018 and 2022 (x 2,5), in contrast, the number of periodicals remained unchanged.

The technological equipment for archaeological excavations is modern and consistent but drones could be used to make aerial photos of the archaeological sites and excavations.

According to the students, it can occasionally be difficult to find resources related to their study field and the topic of their final thesis by themselves, but the supervisor is usually happy to help and the libraries order the books if necessary on a specific electronic platform.

The SER gives few information about the financial viability, but it is clear that the VU Library has large financial resources, but no information is given about the criteria of distribution between the different fields of study.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Nice environment with buildings inside the old-town.
2. The modern laboratories of the Bioarchaeology Research Centre.
3. Specialized libraries.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

3.7. STUDY QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC INFORMATION

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

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

(1) Factual situation

Quality assurance system of the studies is guaranteed through various processes and procedures related to the analysis, monitoring, evaluation and improvement of the study programme, as well as to the improvement of staff competences.

The SPC is responsible for the quality and constant improvement of the programme. The composition of the SPC is formed by lecturers of the programme, students (bachelor and master), and a social partner.

The competences and activities of the SPC are regulated by the University and comprise the data gathering and analysis, ensuring the coherence between aims, competences, methods, improving and implementing the programme changes, and updates in the programme. The Study Programme Committee is supervised by the Study Quality and Development Department during the updated process.

Changes in the study programme are first considered at SP and then, if they are substantial, have to be approved by the Faculty and University Senate.

SPC is also responsible for the resolution of problems between the students, teaching staff and social partners.

Module leaders and the whole department also contribute to the quality of Bachelors' study programme.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The internal quality assurance system is well established and accomplishes the objectives of monitoring and improving of the study programme.

The competences of the SPC are clearly presented, and their composition assures the involvement of lecturers, students, and social partners. However little information is provided on the number of lecturers participating in the committee, the periodicity of meetings and the mechanism they use to solve conflicts.

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

(1) Factual situation

Students of bachelor and master are represented in the SPC and participate in the activities of the committee.

One representative of social partners is also represented in SPC.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Possibilities of students' participation in the internal quality assurance are well demonstrated, they are represented in the SPC and are periodically asked about the implementation of the study programme and other specific questions.

Although social partners are involved in the study programme implementation and have one representative in the SPC it is not specified how their opinions are gathered and their feedback considered.

The Archaeology Field Study Programme Committee consists of lecturers of the field, one social partner (Director of the National Museum of Lithuania) and two students (Bachelor's and Master's cycles). For the diversity of viewpoints, it would be objective to include a few more social partners from more diverse research areas in the committee's activities, e.g., conservation institutions, Lithuanian Institute of History, and others.

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

(1) Factual situation

The University collects and analyses feedback from students, teaching staff, employers and social partners. Twice a year first and second year students can participate in a centralized online anonym survey about specific subjects and general satisfaction with the semester. In addition, students are the object of eight more surveys during their studies in order to obtain data on the admission process, study programme implementation, exchange programme, termination of studies, competences acquired at the end of the students.

Lecturers conduct also surveys on their own related to specific questions of their courses.

Information about the management of the field study programme is available on the VU Study information system. Data collected is available on the intranet to lecturers of the topics, administration, and chair of the study programme committee.

Data collected is used for the improvement of the programme and also for certification or evaluation of lecturers. Several activities for the promotion of studies seeking to attract future students have developed: lectures, videos, writing articles, and media.

In order to attract potential students visits to schools and high schools are organised. Schoolchildren have an opportunity to get acquainted with the studies of archaeology, history, history of culture.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Little details are provided about the number of students who participate in surveys. The number of surveys is relatively high and could result in a demotivation of student

participation. Little information is provided on how does the University inform the students about the survey process and how incentive their participation. The SER is not very explicit on how the University collects and analyses feedback from employers and social partners and how are they used for the improvement of the Study Programme.

Despite the number of activities planned to attract students the interest in the study field has decreased. A deep reflection on the role of Archaeology studies in contemporary society is needed and maybe a major involvement of the stakeholders and social partners.

There is no information about feedback data of visits and activities outcome in the schools, what information is being provided to schoolchildren, what ways the studies of archaeology are promoted. Brief information about publishing articles to mass media or giving interviews, public lectures about archaeology is not sufficient.

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

(1) Factual situation

According to the information provided students are satisfied with the bachelor's module system. The main complains in the case of the master are related to the possibility to combine work and studies because of the timetable.

The SER provides several examples of the changes implemented in the study programmes (both bachelor and master) as a result of the feedback from the surveys.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Insufficient data is provided with respect to the students' satisfaction, although the surveys are mentioned and the results are only partially described.

The changes made in the study programme as a response to the students' opinion during the years 2018-2021 demonstrate the good performance of the quality assurance system, in general, and in particular the effectiveness of the Study Programme Committee to detect and solve the problems.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The Study Programme Committee is active and efficient.

(2) Weaknesses:

No weaknesses

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

Activities of national expertise: in 2020-2021 lecturers of VU formed the nucleus of the group of experts in charge of the descriptor of Archaeology study field, and one took part in a group of experts in charge of renewing the descriptor of the Heritage Study filed.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	Give more space to foreign languages and include windows of mobility in the plan of studies to encourage and improve mobility. Integrate some courses on the main employment areas in the programme to foster students' employability.
Links between science (art) and studies	Increase the international relationships, especially through the participation to excavations abroad, especially in the Mediterranean area for the classical archaeology, and/or in Africa for prehistorical archaeology.
Student admission and support	Outgoing mobility should be improved, especially, students who have chosen a career in archaeology should participate to excavations abroad and this experience should be fully recognized and integrated inside the curriculum. Because students do not seem very attracted by the task of representative, they could get more incentives for participation. The elected representative should interact more with the other students.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	Collect more specific data on graduate employment to give more detailed information on practical implementation of the students' knowledge and skills.
Teaching staff	The outgoing mobility should be increased to so that internationalization become more effective and more value is added to the research activities. Ensure faster promotion to lecturers, especially the associate-professors.
Learning facilities and resources	Bring together different sections of the different libraries to avoid books being scattered in the corridors, work rooms and private cabinets.
Study quality management and public information	Strengthen the role of alumni and social partners in the promotion of archaeology and cultural heritage issues within schools and society

*If the study field is going to be given negative evaluation (non-accreditation) instead of RECOMMENDATIONS main **arguments for negative evaluation** (non-accreditation) must be provided together with a **list of "must do" actions** in order to assure that students admitted before study field's non-accreditation will gain knowledge and skills at least on minimum level.

VI. SUMMARY

Main positive and negative quality aspects of each evaluation area of the Archaeology study field at Vilnius University:

In introduction, the expert panel wants to thank cordially the Dean of the Faculty of History and the staff of the Department of Archaeology in preparing the SER and organizing the site-visit. The experts have been positively impressed by the professionalism of the different staffs, especially the group in charge of the SER, and the quality of the dialogue between all the participants. No discrepancy has been observed between what is written in the SER and the situation observed during the visit. All the points which were not explicit or were missing in the SER could be checked and clarified during the visit.

First at all, the experts can certify that both – the first cycle study programme and the second cycle study programme fully comply with all legal requirements, and that the teaching-research staff meets also all the legal requirements.

Overall, the appreciation is very positive, especially since most recommendations of the last EER. have been taken in consideration and fully implemented. The faculty fought successfully for an increase in funding for archaeology, and now students and professors enjoy very good conditions when working in the field. The commitment to preventive archaeology, especially with the pipe-line project “Amber grid“, has produced excellent results, especially for students who are recruited as specialized workers and can earn money while working in their own field of study. Sometimes, the expert judgements could give the impression that weaknesses have been identified but it is not really the case, the statements only suggest how to be more efficient ”.

The two curricula (bachelor and master) demonstrate a good balance between history and archaeology, between theory and practice, and give a complete overview of all the disciplines linked to the archaeological field, included archaeometry. A particular attention is paid to the Landscape Archaeology which is a promising discipline in the field. They show also a good example of flexibility with the possibility for students to acquire the pedagogical qualification thanks to a minor study programme in pedagogy. These programmes develop a large range of personal and social competences, very appreciated by both students and employers. Only two points should be improved: mobility and student involvement in the academic life. The faculty of History proposes a lot of possibilities to go abroad, but students' motivation is low and they are reluctant to use these opportunities, more incentive measures should be implemented. During the visit, it could be observed that students are not very interested in participating to the different councils and committees, when they elect their representatives the rate of participation is low, and it seems that the representatives have not many contacts with the other students.

The collaboration with the faculty of medicine is excellent, master students have access to specialized laboratories and can carry out their research work (final thesis) in optimal conditions by benefiting from highly qualified supervisors. By this way rare subjects archaeozoology or archaeobotanical can be taught only in Vilnius university. It also noteworthy that students learn how to study manuscripts and other written sources and can compare them with the archaeological sources.

The high scientific and pedagogical qualification of the teaching staff is to be underlined. The number of publications is considerable both in national and international journals, and all the lecturers take an active part in the dissemination and actualization of their research. Some

of them have carried out activities of national expertise in the field, and, globally, the R&D activities has a very good economic and social impact. The recruiting of young PhD students is a good practice, but on the other hand no associated-professors have been promoted during the last ten years while their scientific activities have not slowed down, the faculty should find a way to guarantee this promotion. The outgoing mobility of the lecturers should be improved to reinforce the international influence of the Department of Archaeology, paying more attention to the Mediterranean or African areas. It is a pity that Vilnius University is not responsible for excavations on a great site located abroad. There is a lot of international relationships but they are not yet exploited at the highest level.

During the visit the expert panel could appreciate the fact that students, alumni, employers were all fully satisfied with the quality of the two study programmes. Students who need to work during their studies are happy to find jobs in private companies that accept to set flexible hours so that they can combine work and studies. Closer relationships could be established with the different national cultural heritage institutions, for instance, inventories of unstudied collections, creation of catalogues, organization and evaluation of exhibitions could be proposed as topics for final thesis and the responsible of the institution should participate to the defence committee.

As far as learning facilities and resources, the only limits are those linked to the oldness of the historical buildings located in the City - some rooms are small and dark, and in this area facilities are not fully functional. It is clear that more space and light would make the work environment more attractive and comfortable. Fortunately, this negative aspect is compensated by many positive elements: big digital resources, modern equipment, specialized libraries. Because of the Covid pandemic great efforts have been made to develop remote teaching, but archaeology is not a subject that, the same for the works in laboratory.

The internal quality assurance system of the studies complies with the Quality Management System Standard ISO 9001:2015. The Standards and guidelines for quality assurance in the European Higher Education Area are taken into consideration at the level of the University - a specific Department with specialists in the field is in charge of this task. The management of surveys, the analyses of feedback, the exploitation of statistical data is done in a scientific way and guarantees the quality of the internal evaluations. The faculty of History should ensure that students are well informed about the related outcomes.

In conclusion, the expert panel is pleased to express his congratulations and best wishes to the Department of Archaeology.

Expert panel leader

Prof. dr. Jean-Luc Lamboley