



CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION

EVALUATION REPORT
STUDY FIELD OF TRANSLATION
AT VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

Expert panel:

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Study Field Data*

Title of the study programme	Translation	Translation
State code	6121NX027	6211NX024
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle (undergraduate)	Second cycle (postgraduate)
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 4-year studies	Full time, 2-year studies
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor degree in humanities	Master degree in humanities
Language of instruction	Lithuanian, English	Lithuanian and the first foreign language
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Undergraduate education
Registration date of the study programme	20/06/2012	02/08/2001

Title of the study programme	Audiovisual Translation	Audiovisual Translation
State code	6121NX026	6211NX025
Type of studies	University studies	University studies
Cycle of studies	First cycle (undergraduate)	Second cycle (postgraduate)
Mode of study and duration (in years)	Full time, 4-year studies	Full time, 2-year studies
Credit volume	240	120
Qualification degree and (or) professional qualification	Bachelor's degree in humanities	Master's degree in humanities.
Language of instruction	English and Lithuanian languages	English and Lithuanian languages
Minimum education required	Secondary education	Undergraduate education
Registration date of the study programme	29/05/2012	18/05/2016

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

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

1.2. EXPERT PANEL

The expert panel was assigned according to the Experts Selection Procedure (hereinafter referred to as the Procedure) as approved by the Director of Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education on 31 December 2019 [Order No. V-149](#). The site visit to the HEI was conducted by the panel on 17th of November, 2021. The visit was organised online using video-conferencing tool (Zoom).

Prof. dr. Andrew Goodspeed, *professor at South East European University (Macedonia)*;
Associate Professor dr. Simo Määttä, *associate professor at the University of Helsinki (Finland)*;
Lecturer Dr. Callum Walker, *lecturer at University of Leeds (United Kingdom)*;
Lecturer Andrejus Račkovskis, *lecturer at Vilnius Business College - University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania)*;
Jurgita Mikutytyė, *Assistant to the Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania in Germany (Lithuania)*;
Ms Renata Rachmanovaitė, *doctoral student of the Joint Doctoral Program in History at Klaipėda University and Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania)*.

1.3. GENERAL INFORMATION

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

No.	Name of the document
1.	
...	

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

Note: This report considers four different programmes: two undergraduate and two Master programmes. Comments or recommendations specific to an individual programme are clearly indicated; those comments or observations that are not thus specifically delimited are, in the opinion of the expert team, applicable to all.

Vilnius University (commonly referred to in this report as VU) is the oldest university in Lithuania, tracing its founding to 1579. It currently instructs approximately 25,000 students, taught by approximately 3,000 academic staff members (<https://www.vu.lt/en/about-vu/facts-and-figures>) (accessed 11.12.2021). The University is managed by a University Council, the University Senate, and the University Rector (VU Statute, Article 26). Vilnius University has eleven faculties, and it institutionally defines its University mission as being 'the University's irrefutable obligation and inalienable right to enhance cognitive and creative powers of both Lithuania and the world; to nurture academic and other spiritual and social values; and to educate active, responsible citizens and society leaders of the State of Lithuania' (VU Statute, Article 4).

The study programmes evaluated in this report are in the field of Translation Studies. At Vilnius University, this field of study manifests itself in four programmes. Two are provided by the Faculty of Philology in Vilnius– 'Translation' (1st cycle): a four-year, 240 ECTS credit programme leading to the degree 'Bachelor in Humanities,' and 'Translation' (2nd cycle): a two-year, 120 ECTS credit programme leading to the degree 'Master in Humanities.' The other two programmes are provided in Kaunas by the Kaunas Faculty–'Audiovisual Translation' (1st cycle): a four-year, 240 ECTS credit programme leading to the degree 'Bachelor in Humanities,' and 'Audiovisual Translation' (2nd cycle): a two-year, 120 ECTS credit programme leading to the degree 'Master in Humanities.' As will be seen in this report—which covers the four study programmes as a whole—individual comments may reflect the strengths or weaknesses of individual study programmes.

The goals of these study programmes are to produce translators (either regularly employed or freelance) with high skills in, primarily, the English and Lithuanian languages. These two languages are emphasised because of the international omnipresence of English, and the reality that the Lithuanian language has a small linguistic presence outside of Lithuania, necessitating capable translators between the languages. The graduates should thus be able to enter the labour market either as translators or as professionals in other fields where competent multilingualism is beneficial (international corporations, hospitality, etc.). The

Audiovisual Translation programme focuses particularly upon the expanding areas of subtitling, multimedia translation, and information technologies relating to fields such as television, cinema, information technologies, gaming, and other associated applications.

The 1st and 2nd cycle studies are clearly related, yet each is designed to be a self-contained, discrete academic programme. The 1st cycle programmes are (as a generalization) intended to introduce students to the necessary skills and theories required for employment in their respective specialties, whilst the 2nd cycle programmes promote deeper investigation of the subjects and an increased research autonomy. As individual programmes they all appear to maintain relatively stable and sustainable enrolment (signing of study contracts), with the possible exception of the Audiovisual Translation MA (SER, p. 42).

These four study programmes, delivered across two campuses, indicate a significant institutional commitment to the training and education of translators, whatever their chosen area of specialisation may be. This appears to be rooted in the irresistible internationalisation of modern culture, politics, and economics, as well as upon the need for smaller linguistic groups to establish a voice in an Anglophone world. Finally, it may be observed, the provision of translation between Lithuanian and English is consistent with the University's mission to serve 'both Lithuania and the world.'

II. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Translation study field and **first cycle** at **Vilnius University** 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	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	23

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

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field is being developed systematically, has distinctive features;

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

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

Translation study field and **second cycle** at **Vilnius University** 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	3
2.	Links between science (art) and studies	3
3.	Student admission and support	3
4.	Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	3
5.	Teaching staff	4
6.	Learning facilities and resources	4
7.	Study quality management and public information	3
	Total:	23

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

2 (satisfactory) - meets the established minimum requirements, needs improvement;

3 (good) - the field is being developed systematically, has distinctive features;

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

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

III. STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

3.1. INTENDED AND ACHIEVED LEARNING OUTCOMES AND CURRICULUM

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

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

(1) Factual situation

The translation study programmes offered by Vilnius University are divided into two main areas of specialisation, distinguished by campus of study and academic focus. The 'Translation' BA and MA programmes—offered in Vilnius – aim to produce skilled generalist translators (with strong Lithuanian and English, as well as a second foreign language); the 'audiovisual' BA and M.A programmes—offered in Kaunas – aim to produce specialists with competence in audiovisual technologies, such as providing subtitling for films, live entertainment, gaming, etc. The programmes are thus intended to meet the particular linguistic needs of Lithuanian society and the Lithuanian labour market, with a strong emphasis on Lithuanian and English language ability.

The main distinctions between the BA and MA SPs are, as would be expected, intensity and depth. The BA SPs emphasise the accumulation of theoretical and practical knowledge at an introductory level, but demonstrate the necessary building of skill upon skill, and the increasing complexity of study matter. The MA SPs are structured more to build high-level skill in specialist fields, and to promote a deepening of student research autonomy. In general terms, the curricula are thoughtfully designed, and carefully structured, to achieve the intended profile of a successful SP graduate. The SPs offer a good balance of theoretical and practical coursework, and conclude with student opportunities to test their skills in real-world praxis. The expert team believes that all four SPs are therefore comparable with analogous programmes in other European or North American institutions. This would appear to be supported also by the team's discussions with employers and alumni, as well as the encouraging employability data provided in the Self Evaluation Report (SER, p.59). The SPs also appear to meet the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework at level 6, as also affirmed in the SER (SER, p.13). The team noted no formal idiosyncrasies or errors in the calculations relating to the SPs (i.e., contact hours, ECTS credits awarded, etc.).

As will be discussed later in this report, the teaching staff is composed of highly qualified individuals, who maintain relevant research profiles, and who repeatedly expressed their commitments to the field, to their students, and to their SPs. It should also be noted with approval that—apparently based largely on personal contacts of the teaching staff—a large number of foreign guest lecturers from (primarily) European partner universities have also been engaged to provide their insights and expertise. These guest lectures are of particular value in SPs as necessarily linguistic and international as 'translation' and 'audiovisual translation.'

The expert team noted with approval that Lithuanian language study is not neglected in these SPs (although the Lithuanian emphasis is, quite naturally, more heavily emphasised in the first cycle SPs than in the second cycle SPs). Given the inherent difficulty of the Lithuanian language, and the small linguistic profile of Lithuanian in external linguistic circles (i.e., few programmes in universities outside of Lithuania, a relatively small diaspora, etc.), the team felt that it is imperative for Lithuanian students not only to master the practises of translation and audiovisual translation, but also quite simply to possess excellent Lithuanian language skills as well. It is the team's opinion that this important element is appropriately addressed in the curricula of these SPs.

The team found no indication of how much—if any—collaboration is undertaken between SPs. Although the SPs are designed to be distinctive academic offerings unto themselves, the team feels that perhaps making some provision for offering popular courses to students of the 'other' SP would increase student satisfaction and promote personalization of the students' academic careers.

Based upon the structure of the SPs, the balance between theoretical and practical knowledge, the presence in the curricula of real-world 'internships,' the final theses required (demonstrating research and compositional capacity), and the linguistic skills built, the team assesses that these SPs do meet the needs of society and of the labour market for translators, and for specialists in audiovisual translation. The admission procedure is described on VU website in both Lithuanian and English. It is easy to find all the information.

The admission of Lithuanian citizens for the first-cycle study programmes is centralised and takes place during the national admission period. The process is conducted by LAMA BPO (Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institution).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

These four study programmes appear admirably designed to meet the intellectual and vocational needs of students, in two cycles, who are interested in translation, or in professions requiring linguistic skills and translating ability. They are well structured to begin with relatively introductory matters, and then develop greater complexity.

As Lithuanian has a relatively small position among global languages—by speaker population, whether native or diaspora—the need for linguistically capable employees with strong Lithuanian and English seems assured for the foreseeable future. The Audiovisual Translation study programmes particularly strike the team as being market-oriented and regionally distinctive programmes.

The team assesses that the aims and outcomes of the field and cycle study programmes to the needs of the society and/or the labour market is adequate.

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

Vilnius University's mission states, among other goals and intentions, the institution's commitment to promoting intellectual excellence in Lithuania and abroad; to 'nurture academic and other spiritual and social values'; and to educate engaged citizens for Lithuania (VU Statute, Section 1, Article 4). The SPs for the field 'translation studies,' inclusive of both the 'translation' BA and MA SPs and the 'audiovisual translation' BA and MA SPs, are

congruent with this mission. Translation is, by its very nature, an activity requiring strong linguistic skills, social and cultural adaptability, and a cognizance of different cultures and traditions. These SPs are thus well structured to produce graduates who will contribute significantly to the international position of Lithuanian art, commerce, and research, whilst also helping Lithuanians to better understand their international friends and partners.

Although the COVID pandemic has hampered international academic mobility, it is to be commended that there has been a strong programme-level commitment to hosting international guest lecturers. The team urges the SP managers to maintain this commitment, even if pandemic conditions require guest lecturers to appear online. Should COVID conditions later permit, the team strongly encourages VU to promote mobility opportunities among the staff and, particularly, among the students. The team acknowledges that other factors may limit participation in mobility (i.e. the expense of living abroad, and the inability—particularly for M.A. students—of leaving family or employment responsibilities for extended periods), yet students of translation studies are exceptionally well positioned by their linguistic skills and cultural knowledge to benefit from international mobility opportunities.

In compliance with the university's mission to promote specifically Lithuanian scholarship, the team wishes to note with approval that some of the theses submitted for our consideration were in Lithuanian. Although the international prominence of English as a language of scholarship must inevitably encourage some students to write in English, it is encouraging for the development of Lithuanian science to observe that students at the BA and MA level choose to submit their final theses in Lithuanian.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As noted above, the need for translators with strong English and Lithuanian language skills is important for the economic and cultural development of Lithuania, and indeed for the promotion of Lithuanian culture abroad. These programmes address that need directly, and such cultural and linguistic competences are consistent with the aims and mission of VU.

The team assesses that the conformity of the field and cycle study programme aim and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

The structure, intended student progression, balance of theoretical and practical classes, and elements of student personalization in these SPs are consistent with, and in compliance with, the Lithuanian requirements as the team understands them.

As noted previously, the team believes that these SPs are consistent in structure, delivery, and outcomes with analogous programmes in external (outside of Lithuania) higher education institutions. The team has not noted any basic methodological errors in calculating ECTS credits, allocation of home study requirements, etc.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The team assesses that the SPs meet the necessary legal requirements as we understand them.

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 teaching methods and learning opportunities for these SPs seem consistently well aligned. In general terms, there is a logical consistency between the subjects being studied and the methodologies by which this material is being delivered. This is evidence of collegial cooperation, as students appear to apply skills obtained in one course in other courses on the same SP.

The team is somewhat concerned that the BA in translation seems somewhat unnaturally to neglect the associated activity of interpretation. In conversation with both students and alumni the idea emerged to integrate more interpreting activities into courses earlier in the curriculum, perhaps as classroom activities in classes not strictly related to interpreting.

Allied to this concern is again a small but addressable concern of the team: it was unclear to the team how much opportunity students in any of these SPs have the opportunity to work with native-speakers of other languages, particularly English. Given the heavy emphases of these SPs on strong English ability, it would be desirable to increase—even if only online—student exposure to native speakers of English. Brexit has complicated this recommendation, yet available EU native speakers of English may still be located in institutions in the Republic of Ireland and in Malta.

The team could not determine how much formal translation is undertaken between second foreign languages and Lithuanian. It may be a misapprehension on the team's part, but the team was unable to estimate how much translation is done from (say) Spanish to Lithuanian.

These, however, are minor considerations in light of the broad coherence of the SPs in terms of their structures, delivery, and intended learning outcomes. The team assesses these SPs as being strong programmes with clear designs and comprehensible increases in the complexity of skills required.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

On the whole, there is widespread consonance between the learning outcomes, teaching/learning methods, and the study programme aims. As noted, the programmes seem to focus less on interpretation than might be expected—the students commented upon this—but the general coherence of teaching, assessment, and learning outcomes seems solid.

The team assesses that the compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field and cycle study programmes is adequate.

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 core courses of these SPs are rationally chosen and, as has been noted previously, are consistent with comparable programmes abroad at their respective degree levels. They seem well selected to build both theoretical skills and practical knowledge, and particularly to

position a successful graduate as an employable translator or audiovisual translation specialist. The curricula are admirably broad in scope, particularly as numerous collocutors during the team's discussions noted that the Lithuanian translation market is too small for one to maintain a narrow specialisation (with the possible exceptions of legal or medical translation).

As noted above, the team believes that it might be beneficial to address several possible areas of improvement, among which would be: making more courses from the 'other' SP available to the students; an earlier inclusion of elements of interpretation, even if only as activities in classes not specifically devoted to interpretation; the engagement (as guest lecturers, or perhaps in-person guests for modular instruction) of native speakers of English; and the increase of clear, formal translation assignments from second foreign languages into Lithuanian.

One final suggestion may perhaps be advanced here. It was commonly mentioned to the team that—as in many countries—Lithuanian translation is often freelance work. The team could not establish whether or not any formal business instruction is provided to students to enable them to navigate some of the anticipatable business requirements of freelance work (e.g. invoicing). This practical preparation may also be augmented by selecting more diverse texts for translation exercises; it is the team's impression that many texts selected for translation are downloaded news articles and are presented as linguistic exercises, but do not incorporate the banal-yet remunerative-translation of things such as certificates, marriage licences, birth certificates, and other personal documents that clients routinely need to have translated.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

On the whole, the team is satisfied that these are strong SPs that, as with all study programmes, may simply benefit from minor modifications in material selection and method of delivery. The general situation appears to be one of well-designed and outcome-orientated curricula delivered effectively.

The team assesses that the totality of the field and cycle study programme subjects/modules, which ensures the consistent development of competences of students is adequate.

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

It is perhaps worthy of observation that the students' first act of personalization lies in the very selection of which SP the individual student may wish to follow. Although for reasons of concision this report commonly refers to the SPs collectively, they are decidedly different programmes, with different aims and intentions. It should not go unnoticed that offering these different SPs allows an individual student to personalise, in a sense, her or his programme from the moment of enrolment.

Throughout the curricula there are repeated opportunities for course selection (elective offerings). Yet what is perhaps the most individual element of these SPs lies in the student's choice of a second foreign language, which enables the student either to deepen, or maybe begin, additional language study and thus to begin to conceive of a later professional profile.

Final thesis selection also appears to fulfil the requirement for student personalization. Although the team understands that—quite rightly—there is academic oversight in the selection of thesis topics, the team was impressed by the diversity and variety of subjects addressed, at least in the theses selected for submission to the team as supporting material.

One observation may be advanced here: the team could not determine whether or not any of the SPs are sufficiently adaptable to non-Lithuanian students, or for students (perhaps from a minority group) who do not possess excellent Lithuanian skills. This may be prohibitively difficult given the necessity of strong Lithuanian language skills for the study programmes. The team fully understands that the intended recruitment pool for students is overwhelmingly Lithuanian; the team merely notes here that this factor may suppress both incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

As has been observed, there are opportunities for personalization in these study programmes. Students have the opportunity to choose a second foreign language, which is perhaps the most consequential individual curricular decision the student takes; and the choice of thesis topic is also an element of personalization.

The team assesses that opportunities for students to personalise the structure of field study programmes according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes is adequate.

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

(1) Factual situation

As previously noted in this report, the preparation and assessment of final theses seems to be a strong point for these SPs. The topics addressed cover broad areas of translation, including literary scholarship, technical applications of audiovisual technology, and more practical questions of appropriateness and equivalence.

It should again be noted here that the acceptability of theses written in English or Lithuanian is to be commended. The inclination in modern scholarship often privileges publication in the English language, but one of the strengths of these SPs is that they permit scholarly work in the Lithuanian language as well.

The process of thesis topic proposal, research and composition, and subsequent submission is regulated by the relevant VU policies and procedures, notably the Regulations for the Preparation, Defense and Storage of Research Papers of Students Studying at Vilnius University (SER, p 22). This centralised regulation does not appear to infringe upon the examining autonomy of the SP deliverers, from whom the thesis supervisors are drawn. The commission for defence also laudably includes external experts (employed by other bodies or institutions) or social partners with relevant experience. This helps to create a direct link—particularly for the MA theses—between the academic world and more commercial practitioners. As noted in the SER, ‘The defence is public and can be attended by other students, teaching staff and guests’ (SER, p. 24).

The thesis requirement therefore seems to offer students an opportunity for an in-depth research exploration of a topic of their choosing, and to demonstrate and improve their

research capability. It seems consistent in rigour and scope with similar thesis requirements at other European and North American universities.

The only uncertainty the team still has relates to students who, for various reasons, submit theses of inadequate length or breadth, or whose work is 'too short' or 'incomplete' (SER, p. 24). It would be useful to know what additional assistance may be available to students who find themselves in this unenviable position, and if such a circumstance has any implications for that student's supervisor.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The team assesses that compliance of final theses with the field and cycle requirements is adequate.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The SPs are rationally ordered, increasing in complexity and skills required, and are thus comparable with analogous programmes in Europe and North America.
2. There is a strong element of professional skills building, both in terms of in-class exercises and in contact with social partners/translation practitioners.
3. The team recognizes and commends the inclusion of Lithuanian-language courses, and the possibility of submitting one's thesis in Lithuanian.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Although COVID has interrupted mobility opportunities for the immediate future, it would be desirable to increase student participation in mobility opportunities, insofar as is possible.
2. Increasing student exposure to native speakers-particularly of English-is desirable.
3. It is a concern of the team that practical business skills are not clearly present in the curricula. These could perhaps be built in to other courses, but they would be useful for people who will commonly be working as freelancers.

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

In the period from 2017 to 2019, the combined production of scholarly publications by the two faculties include 93 articles (ranging from peer-reviewed articles to popularised science and book reviews) and 20 books (including scientific monographs, textbooks, and anthologies). Based on the sample titles provided in Annex 5, these texts deal with several topics of translation studies, such as audiovisual translation, the translation of discourse markers, and interpreter training. Many are more related to linguistics, applied linguistics, philology, or literary studies rather than translation studies per se, which is consistent with the strong focus on language learning and country studies especially during the first years of

the BA programmes. In addition, the Vilnius faculty produced seven translations – regrettably, this important work is not always adequately acknowledged in the assessments of scholarly production. The Vilnius University is also the home of the peer-reviewed journal *Vertimo studijos* focusing specifically on translation studies. The journal accepts articles in Lithuanian, English, German, French, and Russian.

Research activities are encouraged by a system of awards given to researchers who have produced high-level publications, and several staff members in both faculties have been entitled to these awards in recent years. The guidelines are precise, and the goal is clearly to achieve excellence.

The active participation in research projects is demonstrated by various projects. Among the Kaunas faculty, Professor Huber leads a WP within a COST action scheme on media accessibility and is a member of the project board. She also led a Erasmus + KA2 Capacity Building project on the *Development of modernized curricula on migrant lives*. Professor Juzelėnienė coordinated a previous COST action focusing on *Text link structuring discourse in multilingual Europe*. The Kaunas staff also coordinate nine projects funded by national bodies. Two of these are related to accessibility of information, whereas the rest deal with varied topics, such as multilingualism and onomastics. The Vilnius faculty is involved in five international projects. A large multinational project coordinated by Professor Maskaliūnienė was finalised in 2018. This project was dedicated to the development of online resources for conference interpreter training and funded by the EU Commission's Translation DG. The three projects funded by national bodies include *Translation and censorship under Soviet ideology* and a project on machine translation and post-editing. Both are coordinated by Professor Maskaliūnienė. The international projects have enabled the creation of extensive networks with several European partner universities and generated joint publications with foreign colleagues.

In addition to participating in international projects and coordinating them, the staff of both programmes have organised several national and international conferences in the field of translation studies in cooperation with the Lithuanian language unit of the EU Commission's DG for Translation and other partners in the public and private sectors. The lecture and discussion series involving some of the most prominent scholars in translation studies have had a major impact in increasing the visibility of the programmes and promoting their international dimension. Several staff members are also members of important scholarly societies in the field of translation studies.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Since the last evaluation, the international profile of the translation studies programmes has been strengthened considerably through various cooperation schemes and projects in several fields relevant to translation studies. The conferences organised in cooperation with domestic and international partners and the lecture series given by renowned foreign scholars have been an important factor in this development. Many staff members publish actively in their field of research, and some of them do important translation work.

To exploit the full potential of their expertise, the staff should be given resources to seek publication opportunities in prestigious journals and collected volumes published by renowned publishing houses – especially in topics related to translation studies. In addition, the translation studies dimension of the publications – especially those written in languages other than Lithuanian – could be strengthened.

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

(1) Factual situation

Most instructors teach courses related to their fields of specialisation in terms of research, which guarantees solid connections between research and teaching. These links are also reflected by the BA and MA theses, whose topics include terminology, translation risk management, audiovisual translation, post-editing of machine translation, translation of EU documents, translation of standards, and the regulation of translation and interpreting activities in Lithuania. Consistent with an important research focus among the staff, various aspects of literary translation constitute a particularly important theme of final theses.

The contents of the courses are regularly updated to correspond to the latest developments in teaching and learning methods and the evolution of the different modalities of translation and the working life. Proficiency in the second language and cultural knowledge are strongly foregrounded in the programmes, although superior skills in the native language are equally emphasised. In addition to linguistic and translation skills, the students acquire skills related to critical and creative thinking, research methodologies and other analytical tasks, technology, and team and group work. These skills are integrated in the courses in multiple ways, including critical reading, analysis, and discussion of texts, definition of concepts, and summarisation and synthetisation of contents.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The links between course contents and the latest developments in translation studies and practice are solid. In the self-evaluation report, critical reading and thinking skills are strongly linked with literary analysis. It could be beneficial to reflect on the potential of integrating these skills into other courses as well, including the translation of specialised texts, where the connections between the instructors' scholarly interests and contents of the course are not always as evident as in literary translation – where the programme exhibits excellence. In addition, since these skills can constitute a major asset on the labour market, students could be made more acutely aware of the fact that they possess them through collective reflection in which these and other soft skills are analysed and unmasked.

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 students can participate in the research projects in which the staff are involved by collecting data and annotated bibliographies and by translating website text. Often, participation in projects is related to the students' BA or MA thesis work, and some research projects include a specific component of integrating students into the project. Some students also participate in international conferences, and many present their research in the annual student conference. Selected presentations are later published individually or jointly with the staff. For example, the journal *Vertimo studijos* provides an outlet for papers produced by the students. Conferences, public lectures, and research seminars organised on campus are integrated into the courses, so that course assignments and activities are linked to the conferences the students have attended. The European Master's in Translation (EMT) network offers a particularly wide variety of opportunities for student participation.

Importantly, the students actively publish the translations they have produced. Cooperation with social partners in the field of specialised translation in the public and cultural sector is particularly salient in the audiovisual translation programmes, and some of the results of this cooperation have a very wide visibility nationwide.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Student involvement in research activities and the application of science is very strong.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Strong quantitative evidence of solid publication activities.
2. Active participation in both national and international research projects.
3. Increased international visibility of the research profile.
4. Multiple possibilities for students to participate in research activities.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. The focus of the publication efforts could be shifted slightly toward more prestigious and well-known international journals and publishing houses.
2. The network of social partners could be exploited more in research activities, for example through studies of translation processes and the working life.
3. The final theses of the students could have more visible links to the skills they need in the working life. In this area, cooperation with the social partners could be strengthened in some of the programmes.

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 procedure is described on the VU website in both Lithuanian and English. It is easy to find all the information. The admission of Lithuanian citizens for the first-cycle study programmes is centralised and takes place during the national admission period. The process is conducted by LAMA BPO (Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institution).

The applicants in BA studies need at least 12 years of secondary education and those who apply for a state-funded position must pass the following exams: Lithuanian Language and Literature exam, History or Geography or Mathematics or Information Technology exam, any other subject that does not coincide with the other subjects, foreign language. (SER, p.40) Successful applicants to state-funded places must have an entrance score of at least 5.4 points (SER, p. 40).

The admission to the second-cycle studies is conducted in accordance with VU Admissions procedures. Rather unexpectedly, application is open to any person with a Bachelor's degree in any field; any holder of any Bachelor's degree may apply to the second-cycle (Master's) SPs of the field of translation. Although the team saw no evidence of unprepared or under-

prepared Master's students, it may be prudent in future to prioritise admission to those with Bachelor's degrees in humanities, ideally with a philological element.

Applications for the first-cycle AVT BA study programme, as for the TBA, did not display notable variation during the period under review. 'First Priority' applicants numbered 36 in 2017, 33 in 2018, and 27 in 2019 (SER, p. 42). The same period shows a decline in the number of student contracts signed for the TMA SP (22 in 2017, 12 in 2018, and 13 in 2019). The AVT MA appears only to have accepted students once in this period, when 8 student contracts were signed in 2018 (SER, p. 42). The team accepts that this relates less to the programme's merits than to the lack of availability of 'state-funded' positions; but the KNF would do well to contemplate how to make the AVT MA more accessible to those who may not receive 'state-funded' positions.

The Bachelor's programmes exhibit general stability. The TBA saw total contracts of 32 (2017), 25 (2018), 30 (2019); AVT BA saw total contracts of 28 (2017), 24 (2018), and 23 (2019) (SER, p. 42). The Master's programmes show less stability in the same period. The AVT MA signed 0 total contracts in 2017, 8 in 2018, and 0 in 2019. In the same years, the TMA signed total contracts of 24 (2017), 12 (2018), and 14 (2019) (SER, p. 42).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The website of VU is very informative and accessible. The admission procedures are transparent and well-grounded. The numbers of students in AVT BA and in TBA studies are quite stable. For several years now the number of students entering the Master's programme is decreasing. More efforts could be taken to market the AVT MA and TMA programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER states on page 44 that VU has procedures 'for the recognition of education and qualifications related to higher education gain in foreign countries and international organisations.' Qualifications obtained abroad are assessed individually, and decisions taken on a case-by-case basis.

VU welcomes applicants who have pursued some of their studies at other domestic-or international-institutions, and makes decisions on recognizing credits thus obtained according to the relevant procedures approved by the VU Senate. The credits recognizable, however, may not total more than 75 percent of credits accrued throughout the first- or second-cycle study programme (SER, p. 45). Informal or non-traditional credits recognized may not account for more than 50 percent of the credits accrued in the programme.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The procedure for recognition is clearly formulated and overseen by VU policies and Senate approved procedures. These processes would appear to work, although as noted in the SER (p. 45), 'During the period under evaluation, the students of the field SPs did not apply for the recognition of qualifications acquired abroad or competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning.'

More attention to the procedures for recognition of non-formal and (or) informal learning should be clarified and better described and more needs to be given to making the recognition of qualifications more accessible and transparent to the potential students.

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

(1) Factual situation

Mobility is one of the central pillars of modern European higher education. For VU, these efforts are coordinated by (among other bodies) the Careers Department and Student Services. Information on mobility opportunities is made public on the University's and CAU's websites, in newsletters sent to the University community, and in information meetings with students, including social networks.

For the SPs considered in this report, 226 Erasmus contracts have been signed with field-appropriate programmes elsewhere in Europe. (SER, p.46) VU also has 38 agreements under the COIMBRA network. As reported in the SER (p. 46), 'the University has also signed bilateral student exchange agreements with 72 universities from 19 non-EU countries in Europe and third countries, and participates in university network exchanges with universities in Canada, Australia, and Brazil'; it is unclear to the team how common mobility to (say) Australia or Brazil may be in practice.

VU also offers international opportunities to the students of these SPs through its participation in the EMT and the ARQUS networks.

Mobility participation for these study programmes is solid, but might productively be increased, given the indisputable benefits of academic mobility. The SER has precise data: 'During the period under evaluation, 33 students in the field SPs, i.e. 12 students in AVT BA, 18 students in TBA SP, 1 in AVT MA and 2 students in TMA SP used the opportunity to go for partial studies under the Erasmus + exchange programme' (SER, p. 48); and 'During the period under evaluation, 12 TBA students and 5 TMA students chose to go on Erasmus internships abroad, whereas 3 TBA students and 6 TMA students went on graduate internships' (SER, p. 48).

These data tell multiple stories. The first is that, when possible, students of these SPs are interested and willing to participate in such mobility programmes. The second is that such mobility programmes may not always be possible. The team fully recognises the difficulties that Lithuanian-language components of the SPs place upon a student trying to conclude a learning agreement with a university abroad that may simply have no corresponding subject or courses. Similarly, on the Second Cycle study programmes, many students will be likely to have full-time employment; responsibilities to children, spouses, or elderly relatives; or other obligations that cannot be postponed while on mobility. Human life does not always accord with the academic calendar.

It is therefore suggested—not as SP weaknesses, but SP opportunities—to attempt to help more students in both cycles to participate, when possible, in appropriate mobility opportunities.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The academic mobility of students did not reach the 10% share. Although there are explanations that Lithuanian students are not willing to go abroad because of work

commitments or career opportunities, obstacles to international mobility such as living expenses abroad should, if it is possible, be addressed.

Also the numbers of incoming students from abroad to study in the Philology department in Vilnius should be increased.

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

(1) Factual situation

The SER reports the broad-spectrum institutional commitment to the provision of student assistance and counselling: 'All students can get the support offered by the University: academic information and counselling, career services, information technology, library and information services, financial support, accommodation services, cultural and leisure services, student activities, psychological support, spiritual and religious services, and support and services for students with special needs' (SER, p 50). This demonstrates a strong degree of academic and pastoral support.

One of the more compelling initiatives for student support is the Vilnius University mentorship programme. Mentors may come from across the academic community, including students, lecturers, and alumni. This initiative is valuable: a mentor may help a student who is too shy, or is otherwise reluctant, to seek help or information individually.

Scholarship support is largely merit-based and performance-measured. As reported in the SER (p. 51), 'During the period under evaluation [...] BA students in the field of translation studies received 101 incentive scholarships, of which 29 students received them for more than one semester.' MA students received 16 scholarships. Additionally, there were 7 BA students and 1 MA student who received scholarships for 'social vulnerability,' and '2 students (1 BA and 1 MA) received one-time social support scholarships' (SER, p. 51).

Students have access to Vilnius dormitories in which they may apply to reside during their studies, prioritised towards those who live 50 or more kilometres from Vilnius. No such dormitories are available for Kaunas students.

Psychological and crisis support is available through the VU Counselling and Training Centre, where students may receive assistance and counselling for a wide variety of personal, familial, relational, or psychological uncertainties. Although the counselling service is a paid one, a student is entitled to up to 3 free counselling sessions in a moment of crisis, and may additionally receive 4-6 consultations at a 75% discounted rate.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

VU does an effective job of providing personal, academic, psychological, social, and religious support for the students. Extracurricular support includes sporting and fitness opportunities, and enthusiast associations. All the information about the support is listed in the VU webpage in a very informative way.

It is unfortunate that financial support remains lacking. While the team fully understands that budgets are limited and monetary requests are always numerous, the team also shares the concern expressed in the SER: 'most students do not have the financial resources and do not

receive sufficient financial support to study, thus they have to work, which makes it difficult to reconcile full-time study and work' (SER, p. 58).

Students from both cycles expressed a feeling of support from the teaching staff and administrators related to these study programmes.

3.3.5 Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counselling

(1) Factual situation

The University provided clear information for the students on all aspects of extracurricular activities and on counselling services. Information can be found in the VU website, and all the students are introduced to these in their first integration week. General information about the study process is provided centrally at the Student Services and Career Centre, which may be augmented or supplemented by advice or assistance from the Student Representative Office. As would be expected, however, most study-programme specific information or advice comes from the directly-engaged academic or administrative staff members.

Details on the study process are available via VUSIS, an online system by which students may find a wide variety of information and documents related to their programme.

There is a wide variety of media by which students may seek information and assistance. According to VU's data, student inquiries break down thus: 51% are central inquiries; 26% are by phone; 14% are through the website; 5% are via social media; 4% derive from meetings; and 1% arise via discussion forums (SER, p. 53: there may be some slight statistical variability in these numbers, as they total 101%)

Students are informed about career possibilities during the lectures, meeting with alumni and potential employees, in some lectures teachers invite representatives from potential employers, as they inform students about their possibilities for volunteer or internships.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The University together with the Faculty of Philology and the student association provide an adequate level of information for students. The VU website is very informative and easily accessible. During the meeting, students confirmed that they can reach the teachers and administration easily if they need any help.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Informative, clear and accessible web page for both current and prospective students.
2. Transparent and clear admission procedures for first and second cycles.
3. The support for students' are well served, as are those of students with disabilities for both first and second cycle students.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Small scholarships for the recipients.
2. Limited opportunities to combine work and study. Flexibility could be enhanced for students combining paid employment and study.

3.4. TEACHING AND LEARNING, STUDENT PERFORMANCE AND GRADUATE EMPLOYMENT

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

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

(1) Factual situation

In both the design and management of its programmes, VU has set up mechanisms to discuss and review learning outcomes integrating student feedback and recommendations from stakeholders such as the EMT Board, Lithuanian translation agencies, the Institute of the Lithuanian Language and other scholarly institutions (SER, pp. 10-11). Course descriptions offer clear outlines of specified learning outcomes, together with the forms of assessment to measure student achievements against the identified learning outcomes (SER Appendices 2 and 3). In the case of the second-cycle (MA) programmes, the learning outcomes are very clearly mapped on to the EMT Competence Framework (SER Appendix 1).

This integration of different insights and perspectives is translated into the classroom in diverse forms of pedagogy and settings, with appropriate mixes of lectures, small-group seminars (~16 students), independent work and, more generally, problem-based teaching centred around case studies and group discussions. Technology is used to good effect in teaching settings, with students working with various pieces of word processing and translation software to support learning. The programmes also emphasise strongly the self-study element, encouraging students to prepare work in their own time and offer a forum in classes for feedback, including evaluation of the work and appropriate advice from teaching staff. The SER also highlights (p. 55) the foregrounding of students' responsibility for their own learning, in collaboration with teaching staff and fellow students, marking a clear shift away from 'traditional' lecturer-student hierarchies. This ethos is supported through extra-curricular provision (for students and staff alike) in the form of academic and vocational counselling, career guidance, sharing of good practices, teaching visits, training, and student exchanges.

With the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, VU shifted to an online provision and, in spite of the relaxation of many pandemic-related restrictions, has evidenced the successes of online teaching and learning, including the ability to satisfy differing student needs through the provision of remote access to key software, enhanced use of the VLE, systematic uptake of video conferencing software such as Microsoft Teams, and greater use of asynchronous learning tools (e.g. forums) to support student learning.

Student feedback forms an important part of programme design, with student representatives sitting on committees deciding on programme changes. There was also recognition from the programme management that some changes to communications with students need to be made to improve consistency in the way in which these committees work. In particular, the site visit meeting with programme managers highlighted the need for more representatives from translation programmes (i.e. diversity in language pairs, different types of translation). On the whole, feedback mechanisms seem to exist, and appear to have a mixed impact on course design and improvements. While social partners highlighted their consultation on course design and subsequent changes to elements of the programme, the site visit meeting

with students revealed concerns relating to the balance of philology content to translation practice, specific modules in need of redesign, the relevance of certain modules, the proportion of interpreting teaching in the first-cycle translation programme, the text types studied in translation, and the directionality of language-specific translation classes. While it is of course impossible to address all student concerns, it was apparent from the meeting with students that some of these matters have been repeatedly raised and appropriate rationales or, better, module/programme amendments have not been forthcoming.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Both the SER and site visit provide evidence of a strong commitment, on the part of VU, to appropriate mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the teaching and learning process and adapt to student needs with a view to enhancing achievement of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are clear and relevant to the study field and future employability, different pedagogical approaches and settings are used to good effect, and staff are promoting a sense of responsibility among students for their own success. There are also signs that the teaching staff and programme management have appreciated some of the benefits of responses to the coronavirus pandemic, in the form of greater use of digital learning tools, and it is recommended that such practises are continued and implemented consistently across teaching staff to promote accessibility of studies and to continue to innovate approaches to teaching.

Feedback from various stakeholders is collected in various ways and there is already some recognition of the need to improve certain elements of these feedback systems. While there is evidence of comments being taken into account from certain stakeholders (i.e. employers and social partners), it is clear that student concerns are not always fully addressed or, at the very least, feedback mechanisms are not functioning as intended. Needless to say, not all student suggestions need to be implemented, but the rationale as to why such changes are not possible or are not recommended in terms of the programmes' intended learning outcomes needs to be communicated more clearly, alongside implementation of other changes to the programmes which are more feasible and expedient to implement.

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

(1) Factual situation

VU exhibited, both in the SER and during site visit, a strong commitment to supporting socially vulnerable students and students with special needs. This is evidenced by a new five-year university-wide strategy promoting diversity and equality, policies on adapting studies to individual student needs, and on-going improvements to university facilities and equipment, with appropriate support from qualified professionals and dedicated disability coordinators. Financial support is available according to specific students' needs and bespoke study plans are prepared to identify adaptations to teaching, learning and assessment methods across the programme. This level of support also extends to assessment, with various measures adopted to support different types of disabilities (e.g. increased time for assessments, larger font sizes, etc.). Staff from the AVT BA SP are also very well placed to support student accessibility on account of the *MoBiLait* project (SER p. 56). Mechanisms are in place to support students who need to suspend their studies for any reason. It is very

encouraging to see financial support on offer to students from disadvantaged families, highly talented applicants from Belarus, and any Belarusian students facing persecution.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

It is clear from the SER and the site visit that VU has made significant strides over the review period, and looking ahead into the future too, to consider the unique needs of a diverse range of students from a wide range of backgrounds and with a wide range of circumstances. The MoBiLait research project offers significant potential, both internally to VU as a whole, but more widely to other institutions, and sharing of research findings and the good practises on show at VU more generally is strongly encouraged.

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

VU adheres to principles of professionalism, transparency, fairness, objectivity, reliability, respect and goodwill in all aspects of assessing student performance. On-going assessment – in the form of tests, written Q&A, examinations, translations, essays/reports, research plans, etc. – are used throughout the taught provision to support the feedback cycle, both in terms of teaching staff identifying areas where students require additional support, and in terms of students receiving timely diagnostic feedback on their work throughout the programme. The study programmes also clearly distinguish between formative and summative assessment to adapt teaching content to student needs on their modules. Feedback is offered in both face-to-face and online modes (via the VLE), depending on the nature of the task, and students are able to request additional information on the feedback if required, including via office hours (virtual or otherwise).

Study progress is monitored centrally by the Study Administration Department which produces grade averages and reports trends of concern (including drop-out levels) with the relevant staff with a view to feeding back into course design, but also to support students in directing them to relevant training for retakes and further guidance if required. Progress is also monitored on a local (programme) level by collecting feedback from internship destinations, evaluating final thesis defence results, checking submission dates for final theses, and comparing the distribution of results across modules.

The SER identified a problem specific to AVT BA SP (p. 57) whereby suspensions of studies were tied to difficulties in submitting final theses on time. The programme has since been adapted following student feedback to reduce the workload in the final semester, and more training to aid preparation of the BA thesis has been incorporated into the programme.

Drop-out rates on the programmes are relatively high when viewed as a percentage of total student numbers enrolled, but the rationales offered in the SER for the drop-outs are not connected with deficiencies in the study programme itself, but relate in fact to external family or other circumstances such as the coronavirus pandemic or finances. Nonetheless, the MA level study programme has made positive strides to encourage better continuation to final MA thesis defence by introducing a requirement to define a preliminary thesis topic and supervisor at the end of semester 2. The design of the teaching timetable for the MA programmes are also well adapted to working students in recognition of the fact that many students need to work in order to support their studies.

From discussions with students during the site visit, a few concerns were raised about feedback being provided too late to be of use in subsequent assessed work (feedback on academic writing skills coming too late to feed into future assignments was cited as one notable example).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Feedback and the overarching approach to feedback seems to be well thought out at VU and it is clear that the staff and programme management fully understand the importance of appropriate feedback to student progress and the effectiveness of course design over the study period. Some changes have been made to the feedback processes and the timing of certain assessments, taking into account student comments and grades in a number of areas. The main recommendation, based on comments made by students during the site visit, is to consider – if one does not already exist – a consistent deadline for returning feedback on summative assessments with effect from the submission date (e.g. 3 weeks after the submission date), and to ensure that this deadline is applied across the board by all staff on all modules. Such an approach will ensure that students know when to expect feedback on their work and that feedback is received an appropriate amount of time prior to the next relevant assignment so that feedback can be taken into account. The assignment deadlines themselves could also be viewed more holistically so that related assignments are appropriately timed for students to integrate feedback from a previous assignment.

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

(1) Factual situation

VU uses the Career Tracking Information System (CTIS), which integrates information from state registers and survey data collected directly from graduates at one year, three years and five years after graduation. The employment figures from Vilnius Faculty, as provided in the SER (p. 59), appear to be relatively low for the most part (e.g., 64% employed in a high-skilled job after the MA in Translation; 39% in high-skilled employment and 26% in low-skilled employment after the BA in Translation). The figures for Kaunas Faculty students (p. 59) paint a similar picture (e.g. 60-65.6% from the BA in AVT). However, from discussions with staff and students during the site visit, it was clear that the figures were not wholly representative of the true employment situation due to the fact that the career tracking systems do not adequately support freelance employment tracking. Student representatives commented that, with patience and perseverance, the vast majority of students have little difficulty finding appropriate employment upon graduation, as the programmes offer relevant training and skills.

While some insight into career destinations was gleaned from site visit meetings with students and with alumni, social partners and employers, the SER offers no specific examples of the career destinations of its graduates. It is however encouraging that it recognises the uniqueness of the interpreting provision on the MA in Translation programme, and the fact that this entitles graduates to take the European Commission Directorate-General for Interpretation's accreditation test. There is also mention of general academic skills training with a view to subsequent doctoral studies (SER p. 11).

The site visit meetings with alumni and social partners revealed that both first- and second-cycle programmes offer strong employment prospects, and that the programmes offer

skillsets well adapted to the needs of the industry with little or no further training required after recruitment. Many social partners indicated that they were always keen to hire students from VU (including one notable testimony that suggested a preference for inexperienced, but well-trained VU graduates over experienced, but untrained applicants). Employers were particularly impressed with the strong translation, proofreading and technology skills of graduates, and it was widely felt among social partners that programme representatives sought their opinions and listened to their feedback on the skills that the industry demands from the university programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

These programmes offer clear paths to employment for students based on strong skills in translation and, in the case of the AVT programmes especially, highly specialised AV translation skills. Students acquire a diverse array of skillsets, ranging from language training, linguistics, practical translation, translation technology, and even, to a lesser degree, smaller 'discovery' components in interpreting and other niche fields. These skillsets and the range of study options on offer (and in particular the range of foreign languages open for study) offer significant potential for students to succeed in the professional environment after graduation, both after the BA and MA level studies. Student employability from these programmes appears to be strong on the whole, even if this judgement is not supported fully by the statistical data. Rather, this observation was made clear from site visit meetings with alumni, social partners and employers, in addition to teaching staff. The employment data do not seem to do justice to the high employability of VU graduates across the study programmes. Graduate employability is tracked both centrally and locally to a degree, but more data would be beneficial in terms of final student destinations, to see precisely which employers are employing VU graduates (and from which programmes). It would also be worthwhile designing a more suitable mechanism to capture information on freelance employment, which is, of course, a popular career path for translators leaving university programmes. At present, it does not seem that freelance employment is fully taken into account in employment statistics, both in terms of graduates in employment and in terms of earnings.

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

(1) Factual situation

VU stresses the importance of mutual respect, trust, and tolerance in its teaching, learning and assessment, and these principles are enshrined in the Vilnius University Statute, the Academic Ethics Code, and the Diversity and Equal Opportunities Strategy, among other documents, which set out clearly specific standards that students and staff are expected to meet in their work. In the context of student assessment, VU uses various approaches to monitor cheating, plagiarism and similar practises. Invigilators are used for examinations and plagiarism detection (EOIS) software is employed to check for overlap between submitted assessments and other documents stored in the database, in addition to anonymous reporting methods for violations of codes of ethics or conduct by any member of the university community.

The SER includes details (p. 61) of two cases of academic dishonesty (plagiarism), both of which resulted in expulsion. Another case related to a mistake in the calculation of a student's assessment, which was duly corrected after the student queried the grade. The SER also

details one case where the code of ethics was allegedly violated by unethical conduct on the part of a student, in relation to disclosure of confidential information. A warning was issued in this case. These cases highlight the fact that relevant policies and procedures exist at the university and appear to have been followed in these cases.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Policies to ensure academic integrity, tolerance and non-discrimination all appear to be in place at VU and appropriate measures are taken to detect cases of academic malpractice. Without knowing the full circumstances of the two plagiarism cases, it is difficult to offer any judgement on the fairness of the procedures, but it is clear that the outcomes have been reported transparently.

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

As shown by the aforementioned case relating to miscalculation of a student grade, an appeal/complaints procedure exists at VU and resulted, in this case, in successful resolution of the error in favour of the student. The appeals procedure, more generally, is governed by Regulations of the Dispute Resolution Commission of Core Academic Units. A complaint can be lodged within 5 days of examination results being published. The policy, as described in the SER (p. 61), states that the decision of the Appeals Commission in terms of evaluation (an appeal on academic grounds) is final, but a decision regarding examination procedure (an appeal on procedural grounds) can be challenged via the Vilnius University Dispute Resolution Committee.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

Appeal procedures for students also appear to be in place and offer sufficient opportunity for students to challenge university decisions regarding any aspect of academic integrity.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. Provisions and support for socially vulnerable groups and students with special needs.
2. Comprehensive mechanisms to collect student feedback to inform programme design.
3. Feedback to students on their assignments with a view to informing their study progression and personal development.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. Feedback mechanisms need to be improved in terms of filtering decisions (and their rationale) back to students in a systematic and clear manner when suggestions are made to change some aspect of a module or programme.

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

The study programme is delivered by the staff meeting legal requirements, both national (the Law on Higher Education and Research) and local (the Regulations for Organising Open Competition for Teaching and Research (Artistic) Staff of Vilnius University). Teaching and research staff (other than visiting) are recruited for the main job at the University or higher positions on a competitive basis, whereby qualifications, expertise and involvement in research activities are considered. Student feedback on the work of the teaching staff subject to certification is also considered. Additionally, both VU Faculty of Philology and VU KNF hold annual individual interviews with the teaching staff and researchers who are also lecturers of the relevant study programmes.

As of academic year 2019/2020, in total there are 13 professors, 19 associate professors, 14 assistants (1 with PhD), 2 junior assistants and 24 lecturers (1 with PhD). In the first-cycle studies, over 70% of the course units are taught by researchers. In the second-cycle studies, over 88 percent of the teaching staff have a research degree; all teaching staff who deliver theoretical lectures have a research degree; 24% of the teaching staff hold the position of professor; practitioners only teach foreign languages, translation or editing. The education of young teaching staff for specialised SPs of the study field begins in their doctoral studies.

The turnover of the teaching staff during the period under evaluation was insignificant, and there were no changes in the teaching staff delivering the key course units in the SPs. New teachers are attracted as needed to deliver the relevant course units of the SPs.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The number of the teaching staff is adequate to ensure the learning outcomes, an adequate provision of the programme is not endangered. The student – teaching staff ratio in the evaluated SPs is very favourable for student-centred studies and has changed only insignificantly. Statistically, there are about 3-3,5 students per one member of the teaching staff.

The programme is not very attractive to young members of staff. Some young lecturers are not motivated to develop a permanent career at VU because the teaching staff of individual course units are only subject to one-year contracts and it is not possible to form a full-time workload. This is a major reason for the existing – though insignificant to the quality of the SPs – turnover of the teaching staff.

The qualifications of the teaching staff are more than adequate to achieve the learning outcomes; the staff are highly qualified and experienced; most have high academic degrees. The staff expertise was described in the SER and confirmed during the virtual visit.

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

The teaching staff improve their research, pedagogical and professional competences by participating in academic exchanges through Erasmus+ (Learning Mobility of Individuals), Nordplus, in-service training courses, monitoring visits, international cooperation visits, teaching visits and staff study visits to foreign universities and non-university institutions. Visits within the frameworks of the programmes are funded through the EU funds allocated specifically for these programmes. Vilnius University also partly finances training and internships under the study internationalisation programme. The teaching staff of the study field are well informed about exchange opportunities.

Project-based activities financed by the EU funds and other external institutions financing research provide opportunities for exchange visits. The teaching staff of the SPs are informed about the possibilities. The administration of the faculty provides advice and organisational assistance, creates conditions for adjusting the schedule of work with students, arranges business trips, and provides a favourable system for the payment of salaries during internships.

The staff of the study field have visited a number of education institutions in Europe and the USA. Study visits included internships for researchers to collect material for their research work as well as internships related to project-based activities. Project-based activities carried out in cooperation with other Lithuanian universities create wider opportunities to invite foreign researchers to give lectures and seminars in the SPs. Quite a few visiting foreign lecturers have given lectures under various academic exchange or support programmes as a result of long-term cooperation and personal links established by the teaching staff.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is broad cooperation with translation-related institutions in Lithuania and abroad, including EU institutions, helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The lecturers of the field under evaluation demonstrate personal mobility and also have opportunities to learn from and share experience with experts working at foreign universities. Exchange visits in the framework of academic and project-based activities create conditions for the teaching staff to strengthen their competences, follow and participate in the developments in translation research and teaching, which helps to enrich the teaching of the SP course units to students. However, there is not enough evidence of the impact the exchange visits have had on the improvement of the teaching of the SP course units to students and/or the content and the teaching-and-learning methods of the course units taught.

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

(1) Factual situation

As it was discussed during the virtual visit, Vilnius University creates conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the SPs. The central administration of the University is committed to developing the scientific, didactic and professional competence of staff by providing training. The scope and variety of professional development programmes and training events offered has increased significantly (almost 4 times) over the period under evaluation. The titles of training programs (e.g., Active Learning Methods, Supervision of Research Papers, Communication Skills, Integration of ICT into the Teaching Process, Application of Blended Learning in University Studies, etc. – some led by

guest foreign guest lecturers) also suggest that the teaching and administrative staff of the SPs had sufficient conditions to improve their competences. As of 2018, all learning materials are to be uploaded onto the University's VLE (Moodle), therefore the majority of the teaching staff participated in relevant training sessions. As it is described in the SER and later confirmed during the virtual visit, since the spring of 2020, due to the impact of Covid-19, the teachers have also been active in improving their skills of distance teaching and assessment. The teaching staff themselves also conduct training and provide consultations for school teachers, other universities and social partners.

The research competences of the teaching staff in the field SPs are mainly improved by participating in national and international conferences (276 reports prepared), conducting research in various projects (26 researchers working on 63 projects), writing articles, participating in the work of editorial boards of scientific journals, reviewing articles, as well as establishing better internal communication of researchers from the five institutes of the Faculty of Philology.

There is also evidence that the practical professional competence of the teaching staff is improved by applying research knowledge in practice through participation in governmental and non-governmental cultural and educational projects, programs and events, giving public lectures and presentations, engagement in commissioned activities (e.g., translation seminars commissioned by the Lithuanian Association of Literary Translators).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The HEI has created very good conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme. The teaching staff are generally involved in research directly related to the study programmes being reviewed. Every 5 years the competences of the teaching staff are assessed as part of the recruitment process using clear and transparent assessment criteria, such as a relevant degree, the number and quality of research articles published and participation in conferences, leading of research, lecturing, preparation of methodological material, participation in the process of doctoral studies, supervision of students' research, expert, organisational and other scholarly work.

Young lecturers do not seem to be motivated to develop permanent careers at VU due to one-year contracts and lack of possibilities to form a full-time workload. This may cause difficulties for the delivery of the programmes in the future as and when some of the current staff reach their retirement age, or when others move on to positions elsewhere.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. The number, qualification and competence of the teaching staff within the field study programmes are more than adequate to achieve the learning outcomes.
2. The lecturers of the field under evaluation demonstrate personal mobility and also have opportunities to learn from and share experience with experts working at foreign universities.
3. VU has created very good conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programme.

(2) 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 learning resources used for the field studies are available in the buildings of the Faculty of Philology, VU Kaunas Faculty, in the University Library and the new Scientific Communication and Information Centre (SCIC). The study facilities in Vilnius and Kaunas are spread around 10 buildings. The staff and students of the SPs can make use of a total of 109 classrooms at the disposal of both faculties, most of which contain adequate computers, multimedia and office equipment). The Department of Translation and Interpretation Studies has a large and constantly updated internal library for staff and students of the programs under review.

All faculty units have computers and office equipment that the teaching staff can use to prepare study materials. Most of the regular teaching staff either have individual workplaces or can use department rooms, shared areas and vacant lecture rooms to meet students individually or in small groups. The equipment in both locations is maintained by 5 IT specialists; consultation and emergency assistance are available by email or phone (during working hours) to all faculty employees. The premises of both faculties provide wireless internet access points and *Eduroam* international wireless Internet access for academic organisations. A new electronic card access system has solved the problem of timely access to the lecture rooms. Almost all lecture rooms have the necessary equipment: widescreen TVs, computers, multimedia projectors, and Internet access. Departments and centres are equipped with computers, printers, and photocopiers; the teaching staff and students can work there and use the existing equipment. The computer network service VPN provided by VU allows students to connect to the university computer network. The University's VLE (Moodle) is used for teaching, learning, and consultations in the SPs.

Much attention is paid to the self-study of students, which requires libraries, reading rooms with Internet access and numerous publications. The reading rooms contain enough computers and other technical equipment and resources necessary to do research and prepare for lectures and seminars. Students can use the main VU philology library, as well as libraries at other faculties. Furthermore, the VU library subscribes to a number of databases, which students and staff can access. In addition to the main libraries and information centres with general access, there is also an impressive internal library with an ample stock of publications on and related to translation and translation studies.

Interpreters have access to the centre suitable for training conference interpreters of the EU institutions, and translators have access to computer rooms equipped with computer-assisted translation technologies. Lecture rooms used for interpreter training have simultaneous interpretation booths with modern interpretation equipment (microphones, headphones, simultaneous interpreting consoles, control panel, etc.). Specialised software is used in the study process: Trados Studio and Multiterm, video and audio editing software, subtitling software (Subtitle Edit and Aegisub), and Memsource, among others. It has been updated this year by using project funding.

Efforts are made to create equal study opportunities for people with special needs (names of lecture rooms written in Braille; special scanners, a Braille printer and other devices and software in the library (e.g., JAWS 14 For Windows, WintalkerVoice, SuperNovaMagnifier 13.03) and to facilitate the movement of students with physical disabilities (inclined platform lifts, stair climbers, special sanitary facilities).

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The premises for studies are perfectly adequate in terms of size and quality; the old buildings are adapted to suit the needs of teaching and learning. Arrangements for students' practice are adequate; premises are not only suitable for traditional, theoretical lectures and seminars, but also for practical classes and self-study.

The teaching and learning facilities meet the needs of the study field's programs, students and teachers, and are suitable for achieving the intended learning outcomes. There is a sufficient number of lecture rooms available for the training of translators and interpreters. The equipment for teaching and learning is adequate in terms of size and quality; the number of computers is sufficient; the software is up-to-date, but could benefit from some expansion of translation software to other popular tools (e.g. memoQ, Wordfast, etc.) to provide greater opportunities for students to practise re-application of existing knowledge to new tools. Free tools such as MateCat and OmegaT could also be covered briefly to introduce students to cost-effective solutions that can be used when they first embark on a translation career. Learning and teaching materials are both adequate and accessible; the libraries are well-stocked and regularly updated.

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

(1) Factual situation

The teaching staff of the field SPs decide what publications need to be purchased. The necessary resources are acquired if they are included in the lists of compulsory and recommended literature in course unit descriptions, or relevant and required sources are suggested by lecturers and researchers. Electronic resources (databases, electronic books and magazines) are also regularly updated. The teaching staff can contact the subject librarian of the relevant faculty regarding the acquisition of new publications. The Faculty has a technical specialist who can help the teaching staff fix minor technical problems during lectures. External specialists of respective service providers need to be involved to eliminate more serious failures of the equipment used for translation and interpreting.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

There is evidence in the SER that the institution makes a point of constantly updating its premises, electronic equipment, specialised software and library resources. However, most of the numbers provided relate only to the period under evaluation and do not reflect forward planning. There is not sufficient evidence in the SER of a more strategic forward planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies. For example, the report says that specialised software used in the study process (Trados Studio and Multiterm, etc.) has been updated using project funding. It remains unclear how the faculties are planning to update the software in the future if project funding is no longer available. Even though the latest monographs in various fields of translation studies are regularly purchased, the numbers of

copies are still insufficient, therefore photocopies need to be made, which may lead to unauthorised copying unless it is strictly controlled.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

4. The teaching and learning facilities meet the needs of the study field's programs, students and teachers, and are suitable for achieving the intended learning outcomes.
5. The reading rooms contain enough computers and other technical equipment and resources necessary for research and self-study..
6. Efforts are made to create equal study opportunities for people with special needs.

(2) 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 procedures and policies at Vilnius University are informed by the VU Statute, the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the Regulations of the Study Programme Committee of Vilnius University, and the institution-wide project 'Development and Implementation of the Internal Study Quality Management System of Vilnius University' (SER, p. 84). The University's institutional policies and commitments thus exercise broad authority over most quality assurance procedures, inclusive of programme accreditation, management and improvement; student achievement and the solicitation of student opinion; hiring and promotional decisions regarding teaching staff; the formulation and implementation of academic integrity policies, etc.

In practice, much of this work is undertaken—as it applies to these study programmes—by the relevant Study Programme Committee, the membership of which includes academic staff teaching on the programmes, social partners, and student representation. This is an appropriate delegation of authority, as the SPC members possess programme-specific experience and knowledge.

The QA functions of the SPC are numerous, but relate generally to: the examination of curriculum and course structure, to identify strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities for innovation; examine proposed changes in course structure or delivery; assess and authorise final thesis topics and identify and approve appropriate supervisors; elicit and respond to student concerns or suggestions (the SPC has a student representative); and other practical and analytical functions. The SER reports that the SPC are formally required to meet 'by necessity,' although in practice it appears to meet more regularly, with meetings convened 'at least twice a semester,' and with additional online meetings as needed or desired. (SER, p.85) Multiple examples of course modification or replacement based upon these procedures are detailed in the SER (SER, p.85-86).

One of the primary-and appropriate-methods of pursuing QA are the twice-yearly anonymous student surveys. These are anonymous, occur at the end of each semester, and the data thereby generated is shared with the Dean and the individual teacher. This is a common and valuable process and, in conversation with the team, the instructors noted that they take these results seriously. They also mentioned that many of them also informally conduct their own surveys at the end of each class, to gauge student satisfaction or discontent with modules or assignments within the course. Both survey methodologies are laudable and should be continued. It should be noted, however, that in the team's discussions with students they (the students) mentioned several-apparently quite precise, reasonable, and actionable-concerns about several elements of specific course delivery (such as requests for the inclusion of more interpreting activities in classes, or the focus upon downloaded articles for translation to the exclusion of other, more varied, materials such as diplomas, birth or death certificates, etc.). These observations are not noted here as a criticism of the study programmes' QA mechanisms, but are recorded merely to note that there still exist apparently reasonable student suggestions that have not been enacted-or, if impracticable, explained to the students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The QA policies and procedures for these study programmes are, in the opinion of the team, effective, proactive, embedded, multifaceted, and well understood by students, academics, and managers. VU is a large and complex institution but, with only minor objections about the materials or delivery of several classes, seems to be providing efficient and effective quality maintenance oversight for all four of these study programmes.

The programmes examined here provide high-level education, and have a demonstrated willingness to examine weaknesses and address them, as evidenced both by the various programme modifications undertaken since the last accreditation report and, perhaps more importantly, by the testimony of instructors, social partners, and the students themselves. The team particularly commends those teachers who conduct their own informal surveys, as these are compelling proof of commitment to addressing student concerns and curiosity. The team therefore finds that the quality assurance and quality maintenance mechanisms are appropriate and meet the requirements of the programmes.

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

(1) Factual situation

As noted previously in this report, there is representation of both social partners and students on the SPC.

More broadly, there appears to be strong involvement of social partners in the totality of these study programmes, as independently verified in discussion by both programme managers and social partners. The main formal elements of social partner involvement are: representative participation on the SPC; advising on curriculum modification or needed skills development; the provision of places for student internships or other in-work practice opportunities; and participation in the evaluation of thesis defences. The social partners therefore, in the opinion of the team, provide a valuable and extensive professional support network for both the programmes' staff and students.

Perhaps more important than these formal links are the informal advice and support provided by social partners. It was emphasised to the team that the instructors on these programmes maintain close links with alumni and employers, and that there is common interaction in the provision of seminars, guest lectures, participation in student conferences and workshops, and general advice and support. It is the opinion of the team that these multiple links with the field practitioners of translation provide a substantial benefit to the overall quality of the study programmes and should be maintained.

This report has already detailed multiple areas of student involvement in quality assurance elements of these study programmes, but briefly notes again here the student SPC representation; elected student association representation (<https://vusa.lt/en>); regular formal (institutional) anonymous student surveys; and semesterly informal student surveys initiated by individual instructors. These mechanisms of inclusion provide compelling evidence of the seriousness with which VU, and these individual study programmes, seek to include students.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

These study programmes are distinguished by—and benefit from—the collaboration and involvement of students, alumni, and social partners. This is advantageous not only in the classroom setting, but also in the establishment of formal or informal ‘networking’ opportunities for students who may find themselves soon working as freelance translators, and will need contacts.

The active involvement of external stakeholders was multiply attested by the various groups in conversation with the team. The team believes it has seen strong evidentiary support for the benefits of such engagement. It is therefore the finding of the team that the student and stakeholder involvement is admirably realised and is a strength of the programmes worth both maintaining and deepening.

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 main programme-specific data appear to derive from the student survey results, and from internal documentation regarding curriculum design, staff evaluation processes, and other internal quality assurance procedures that are legitimately not publicised for reasons of confidentiality. These data, when released—as in the SER—are anonymized or aggregated to prevent individual identification.

On the whole, however, study programme information appears to be widely disseminated among both the teaching staff and the students. The students verified that they are formally and informally surveyed regarding their opinions regarding their classes, and significantly also commented that, in general, they feel comfortable approaching individual instructors personally for discussion. The teaching staff also verified that they are provided with the results of their individual student survey results, and indicated that they are also collegially involved in larger questions of programme revision, programme delivery, or other larger-than-individual matters.

As noted previously in this report, the programme managers, teaching staff, and social partners also independently verified that the social partners are closely involved in

programme structure and analysis. No social partner mentioned being inadequately informed about programme data to fulfil this service.

The team could not, however, establish how information and data are elicited or analysed to identify necessary or desired staff training opportunities. It is the impression of the team that programme-specific surveys of teaching staff—perhaps anonymous—might be a useful method to identify the technological, methodological, or research training desired by the teaching staff.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The main regular data collection for these programmes derives from the semestral student survey results, which processes seem generally efficient, valued, and undertaken. Within the appropriate restrictions of confidentiality, there appears to be a general openness in the distribution and consideration of these data.

Students, social partners, and other stakeholders seem to be well, and regularly, informed about the overall structure and delivery of the programmes.

The team therefore finds that the collection, use, and publication of information on studies meets expected standards, and is appropriate to the study programmes.

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

Again, as noted, the main mechanisms for the elicitation and analysis of student opinion lie in regular formal and informal student surveys. Additionally, there is student representation on the relevant SPC, which individual is tasked with raising matters of concern or opportunity as perceived by students. Finally, both students and instructors mentioned that the instructors try to maintain an approachability for formal or informal discussion in person, which the students understood and appreciated.

In discussion with the team, students mentioned several relatively small concerns about material selection, the overly 'technical' focus of a course, the paucity of interpretation exercises early in the programmes' curricula, and similar opinions. One course in particular was singled out for dispraise of both subject matter and teaching methodology. All of the points raised by the students were specific and reasonable; they are generalised in this report to preserve the students' anonymity. None of the concerns raised were of a disturbing nature, yet the very fact that they were reasonable, and apparently not acted upon, suggests that there may still be room for innovation in identifying and addressing student concerns.

The stakeholders, alumni, and social partners expressed strong satisfaction with their involvement with these study programmes. The team encourages this, and it encourages as well study-programme specific alumni surveys, for precise insight into the programmes from alumni. Such surveys might provide valuable insight, would be simple to undertake, and would keep programme graduates involved and informed about their programmes.

(2) Expert judgement/indicator analysis

The team finds that there is strong institutional and study programme commitment to eliciting and acting upon student ideas, comments, and concerns. There may be room for improvement in more proactively addressing individual student concerns about repetitive assignments or material selection, but the general mechanisms employed seem largely successful and understood.

The publicity of the Audiovisual Translation study programme is excellent.

The team therefore finds that the opinion of the field students about the quality of their studies meets all expected standards.

Strengths and weaknesses of this evaluation area:

(1) Strengths:

1. There is a strong commitment to surveying students and hearing student opinions.
2. There is useful and productive involvement of external stakeholders.
3. There appears to be effective coordination for QA purposes among all relevant partners, including institutional-level QA initiatives, the SPCs, and the instructors.
4. The publicity of the Audiovisual Translation study programme is excellent.

(2) Weaknesses:

1. There is some evidence that apparently precise and reasonable student concerns about material selection or course delivery are either not acted upon (or perhaps insufficiently informative feedback is provided to students about their concerns).

IV. EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

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

—The European Master's in Translation EMT recognition is highly commendable. The EMT requires a serious curriculum, one that is maintained with integrity, and is externally evaluated according to rigorous standards. It is, in a literal sense, a certified sign of programme excellence.

—It is the impression of the team that the elements of (specifically) literary translation are taught, learned, and demonstrated at an admirably high level.

—Both Audiovisual Translation study programmes are innovatively conceived, and are excellently promoted in Lithuania.

—VU has created very good conditions for the professional development of the teaching staff necessary for the provision of the programmes.

—The Teaching Staff and Learning Facilities and Resources were consistently seen by the team as strengths of these programmes.

V. RECOMMENDATIONS*

Evaluation Area	Recommendations for the Evaluation Area (study cycle)
Intended and achieved learning outcomes and curriculum	-Increase student exposure to native speakers of English. -Better incorporate practical business skills in the delivery of the curricula, particularly those appropriate for people who will commonly be working on their own, as freelancers.
Links between science (art) and studies	-Utilise social partners more in research activities, particularly through studies of translation processes and the working life. -In final theses, build more visible links to the skills the students need in working life, perhaps through cooperation with the social partners.
Student admission and support	-Attempt to increase incoming and outgoing student mobility, where consistent with the aims and curricula of the study programmes.
Teaching and learning, student performance and graduate employment	-Feedback mechanisms need to be improved in terms of filtering decisions (and their rationale) back to students in a systematic and clear manner when suggestions are made to change some aspect of a module or programme.
Teaching staff	
Learning facilities and resources	
Study quality management and public information	-Improve speed and clarity of addressing student concerns about material selection or course delivery; or provide sufficiently informative feedback to students about why their concerns cannot be acted upon.

*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 study field Translation at Vilnius University:

The four study programmes examined herein demonstrate the serious commitment of Vilnius University to the provision of translation studies in both first and second cycles. The distinction between 'Translation Studies' (Vilnius) and 'Audiovisual Translation' (Kaunas) is an academically defensible division of programmes and, by locating them in different campuses, helps to provide academic offerings of high quality in multiple geographical locations. This dispersion is consistent with the commitment to educational social contribution necessitated by formal recognition in the VU Mission that there exists a 'responsibility of the University to the Nation and to the State of Lithuania.'

As noted in several instances in this report, EMT recognition is a prestigious, esteemed mark of quality, with internationally-established standards. To earn EMT recognition requires programmatic eminence.

These study programmes are, within their parameters, largely comparable and congruent with similar first and second cycle programmes in the European Union and in North America. The individual programme progression (i.e., for example, progression from first cycle 'Audiovisual Translation' to second cycle 'Audiovisual Translation') is rational, and provides both thematic continuity, and increasing complexity.

There are areas in which the team feels that progress or improvement can be made; these recommendations are contained in the textual body of this report, and in the summary recommendations in Section V, immediately above. Yet-taken as a whole-the team feels that these are four strong, well-focused study programmes, delivered well, and supported effectively by Vilnius University.

Expert panel chairperson

Prof. dr. Andrew Goodspeed