

# VILNIUS UNIVERSITY INTERNAL STUDIES' QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM: EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

6-7<sup>th</sup> January 2014, Vilnius



### **Title of the report**

Vilnius University Internal Studies' Quality Management System: External Evaluation Report

### **Title of the project evaluated**

Vilnius University Internal Studies' Quality Management System Creation and Implementation (project code: VP1-2.1-ŠMM-04-K-02-016), financed by the European Social Fund in accordance to Lithuanian 2007-2013 Human Resource Development Action Programme 2<sup>nd</sup> priority "Lifelong learning" VP1-2.1-ŠMM-04-K instrument "Studies' System Effectiveness Development" (hereinafter - **the Project**)

### **Purpose and scope of the report**

This external evaluation report was initiated by Vilnius University in order to assess its quality management system, its functioning and progress made since the Project began. Planned activities of the Project were implemented during the period of 12<sup>th</sup> July 2011 and 30<sup>th</sup> December 2013. The report was composed and concluded based on information gathered during interviews with Vilnius University representatives, as well as an analysis of Vilnius University internal quality management system and its documentation.

### **Structure of the report**

The report consists of the following parts:

- ▶ **Inception and Progress of the Project, July 2011 - December 2013.** In this part of the report, findings on achievements which were made during the Project are provided based on both: information from interviews and analysis of documents;
- ▶ **Findings from meetings with Vilnius University stakeholders - quality management advice and practice.** This part of the report outlines opinions of interviewed Vilnius University representatives who provide essential evidence of current Vilnius University quality-assurance practice, as well as insights towards further enchantment of quality culture at Vilnius University;
- ▶ **Outcomes - brief analysis of progress, Matters to be addressed - towards sustainability.** In this part of the report, conclusions of the external evaluation are provided together with recommendations for sustainability and further development of Vilnius University internal studies' quality management system assembled under the Project.

The report is supplemented by procedural information which is provided in appendixes listed in executive summary below.

### **Prepared by:**

Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos, external evaluation team leader, and Ernst & Young Baltic UAB consultants in cooperation with external evaluation expert Dr. Csaba Forgács (hereinafter - **the Consultants**) [for further information see Appendix 5]

### **Date and place:**

6-7<sup>th</sup> January 2014, Vilnius

## **Executive summary**

This report examines the practice of quality assurance assembled under the above-named project at Vilnius University (hereinafter - **the University**), which began in July 2011. The Consultants found in this short space of time that the University had established a culture of quality through the development of new structures and systems, which include a senior Quality Committee, a Quality Management Centre and senior Quality Coordinators, who operate at faculty level. The Consultants also found that involved personnel had developed new attitudes and behaviour towards professional work. There is now much less defensiveness and the new culture of openness has produced a positive self-critical arena, in which colleagues openly communicate about quality issues. These positive changes are also the outcome of the involvement of the University's community in establishing new quality-assurance practices. Project activities were implemented by responsible employees of the University's central administration and faculties' administration in close cooperation with students' representatives who participated in established working groups.

Student comments were positive in endorsing the responsiveness towards student-centred learning and how student expectations and needs were developing at the forefront of teaching and learning. Quality Coordinators are senior academics who support both academic staff and students and encourage their cooperation. Their role remains as one of monitoring, consulting and review of documentation. They prepare plans for quality improvement, contribute to the preparation of questionnaires for the audit of faculties and assist individual staff with particular quality needs. Senior staff outlined the importance of quality to the maintenance of standards in student and staff recruitment, to increasing good candidates to MA and PhD registration and to the creation of an environment which makes people "shine". They also expressed a view that good, effective internal quality assurance should be more "invisible" than "visible". Although progress is not at equal pace across all faculties, the Consultants concluded very positively on the considerable success of the Project, achieved over such a short period of time.

## **Appendixes:**

Appendix 1 - Summary of compliance with the results and measures of the Project

Appendix 2 - Schedule of meetings with representatives of Vilnius University

Appendix 3 - List of participants

Appendix 4 - External evaluation of Vilnius University internal studies' quality management system criteria (questionnaire used during interviews)

Appendix 5 - Brief information about external evaluation team

## Inception and Progress of the Project

### July 2011 - December 2013

The inception of the Project involved a significant cultural shift from the existing practices towards new methodologies in the gradual establishment of an internal quality assurance system. Initially, there was some resistance towards quality assurance in respect of anticipated increased workloads. Consequently, it was some time before colleagues realized that quality assurance can add to the quality of teaching, learning and academic life as a whole. According to the Quality Management Centre, the main success of the quality-assurance system is the gradual acceptance of it as a means of enhancement. This does not guarantee that the Project has been acceptable to everyone involved at the University, but it has been confidently illustrated that most of the academic staff and students accept the need for quality activities. Each faculty has established the position of Quality Coordinator, senior positions which enable academic staff to consult openly about issues regarding teaching, learning and their concomitants in academic life at the University.

Advantageously, there is now much less defensiveness in a new quality culture which demands more personal accountability. Attitudes are changing and colleagues are becoming more self-critical. Increasingly across the University, academic staff-awareness has motivated colleagues to self-assess the quality of their own work both for the good of the University and its students, and also as part of the five-year accreditation cycle to which they, as academics, are subject.

Progress has been surprisingly brisk in some areas of the Project, since the history of Vilnius University, hitherto, has been grounded in traditional Soviet thinking. Significant in this respect is the change in mind-set towards the needs of students as individuals across the various study arenas. Guided by the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area* (hereinafter - **ESG**), the entire internal procedure at the University is shaped by part 1 of that document (internal quality assurance within higher education institutions), namely that there are policies and procedures for quality assurance; programme approval monitoring and periodic reviews of programmes and awards; progress in the assessment of students, in terms of published criteria, regulations and procedures; quality assurance of teaching staff; development in learning resources and student support; and information systems and public information. Progress in the seven standards of the ESG is palpable, though progress across all of them has not been at the same pace.

Concerning policy and procedures, Vilnius University has in place a senior Quality Committee, fourteen Quality Coordinators and an operative Quality Management Centre (hereinafter - **the Centre**) managed by a director and a range of support staff.

The Quality Committee is the senior body for coordinating the quality management system and its implementation at University level. The Quality Committee comprises of a Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs, Deans, representatives of a Studies' Administration Office, a Data Analysis Department and the Centre, as well as representatives of external stakeholders and students [Vilnius University Rector's 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012 Order No. R-457 regarding establishment of the Quality Committee].

The assigned fourteen Quality Coordinators operate at faculty level. The Centre receives reports from all faculties, reports back, catalogues progress and reports to the Quality Committee. The Centre has produced

*1<sup>st</sup> standard:  
"Policy and  
procedures for  
quality  
assurance"*

a range of methodological documents [in the scope of the Project, the Centre prepared range of quality-assurance related learning material: these were in the areas of study programmes' quality management, project management, internal quality audit, formation of a quality culture, usage of a newly-developed Studies' Quality Management Information System (SKVIS) which covers Vilnius University processes' management and monitoring of key performance indicators, as well as gathering other studies-related data and statistics]. Academic Councils (faculty level) are responsible for supporting such documentation. The Centre prepares an annual report, summarizing reports from faculties, and twice a year prepares student surveys and outcome reports.

Inter-alia, the Centre produces around seven to eight quality-assurance related reports annually and also produces reports on the best lecturers of a particular year. The Centre is an advisory rather than decision-making body.

A University Studies' Administration Office also participates in quality activities. This body is responsible for the coordination and assurance of fluent study processes, development of an internships' organization system, also the management of studies and related information systems.

Mechanisms for students' appeals and complaints take the form of faculty commissions which always have student representation and each programme has a study committee.

It should be noted that in the University's studies' quality management system an active role of students is established throughout their representation in its governing bodies [Vilnius University Council, Vilnius University Senate, commissions of the Senate and other bodies, the study programme's committee and other committees]. Student Charter, developed during the Project, provides the University's obligations to students and the University's expectations from the students in respect to admission to studies, the organisation of study process, learning outcomes' assessment, submission and satisfaction of appeals, internships, organisation of exchange programmes, provision of academic and social services, career counselling and other areas. There are more students' involvement related initiatives in the University that are provided in Vilnius University Quality Manual (Chapter 3.13).

In the scope of the Project, all quality-assurance related policies and procedures were gathered into the Quality Manual. Additionally, new necessary documents were prepared and some existing ones were updated in order to support newly developed Vilnius University quality management model [for further information see Appendix 1]. During the development of the Vilnius University quality management model, all important study-related processes were defined and described outlining the processes in the diagrams. This systematization and development of quality-assurance documentation provides a strong base for quality-assurance practice and its implementation at different levels of the University. For further improvement and commitment to quality development, Vilnius University developed its studies' quality improvement strategy for the period of 2013-2015 [this document was

prepared in 2012 and approved in 2013].

As an important means to ensure implementation and continuous improvement of the University's studies' quality management system, internal quality audits were established, i.e. necessary methodological documents were prepared [see Chapter 4 of the Quality Manual] and internal quality audits in 6 academic departments of the University were conducted [for further information see Appendix 1]. The purpose of internal quality audits is to identify whether implemented system serves set goals and needs of the faculties.

Learning materials published in University's virtual environment and responding to the first standard of ESG are:

- ▶ **University's quality culture formation training**, designed to meet the needs of University's administration personnel whose responsibilities are related to studies' quality management system's implementation and provision. The purpose of the manual is to provide with knowledge about higher education quality management practices across European Higher Education Area, main principles of quality culture assurance and maintenance, quality's impact on internal quality management system and operational practices, stages of continuous improvement;
- ▶ **Vilnius University's quality management system's internal audit report**, focused on the analysis of quality management system's implementation and results evaluation, internal quality audit principles, process understanding and practical skills to conduct internal quality audit formation;
- ▶ **Projects' management sub-system's manual**, designed for University's administration personnel in order to introduce the system and provide with necessary skills to use it in their daily work.

Concerning the approval and preparation of new programmes, this is an extensive procedure, lasting one year or more. There is a Study Committee for the approval of new programmes. The validation process also includes procedures for updating and the minor modification of existing programmes.

Periodic reviews are also in place. If a programme is accredited externally [by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter - **SKVC**)] for three years only, then that programme is subject to the University (central) periodic review annually. Otherwise, in cases of full accreditation for six years [by SKVC], the periodic review of the programme will be implemented annually at faculty level only.

All relevant policies and procedures on development, approval, evaluation and improvement of study programmes at Vilnius University are provided in the Quality Manual (Chapter 3.2).

One more set of learning materials responding to the second standard of ESG is „Study programmes' quality management training” which is designed to support study programmes' initiators, Study Committee

*2<sup>nd</sup> standard:  
“Approval,  
monitoring and  
periodic review  
of programmes  
and awards”*

chairs and Committee members in obtaining basic knowledge and skills necessary to prepare new and analyse, evaluate and improve existing study programmes. Document is published in University's virtual environment.

Concerning the assessment of students, progress has been made in learning outcomes and competences. Although progress appears to be uneven across faculties, programme aims and learning outcomes are published via internet and intranet. From the student interviews, the Consultants experienced high awareness of academic staff progress in learning outcomes and competences, but among the students interviewed, not all were contented with learning outcomes and competences in terms of their practical application to assessments.

Policies and procedures on the assessment of learning outcomes at Vilnius University are also provided in the Quality Manual (Chapter 3.4). In addition to this, in the Quality Manual (Chapter 3.7), applicable policies and procedures on academic appeals are given.

In relation to the quality assurance of teaching staff, there is a rigorous system in place involving a five-year accreditation of teachers in which students have a role in their assessment. Any examples of weak teaching are identified by Quality Coordinators, and staff-development action can be applied towards improvement. In cases of continuous weakness, a teacher with other strengths, i.e. research and publication, can be removed from the teaching role. In cases where poor teaching is not compensated by other strengths, such teachers could be ultimately removed from the University. There is a system in place for promotion and reward [election of the best teachers] which is open to all academic staff.

Notably, a methodology for academic staff satisfaction index measurement was developed, and the first research according this methodology was conducted during the Project. The index of academic staff satisfaction provides valuable information for studies' quality development since it covers the following aspects of teachers' work: provision of teaching resources, students' motivation, methodical support and teaching space, collaboration with colleagues, organizational help, development of the qualification and motivation system and overall working conditions, other activities and management. It is now embedded and such surveys will be conducted every two years.

All relevant policies and procedures on academic personnel management and teaching quality assurance at Vilnius University are provided in the Quality Manual (Chapter 3.9).

Learning material responding to the fourth and fifth standards of ESG has been developed in a form of "Doctoral studies' quality management training", designed to answer some of the most common questions among doctoral students' supervisors and students themselves, as well as to provide with ideas and advice which could inspire the change of practices that do not work. Similarly to the documents mentioned earlier, this

*3<sup>rd</sup> standard:  
"Assessment of  
students"*

*4<sup>th</sup> standard:  
"Quality  
assurance of  
teaching staff"*

manual is also published in University's virtual environment.

Concerning learning resources and student support, the University has invested in several areas of improvement including a new library and is satisfied that the student body is well-resourced in terms of the development of Moodle, the introduction of Wi-Fi, study space, reading rooms and the provision of software and books. Students, while agreeing with this, noted a number of support needs which, however, are developing more slowly. These are: one-to-one academic support; secondary support in cases of examination failure and difficulty in particular areas of study; adequate psychological support; career guidance and more development in student-centred learning. However, concerning psychological support, there is a service available in the Psychological Innovation and Research Training Centre of the Faculty of Philosophy although few students appear to be aware of it.

As is the case with teachers, a students' satisfaction index has also been developed and measured. There are three indexes developed for different student groups: Bachelor, Master and PhD. The index of students' satisfaction explores various aspects of studies' quality, including lecturing, research activities and career, provision of studies' resources, informational support and other aspects depending on the particular student group.

In the Quality Manual (Chapter 3.10), applicable policies and procedures on study resource management are given [these cover management of financial, material and information study resources]. Notably, detailed information about student support and services is also provided in the Quality Manual (Chapter 3.8), including information about psychological services.

The University information systems vary from faculty to faculty in terms of strength, relevance and up-datedness. It was generally agreed that more modern IT systems are urgently required, and while online quality questionnaire assessments are efficient, alumni data bases could be stronger. To strengthen this area, Vilnius University has prepared a strategy for its information technologies and telecommunications development for the period of 2013-2018 [it was approved by the Vilnius University Senate on 24<sup>th</sup> October 2013 (Order No. SK-2013-12-7)]. Specifically in relation to alumni data, there is an ongoing project in which a Career Management Information System (KVIS) is being developed. This system will allow the University to gather data about its alumni including such data as: the period during which the student secures a first job after graduation, employment details, first salary and other relevant employment-related data.

During the Project, two information systems were developed, as well as related methodological documents [learning materials, user's guides]. Comments on these new IT systems are provided below in this part of the report.

It should be also noted that policies and procedures on information resource management at Vilnius University are given in the Quality

*5<sup>th</sup> standard:  
"Learning  
resources and  
student support"*

*6<sup>th</sup> standard:  
"Information  
systems"*



Manual (Chapter 3.10.3).

Lastly, concerning public information, this ESG seventh standard is generally well developed. Public information is provided both quantitatively and qualitatively on a range of University matters including finance, programmes, awards, students' achievements and students' activities.

In the scope of the Project the *Procedures for Information on Studies' Quality Management and Dissemination for Internal and External Stakeholders* were prepared.

In addition, learning material responding to the sixth and seventh standards of ESG has been developed. "Information management in the system of quality management training" is designed to introduce University's administration personnel to the concept and practices of studies' quality information management and improve their dissemination skills in regards to internal and external stakeholders. It is also available through University's virtual environment.

Notably, in addition to ESG the University applies the *European Foundation for Quality Management (EFQM) Excellence Model*. This model is used to strengthen the following: satisfying needs of students and academic staff; managing quality of study processes; ensuring the development of university employees' potential; developing partnerships with foreign higher education institutions, as well as international organizations; applying fact-based decision-making in the area of studies' quality assurance and improvement; implementing principles of social responsibility. The Consultants found that the University had achieved significant progress during the Project in above mentioned areas, especially in managing the quality of study processes and decision-making with regard to the quality assurance of studies and overall improvement.

Partially, this has occurred due to development of the *studies' quality-management related information systems*. These include: Studies' Quality Management Information System (SKVIS); specialized IT systems for students' surveys and project management [it should be noted that the IT system for students' surveys was not developed in the scope of the Project].

Within the Studies' Quality Management Information System (SKVIS), all studies-related processes are described [prepared process diagrams supported by attached legal documents and document forms], as well as their continuous improvement mechanisms, including assigned process owners who are responsible for updating particular processes. In this system, also key performance indicators are monitored and relevant studies-related data and statistics are gathered and analysed. During the Project period SKVIS was filled with sufficient data [some by hand, some through integration with other internal IT systems of the University]. Although some indicators will be calculated in the following years [from 2014], currently there is sufficient information to form reports for internal and external reporting purposes.

In relation to satisfying students' needs, a specialized IT system for students' surveys is of great value since it enables the gathering of feedback from students in a systematic and effective way [students' surveys are organized every semester regarding specific subjects that students had studied during particular semester and on the overall satisfaction with studies]. For these surveys, the above-mentioned methodology of students' satisfaction index measurement is used. Following the principles of the EFQM Excellence Model, surveys of academic staff are also organized every two years. Using the satisfaction of academic-staff index measurement

7<sup>th</sup> standard:  
"Public  
information"

methodology, these surveys enable to better understand the needs of faculties and plan corrective action, accordingly, where necessary.

As for the specialized IT system for project management, it enables academic staff to plan, manage, monitor and report on projects including those related to studies' development and their quality improvement. Although this system was implemented in the end of 2013, 284 projects of the University have been transferred to this system [these projects amount to more than 700 m LTL]. This system is strongly focused on the financial side of project management [budgeting of projects, including planning of working hours and related salaries, managing accounts payables and receivables and other financial procedures]. Although these aspects are often considered as being an unpleasant administrative burden for academics who implement projects at the University, there is nevertheless confidence that this newly-developed IT system will assist towards making the process easier.

## **Findings from meetings with Vilnius University stakeholders - quality management advice and practice**

The Quality Coordinators have been charged with the difficult task of management change at faculty level and developing a new mindset towards the precepts of the Project. Sensitivity has been paramount, generally, because teaching personnel are overloaded and the encouragement towards the development of an embedded quality system has not been an easy task. However, this achievement ranks as the major cultural change which has taken place over the past two years. This means that essentially there is now much more consultation and open dialogue about the teaching and learning process. The Quality Committee is a strong advisory body, largely, but not exclusively, for faculties. The Quality Coordinators have found that the consultative process is working. And throughout the Project, the Quality Management Centre, under the leadership of its director, has become a strong driver in the process of innovation and change at the University. Since the beginning of the Project 83 members of administrative personnel responsible for implementation and maintenance of studies' quality management system have participated in various learning events and workshops relevant to their daily work as quality culture agents.

*Focus group I*

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### **The Quality Management Centre with colleagues from the Studies' Administration Office and an International Programmes and Relations Office**

Notwithstanding the above tasks, the Centre has been endeavouring to establish a culture of quality around the University, which has been another hugely testing task, though positive changes have been observed. The academic staff are committed to quality, but the problem has been workload and time. Teaching personnel are stretched, and quality procedures can distract from teaching. They say that: "It is in our culture, our common history, that makes this process of change relatively slow". However, despite this comment, the Consultants found that progress has largely moved at a fairly brisk tempo.

The Project targets have been reached, but the biggest win is the acceptance of the Project's activities. Many colleagues have been directly involved in the work on quality-assurance matters and they are in agreement with it. Colleagues are informed and know what quality assurance is about, that it is about them and the ways they work. Quality audits have shown that this culture of openness is becoming dominant as colleagues are positively critical about themselves and the quality of work that they undertake. The Centre stated that the formalization of quality-assurance procedures adds up, particularly for transparency reasons, results and dissemination of evidence.

The Centre needed support from a variety of University personnel. Now, they have colleagues from academic departments and the Studies' Administration Office working with them. As the Centre is now engaged with Quality Coordinators at faculty level in the areas of internal quality audit and students' feedback, together with the Studies' Administration Office they work in the fields of study processes' management, as well as collecting studies-related data and statistics [mostly in the context of Studies' Quality Management Information System (SKVIS) development].

The Quality Coordinators at the faculties took their offices and began to shape quality within their faculties and Academic Councils. Reports of each faculty are approved by the Quality Committee, as well as various quality-related questionnaires or self-assessment forms. For now, the Quality Committee remains as an organizational body created under the Project activities,

but its future status is not entirely certain. At the moment, the Quality Committee assesses the reports by different faculties and departments. However, it is not yet entirely clear how this structure will be institutionalized in the future, as to whether it will function as a separate body or become a supporting structure under another body.

Personnel from the Centre were persuasive in terms of the current University structure, in that they believed it should not be centralized entirely. Autonomous faculties are a tradition of Vilnius University, but there should be some common standards, for instance, the same salaries, terms and conditions. They claimed that sometimes decision-making is more efficient at central level.

*Focus group II*

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## **The Students**

Findings from the meeting with students underlined their close familiarity with quality-assurance culture, though they saw it essentially as being in the hands of teachers, in that they can be ensured that the expectations about the programme were being fulfilled. In the culture of expectation, students and academic staff are gradually becoming equal partners and there is also a close relationship between students and staff in research participation. Students now have a dialogue with academic staff, and they demonstrated to the Consultants the integrity to admit that: "Sometimes we win and sometimes they prove us wrong". Concerning student-centred learning the expression "needs" was very important in this meeting. Students were pleased to inform that changes were becoming apparent, but also informed that some lecturers refuse to change because student-centred learning concentrates on needs rather than on process. However, intriguingly and to some extent perhaps uniquely, students do their best to help their lecturers to adopt the "needs" approach.

Students realized that student-centred learning can work against older methods of teaching and learning. They also recognized that it requires investment, for example, preparing learning outcomes takes additional time, but in the end it pays back. Students reported satisfaction with the academic appeals' arrangements, which have student representation. Should the commission comprise of 5 persons, 2 of them are students; if the commission comprises of 3 persons, 1 of them is a student [Vilnius University Senate 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012 Order No. SK-2012-20-3], but they also stated that there is only one marker per student assignment. Although the Consultants found modules from computer science, oriental studies and medicine that contained either learning outcomes, competences or both, and sometimes grade-related criteria, the students interviewed, generally did not find their own provision wholly satisfactory in terms of their understanding. Concerning admissions, students believed that for Vilnius University, the system is based on merit rather than the social dimension, which in this sense they regarded as academically just, but socially unfair.

Within the range of other issues, the Consultants were pleased to hear that students have the opportunity to study abroad, that they were sole writers of the Students' Charter [composed during the Project period] and that they have special contact with social partners in relation to career possibilities and the internships offered to them.

Concerning workload, students' involvement complements Vilnius University study programme committees for the evaluation of this matter. Generally, they are not discontented with workloads, but wished for better coordination in terms of publication of the submission of assignments dates. They were happy with the study resources including laboratories and the new library, but discovered that teachers themselves are now expressing dissatisfaction with the

lack of office space. Students commented less favourably on the opportunities for part-time studies, but again very favourably on the variety of learning methods offered by Vilnius University. Concerning the quality of teaching, they indicated that more attention should be given to PhD students and their progression. Elsewhere, they were happy with the policy on mitigating circumstances for students within the structure of examination arrangements, and would like to see more investment in University teaching, specifically in the provision for staff development.

Students also gave an unqualified view that Vilnius University is a happy place to be and they described the "feel-good factor" as something that emanates from the status of the University and its history in teaching, learning and research. Both academic staff and students, however, felt that there were insufficient students' voice and opinion. Students could be stronger in pressing for the changes they wish to see. However, there is full student representation from the Vilnius University Senate to study programme committees, and students interviewed felt that their views were being taken into account. It was claimed that working students found it very difficult to combine a job with studies, and that this was an area in need of attention.

Information provided by the students, was found by the Consultants to be highly intelligent, close to the ground, observant and insightful, containing commentary on problematic issues and recommendations for improvement.

*Focus group III*

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### **The Quality Coordinators**

Interview evidence from Quality Coordinators found that they were people of standing and authority as leading academics and growing experts in the field of quality assurance. This is a highly pertinent and influential level for a quality role in senior capacity, despite the fact that they have been regarded sometimes as "quality-assurance police" rather than coordinators. Although faculties tend to be separate kingdoms of Vilnius University, the various meetings and trainings in quality assurance had contributed to a common culture of quality and the development of common standards. Teaching personnel are responding towards advice and to new written standards and regulations, as well as to the student voice. Quality Coordinators essentially are facilitators and mediators between teaching staff and students. The Consultants were informed that academics, both young and senior, are now seeking support, particularly in document writing, especially since quality assurance has become the norm across the University. Often advice is sought as to how to connect learning outcomes to examination methods.

Prior to the introduction of formal quality assurance, many academic matters tended to be intuitive, but now intuition has largely been replaced by the need for documented processes and methods. Each programme now has a study programme committee which discusses outcomes, expectations and the role of stakeholders in the quality process. Quality Coordinators have other senior roles and some are present in the study programme committees, but their role remains as one of monitoring, consulting and review of documentation. They prepare plans for quality improvement, contribute to the preparation of questionnaires for the audit of faculties and assist individual staff with particular quality needs.

A most valuable role for Quality Coordinators is the bringing together of students and teachers to discuss academic matters. Younger generation teachers are particularly keen regarding this dialogue. Quality Coordinators also encourage cooperation between students and alumni. In addition, there are other strong networks of professional organizations and networks in different fields, for example, in law, medicine, mathematics, economics and history. Quality Coordinators

are also concerned with standards and the variables that influence quality change over the years. It is a debate currently ongoing at the University, and an opinion was given that learning outcomes should relate to this process and discussion.

Quality Coordinators have access to confidential data on the effectiveness of teachers [students' survey results at faculty level are also available for Deans] which they can use in giving advice to teachers about needs for further and particular development. Concerning the University as a whole, they expressed some lack of forward direction regarding its main goals. It is the case that the University wishes to remain the best in Lithuania and one of the best in Europe, but it appeared to them that there is no long-term plan as to how these are to be achieved [mostly the role of separate faculties in the overall strategies mentioned above are not fully clear]. Elsewhere, Quality Coordinators were generally pleased that progress is being made in learning outcomes. It works well with students and lecturers. Students and lecturers in fact, they claim, are learning from each other. However, performance indicators for students could be better progressed by the enhancement of learning outcomes throughout students' assessment. It was agreed by interviewees that this "may" be a way forward for overall student improvement and excellence. It was stated that there should be less pressure from performance profiles required for statistical purposes.

*Focus group IV*

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#### **The Senior Management (Pro-Rector for Strategic Affairs, Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs and Chairman of Studies' Committee)**

The Senior Management group asserted that quality assurance should be exercised by everyone and should be helpful but "invisible". A good university should be able to conduct quality assurance in this way. First and foremost, they claimed, the University should be a lifestyle and institution of learning and not merely an enterprise. Quality assurance should be horizontal not vertical and integrated into all processes within the University. Senior management can offer oversight, Quality Coordinators can regularly check feedback from students and personnel, but in the end it is up to the faculties to implement change. Strictness in process and documentation has resulted in the "internal" accreditation of a new programme being more testing than the "external" ones. However, the number of internally accredited (validated) programmes is decreasing due to the improvement processes within existing traditional programmes [the specifics of fundamental sciences which assume a large academic part in the curricula of the University]. New validations tend to number between eight and nine per year. Fundamental programmes tend to change less in comparison to social science and humanities. However, the University does not have a closed mind towards programmes outside the classical tradition, but these must have new substantial areas rather than new attractive names with relatively weak content. Such matters are the province of Senior Management who are engaged in the Study Committee and Vilnius University Senate. The Study Committee approves study programmes and then they are transferred for the approval of Vilnius University Senate. These are the governance bodies that make decisions for the implementation of study programmes.

The performance indicators (key success indicators) for maintaining quality are: to attract the very best students, to create an environment that enables students to "shine", to attract the very best teachers (through open appointments internationally), continue with developments in student-centred learning, to increase MA recruitment to the equivalence of Bachelor (currently it is 3 Bachelor students to 1 MA student) and to increase PhD enrolments to include also more international students. Increasing the status of the University as an international research institution is a primary objective.

For financing and curricular reasons, Vilnius University has accepted students who are at the baseline of acceptable entrance qualifications, and although the numbers of such are not high, it can result in poor-quality performance. Similarly, concerning international students, the University uses equivalence mechanisms in entrance qualifications, but again some international students perform poorly, sometimes resulting in the discontinuance of studies. In order to attract the highest quality students, Vilnius University sets a minimum qualification entry requirement which is not less than half of the national maximum [the national maximum without additional points is 20.8, the University minimum is 10.4].

Stakeholders are active in the University, mostly involved in thesis defense but also in committees where they are able to make contributions on quality matters. Alumni involvement achieves a higher profile in some faculties rather than in others. A University policy on Alumni was recommended by some senior interviewees.

Vilnius University is more than a place for study. Mobility excites students, and their enthusiasm for it can result in self-financing when the Erasmus funds are exhausted. Placements and internships are organized by both students and the University. The University operates an index of satisfaction for staff and students, and results usually yield high-levels of contentment [the methodology for the index of satisfaction was developed during the Project]. A part of this satisfaction is found in staff development, which is supported by the University, both in terms of individual needs and group activities where there is particular demand. More widely, there is a University Social Centre which organizes and disseminates information on cultural events.

The senior management interviewees stated that expectations were high regarding the last institutional review, but the finalization of the report is too lengthy a process, since the event was held in October last year. A great deal of time and effort was given to preparation for the institutional review. In a number of areas across the University responses were very positive. The report has yet to be received by the University. As part of the University's benchmarking, the European Qualifications Framework was considered useful, as it is also related to the National Qualifications Framework. Performance indicators are used as valuable guidelines for progress and are in line with the University's strategic goals. Concerning legal requirements, the University is not autonomous and fully complies with the national legal requirements.

In the process of staff accreditation, they restated the case that problems with poor teaching are handled as judiciously as possible. Concerning staff progression, although there are clear criteria for promotion, this can depend on the needs of a faculty and its financial situation.

They endorsed the general satisfaction with resources, stating that during the last European Union financial programming period, considerable improvements were made. However, although the technical IT base [computers and other equipment] is satisfactory, the information systems are a priority for updating. Despite this situation, the Consultants were pleased to hear that a new information system, currently under development, will provide the faculties with the possibility to track graduate destinations.

Concerning the Standard 1.7 of the ESG, the senior members endorsed that information on the programmes is available on-line; that descriptions of the programmes are also published online; that learning outcomes and programmes' descriptions are published in the *Open Information, Consultation and Orientation System* (AIKOS); and that feedback and surveys results are available on the intranet. Admission statistics are published, as is the annual Rector's report which includes the financial account. Destinations of students are published in rare and exceptional cases (students with particular profiles). Publication of the names of the best 25 % of graduates is released on an annual basis.

The University considers itself fair and impartial and operates a code of ethics.



### **Outcomes - brief analysis of progress**

There is clear evidence that over a short period of time (since 2011) Vilnius University has assembled a workable system for internal quality assurance. Through its new committee structures, senior and middle management appointments and quality systems, the University is able to demonstrate advanced progress towards an embedded and integrated institutional system. This is the principal strength achieved over the past two years - and is to be commended.

There is clear evidence that University staff have gradually accepted the new culture and most see the benefits for students, themselves and the University. Winning the approval and support of colleagues has been another great strength, though this achievement has been a more testing endeavour.

Students are now involved in a full-range of meeting representation across the University, from the Vilnius University Senate to study programme committees. They have a useful dialogue with academic staff and appreciate the work being achieved on student-centred learning and the meeting of individual student needs, though they believe more could be achieved on learning outcomes and their relation to assessment.

A Student Charter is in place composed entirely by students. It was written as part of the Project and published in 2013.

### **Matters to be addressed - towards sustainability**

The groundwork for sustainability is now in place, i.e. plentiful evidence revealing a discernible change of culture resulting from the proactive measures undertaken to achieve a new era of quality evaluation and self-accountability. A senior staff member encapsulated the future in believing that effective quality assurance should be more "invisible" than "visible" and should operate in support rather than become an obtrusive entity across the University.

While this to some extent is a truism, but also evidence of good practice, there should be an aim to develop and achieve continuous quality assurance across the University, so that it does not have to rely solely on evaluation and periodic reviews.

### **To further enhance its quality culture, Vilnius University should:**

- ▶ Aim for further normative practice in its quality systems;
- ▶ Continue to recruit the strongest students;
- ▶ Continue to develop strategies in student-centred learning for all students and those whose abilities and skills are less strong;
- ▶ Debate and resolve (where possible) the variables which affect standards over chronological academic years;
- ▶ Be vigorous in terms of ensuring quality in overseas recruitment;
- ▶ Fulfil its ambitious Master and Doctoral plans;
- ▶ Increase the provision for academic support and support for students who need to retake examinations;
- ▶ Communicate more rigorously the range of psychological support available to students and improve it where necessary;
- ▶ Improve information systems as soon as possible;

- ▶ Monitor and provide a full annual account of graduate destinations across the University (employment circumstances, i.e. Full-time employment, Part-time employment, Further study only, Work and Study, other categories; job titles of graduates; employers of graduates; other data of graduate destinations);
- ▶ Develop a University policy on Alumni;
- ▶ Consider and respond to the needs of part-time studentship;
- ▶ Improve the definition of learning outcomes and their match with examinations (Quality Coordinators could conduct more consultations on these matters; more involvement of students in the process could also be exercised);
- ▶ Develop systems for timely publishing of examination and assignment submission dates, with coordinated time-lines, where possible;
- ▶ Continue to organize systematically surveys of students and academic staff [teachers] concerning their satisfaction with relevant aspects of the quality of studies and respond to the results;
- ▶ Articulate an overall strategy for all the University at faculties, showing their role in the process of achieving University set goals (this could include setting specific indicators and targets for faculties).

**The Consultants were impressed with the significant progress and achievements made during the Project period, affirm its highly successful outcome, and wish the University well in the next phases of quality assurance and its further and future development.**

## APPENDIXES

**APENDIX 1 - Summary of compliance with the results and measures of the Project**

Code	Results and measures	Comments on achievements
1.1.1	Prepared Vilnius University studies' quality improvement strategy and studies' quality management model	<p>The Studies' Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Improvement Strategy at Vilnius University (2013-2015) and Vilnius University studies' quality management model, which includes all relevant study-related processes' diagrams; these are prepared and published on the website of Vilnius University Quality Management Centre (see link: <a href="http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/160">http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/160</a>).</p> <p>It should be noted that Vilnius University studies' quality management model is described and mentioned study-related processes' diagrams are provided in Vilnius University Quality Manual (see link: <a href="http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/qme/topic/10298445">http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/qme/topic/10298445</a>).</p>
1.1.2	Prepared Vilnius University Quality Manual	<p>Vilnius University Quality Manual covering all studies' quality-assurance related policies and procedures is prepared and also published on the website of Vilnius University Quality Management Centre (see link: <a href="http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/160">http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/160</a>).</p> <p>Notably, information provided in Vilnius University Quality Manual covers all the seven standards of the ESG and the document is structured accordingly.</p>
1.1.3	Prepared and updated documents necessary for effective functioning of Vilnius University studies' quality management system	<p>As planned, a number of existing documents were updated and new documents were prepared in order to implement the newly developed Vilnius University studies' quality management model. All these documents with some</p>

		<p>exceptions are available on the website of Vilnius University Quality Management Centre (see link: <a href="http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/160">http://www.kvc.cr.vu.lt/site/?q=node/160</a>) [in the case of exceptions mentioned documents are provided on the intranet].</p> <p>Updated documents are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Vilnius University Studies' Regulations;</li><li>▶ Study programmes' quality management documents [Vilnius University Study Programmes' Regulations and other documents];</li><li>▶ Vilnius University Doctoral Studies' Regulations (exact link: <a href="http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/gm/topic/9370042">http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/gm/topic/9370042</a>);</li><li>▶ Procedure of the Evaluation of Vilnius University Students' Achievements;</li><li>▶ Vilnius University Study Process Participants' Feedback Organization Procedure (exact link: <a href="http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/gm/topic/10298487">http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/gm/topic/10298487</a>).</li></ul> <p>Prepared new documents are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ Vilnius University Quality Manual;</li><li>▶ Study programmes' quality management documents [Vilnius University Doctoral Studies' Quality Assurance Procedure and other documents];</li><li>▶ Procedure of Monitoring and Evaluation of Vilnius University Teachers' (Scientists') Qualification Improvement and Competencies' Development Results (available on the intranet);</li><li>▶ Vilnius University Students' Charter;</li><li>▶ Procedures for Information on Studies' Quality Management and Dissemination for Internal and External Stakeholders (available on the intranet);</li><li>▶ Vilnius University study process participants feedback</li></ul>
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		<p>gathering and analysis instruments [methodologies and surveys' questionnaires] (available on the intranet);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ Studies' Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Improvement Strategy at Vilnius University (2013-2015) and Internal Quality Audit Procedure (exact link: <a href="http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/qm/topic/30499">http://skvis.vu.lt/pub/book/qm/topic/30499</a>).</li> </ul>
1.1.4	Implemented Vilnius University studies' quality management system and performed internal quality audits	<p>Findings on Vilnius University studies' quality management system's development and functioning are presented in the report.</p> <p>Internal quality audits were performed at Vilnius University academic units' level during the period of November 2013 - December 2013 [standardized questionnaire based on the ESG were used].</p> <p>Overall, 14 academic departments completed self-evaluation questionnaires; and in 6 departments [Faculty of Chemistry, Faculty of Philosophy, Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, Kaunas Faculty of Humanitarian Sciences, Institute of International Relations and Political Science and Centre of Oriental Studies] internal quality audits were conducted. In the reports of internal quality audit, best practices and recommendations for improvement in the field of studies' quality assurance were identified.</p>
1.1.5	Organized external evaluation of Vilnius University studies' quality management system	<p>External evaluation of Vilnius University studies' quality management system was organized on 6-7<sup>th</sup> January 2014.</p> <p>Results of external evaluation are presented in the report and used criteria are provided in Appendix 4.</p>

1.2.1	Created studies' quality management information system	Studies' Quality Management Information System (SKVIS) has been created and is functioning. Comments on its development and current situation are presented in the report (see chapter "Inception and Progress of the Project, July 2011 - December 2013").
1.2.2	Prepared documentation of project management and administration information system	Specification and other necessary documentation for development and implementation of Project Management Information System (PVIS) were prepared (this includes a detailed User Manual). Based on these documents this system was developed and implemented.
1.2.3	Implemented project management and administration information system	Project Management Information System (PVIS) has been created and is functioning. Comments on its development and current situation are presented in the report (see chapter "Inception and Progress of the Project, July 2011 - December 2013").

**APPENDIX 2 - Schedule of meetings with representatives of Vilnius University**

Date and time	Meeting	Focus group
<b>6<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>		
13:00 - 15:00	With representatives of Quality Management Centre, Studies' Administration Office and International Programmes and Relations Office	I
15:00 - 17:00	With Students' Representation members (students from different academic units)	II
<b>7<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>		
10:00 - 12:00	With Quality Coordinators who are in charge of studies' quality management activities at the level of academic units	III
13:00 - 15:00	With the Pro-Rector for Strategic Affairs, Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs and Chairman of Studies' Committee	IV



**APPENDIX 3 - List of participants**

Focus group	Participant	Position
<b>6<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>		
I	Dr. Inga Milišiūtė	Quality Management Centre, Director
I	Dr. Roma Adomaitienė	Quality Management Centre, Senior specialist
I	Vaida Dagytė	Quality Management Centre, Senior specialist
I (IV)	Jekaterina Bortkevič	Studies' Administration Office, Director
I	Daiva Lepaitė	Studies' Administration Office, Study Programmes Department, Senior specialist
I	Dovilė Savičiūtė	Studies' Administration Office, Study Programmes Department, Senior specialist
II	Andrius Uždanavičius	Students' Representation Body, Academic Affairs Committee coordinator
II	Greta Straigyte	Students' Representation Body, Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, Social Affairs Committee coordinator
II	Arminas Varanauskas	Students' Representation Body, Representative
II	Arnoldas Zdanovičius	Students' Representation Body, Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Academic Affairs Committee member
<b>7<sup>th</sup> January 2014</b>		
III	Dr. Nijolė Radavičienė	Faculty of Philosophy, Professor
III	Linas Būtėnas	Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics, Vice Dean

<b>Focus group</b>	<b>Participant</b>	<b>Position</b>
III	Dr. Margarita Šešelgytė	Institute of International Relations and Political Science, Assistant Director
III	Dr. Loreta Chodzkiene	Institute of Foreign Languages, Assistant Director
III	Dr. Valdas Jaskūnas	Centre of Oriental Studies, Assistant Director
IV	Dr. Kęstutis Dubnikas	Pro-Rector for Academic Affairs
IV	Dr. Juozas Galginaitis	Pro-Rector for Strategic Affairs
IV	Prof. Alfredas Račkauskas	Chairman of Studies' Committee, Professor at the Faculty of Mathematics and Informatics
IV (I)	Jekaterina Bortkevič	Studies' Administration Office, Director

**APPENDIX 4 - External evaluation of Vilnius University internal studies' quality management system criteria (questionnaire used during interviews)**

\* - **Origin** [see below] - indicates the source of a particular question. Explanation of abbreviations: **ESG** - the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area; **SKVC** - the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) [Higher Education Institution Performance Evaluation Methodology, approved by director of the SKVC on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2010 (Order No. 1-01-135)]; **EFQM** - the European Foundation for Quality Management [Excellence Model developed by the EFQM]; **VU** - values stated in the Vilnius University mission and provisions of Vilnius University internal studies' quality management documents [Studies' Quality Assurance Policy and Quality Improvement Strategy at Vilnius University (2013 - 2015), Quality Manual, Vilnius University academic units' self-assessment<sup>1</sup> methodology and other documents]; **Project measures** - the results and measures of the project "Vilnius University Internal Studies' Quality Management System Creation and Implementation" [see Appendix 1].

\*\* - **Focus group** [see below] - indicates to which Vilnius University representative groups particular questions were addressed (e.g. students, senior management) [see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3].

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
<b>1. Quality assurance policy and procedures, quality culture formation (including relevant aspects of university's general management)</b>			
1.1.	Please briefly describe VU management (principles, structure, and other relevant aspects).	-	IV
1.2.	Please describe VU studies' quality management system and its organizational structure. What are the responsibilities of different organizational units and staff in the implementation of studies' quality management system?	ESG, Project measures	I

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<sup>1</sup> Vilnius University academic units' self-assessment is a part of the evaluation of Vilnius University studies' quality management system's functioning.

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
1.3.	What exactly is students' contribution to the implementation of VU studies' quality management system? To what activities and at which level they are involved?	ESG	I
1.4.	Please comment on how student voice across university is heard and how their opinions are acted upon.	ESG, EFQM	II
1.5.	Please briefly comment on VU strategy.	-	IV
1.6.	Do you have a policy and associated procedures (if so please explain) for the assurance of the quality and standards of study programmes and students' awards?	ESG, SKVC, Project measures	I
1.7.	What are the goals of VU studies' quality improvement and how they comply with VU mission, vision, and the demands of stakeholders?	EFQM, VU	I, IV
1.8.	Please describe strategies that are applied for continuous improvement of VU studies' quality. Do students and other stakeholders participate in the process of their development? How it is ensured that stakeholders would participate and defined goals would be implemented?	ESG, EFQM, VU, Project measures	I, IV
1.9.	Please comment on whether the University staff takes personal responsibility in their daily work to nurture quality culture and contribute to quality assurance and improvement.	ESG, EFQM	III
1.10.	Please describe VU studies' quality management system's model (applied studies' quality assurance and improvement methods/ means).	Project measures	I
1.11.	Please explain how VU studies' quality management system (model) is implemented, reviewed, and developed. What kind of challenges VU faces?	ESG	I, IV

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
1.12.	How best practices in the field of quality management across university are collected and shared?	VU	I
1.13.	Please indicate prepared documents and underway procedures that are to ensure effective functioning of VU studies' quality management system.	Project measures	I, III
1.14.	What information technology (IT) tools are applied in developing, implementing, monitoring, and improving VU studies' quality management system? What goals exactly do they serve?	Project measures	I, III
1.15.	Please indicate how and what reports are prepared in relation to VU studies' quality evaluation?	-	I, III
1.16.	Please explain how the University applies facts-based management in implementing studies' quality assurance and continuous improvement. What measurements are employed?	EFQM	IV
1.17.	Please comment on last external evaluation conducted in VU. What were the comments and recommendations? What actions have been implemented after the review?	-	IV
1.18.	Please describe how academic appeals and complains are handled.	-	II, IV
1.19.	Please elaborate on the links between teaching and research activities in VU.	ESG	IV
1.20.	Please comment on the conditions for VU students to participate in research activities.	-	IV
<b>2. Study programmes and awards accreditation, monitoring and periodic reviews (including study programmes preparation and study process quality management)</b>			

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
2.1.	Please describe formal University's mechanisms for approval, periodic review and monitoring of programmes and awards.	ESG, SKVC	IV
2.2.	Please describe formal programmes' approval procedures by external bodies.	ESG, SKVC	IV
2.3.	Please indicate any regular periodic reviews (e.g. every 5 years) of programmes (including external experts' panel).	ESG, SKVC	I, IV
2.4.	Please comment on how University prepares for accreditation.	-	I, IV
2.5.	Please comment on how the University's awarded qualifications comply with National and European qualifications frameworks.	SKVC	I, IV
2.6.	Please comment on how study programmes meet legal requirements.	-	IV
2.7.	Please elaborate on how exactly the intended studying outcomes are defined and how this information is published?	ESG, SKVC, VU	I, II
2.8.	Please describe monitoring system of the progress and achievements of students. For what purpose and how its information is used?	ESG, SKVC, VU	I
2.9.	Please describe the University policy on students' admission.	-	II, IV
2.10.	How is the cooperation among VU academic bodies and industry partners ensured and what is its effect on studies?	VU	I, IV
2.11.	Please comment on how VU ensures and fosters cooperation with foreign higher education institutions and international organizations.	EFQM	II, IV
2.12.	How is the cooperation among teaching personnel, students and social partners ensured in defining and renewing intended study outcomes?	EFQM, VU	II

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
2.13.	How is the cooperation among teaching personnel ensured with regard to renewing study programmes and teaching subjects?	VU	III, IV
2.14.	Please describe any feedback from employers, labour market representatives and other relevant organisations.	ESG	I, III
2.15.	How is the feedback from students, alumni and external stakeholders applied to improve the quality of study programmes?	VU	I, II, IV
2.16.	How are students and external stakeholders informed about their feedback's application in studies' quality improvement initiatives?	VU	II, III
2.17.	Please comment on how is the connection between intended outcomes of study programmes and their subjects assured.	VU	II, III
2.18.	How is the connection between intended studying outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment methods assured?	VU	II, III
2.19.	How is the balance between intended studying outcomes and students workload (credits allocation) kept intact?	VU	II, III
2.20.	How does VU monitor students' workload?	VU	III
2.21.	What is the means of help to improve students' achievements compliance with study programmes' goals (literature, laboratories, classroom equipment, teaching and evaluation methods, etc.)?	VU	II, III
2.22.	Please describe specific needs of different modes of studies' delivery (e.g. full time, part-time, distance-learning, e-learning) and types of studies (e.g. academic, professional, short term courses), as well as the availability of	ESG, VU	II, IV

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
	appropriate learning resources.		
2.23.	Please comment on the opportunities for professional practice provided to the VU students?	-	II, IV
2.24.	What are the opportunities for international mobility of teaching staff and students?	EFQM, VU	I, II
2.25.	What are the different learning opportunities that VU provides for its students?	-	II, IV
2.26.	Please comment on how the quality of study process is managed (planning, implementation, control, improvement).	EFQM	I, IV
2.27.	Please describe how students are assessed in relation to overall assessments' goal - diagnostic, formative or summative.	ESG	II, III
2.28.	Please describe whether you have clear and published criteria for assessment.	ESG	II, III
2.29.	Please comment on how sufficiently the role of assessments is understood in relation to progression towards expected qualification and intended learning outcomes.	ESG	II, IV
2.30.	Please describe, where appropriate, how the assessment system relies on more than the judgements of a single examiner.	ESG	III
2.31.	Please describe how assessment system takes account of all examination regulations.	ESG	II, III
2.32.	Please describe how the assessment regulations cover students' absence, illness, and other mitigating circumstances. Are these circumstances explicitly stated and what procedures accompany them?	ESG	II



No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
2.33.	Please describe how assessments are conducted in accordance to the institutionally stated procedures.	ESG	III
2.34.	Please describe if and how students assessments are subject to administrative verification checks conducted to ensure the adequacy of procedures that are in place.	ESG	I, II, III
2.35.	Please describe how students are informed about the assessment strategy used in their study programme, what examinations or other assessment methods they will be subjected to, what will be expected of them, and the criteria that will be applied to the assessment of their performance.	ESG	II, III
<b>3. Teaching staff quality assurance (including relevant academic personnel management aspects)</b>			
3.1.	Please comment on how in general VU develops its employees' potential.	EFQM	IV
3.2.	Please explain how the quality of teaching staff is assured.	ESG, SKVC	IV
3.3.	Please explain how it is ensured that all new staff have at least the minimum necessary level of competence.	ESG	IV
3.4.	How are the professional competencies of teaching staff ensured?	VU	II, III
3.5.	Please indicate how staff development is organised and its frequency.	ESG, SKVC	IV
3.6.	Please indicate whether self-assessment of pedagogical activities among the academic community is encouraged?	VU	IV
3.7.	How does the motivation and rewards system in place encourage academic staff to develop further competencies and the quality of their work?	VU	IV

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
3.8.	Please explain the procedures in place for dealing with the problem of any poor teaching.	ESG, SKVC	II, IV
3.9.	How do you ensure that the needs of the University employees are satisfied (employees' surveys, interviews, etc.)?	EFQM	II, III, IV
<b>4. Study resources and students support services</b>			
4.1.	What support services and resources are available for students?	ESG, SKVC, VU	II, III
4.2.	Please explain how resources available for the support of students' learning are adequate and appropriate for each programme offered.	ESG, SKVC	II, III
4.3.	How are the planning and analysis of allocated students' support conducted?	VU	II, IV
4.4.	How do you routinely monitor, review and improve the effectiveness of the support services available to students?	ESG, SKVC, VU	II, IV
4.5.	How do you ensure students' feedback in regard to support services offered?	ESG, SKVC, VU	II
<b>5. Information systems</b>			
5.1.	Please explain how it is ensured that relevant information for the effective management of programmes of study and other activities are collected, analysed and used.	ESG, EFQM, SKVC	I, IV
5.2.	Please explain how students' progress and awards are monitored and comment on trends.	ESG, EFQM	I, IV
5.3.	Please explain how the employability of graduates is monitored and comment on trends.	ESG, EFQM	I, IV

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
5.4.	Please explain how students' satisfaction with their programmes is monitored and comment on trends.	ESG, EFQM	I, IV
5.5.	Please explain how the effectiveness of teachers is monitored and comment on trends.	ESG, EFQM	I, IV
5.6.	Please explain what information about students is collected and comment on trends.	ESG, EFQM	I, IV
5.7.	Please explain how learning resources available and their costs are monitored and comment on trends.	ESG, EFQM	I, IV
5.8.	Please explain how the institution's own key performance indicators are monitored and comment on trends.	ESG, EFQM	I, IV
<b>6. Public information</b>			
6.1.	Please describe how the University regularly publishes up to date, impartial and objective information, both quantitative and qualitative, about the programmes and awards it offers.	ESG, SKVC	I, IV
6.2.	Please describe how information on programmes is published.	ESG	I, IV
6.3.	Please elaborate on how learning outcomes, assessment procedures, learning opportunities and awards are published.	ESG	I, IV
6.4.	Please explain how the views of current students, views of past students, employment detail and destinations are published.	ESG	IV
6.5.	Please comment on how the university meets its own expectations in respect of impartiality and objectivity.	ESG	IV

No.	Evaluation criteria and corresponding questions	Origin*	Focus group**
<b>7. Social responsibility</b>			
7.1.	What kind initiatives are implemented by VU in regard to social responsibility principles? How VU is implementing them and who is participating?	EFQM	II, IV

## APENDIX 5 - Brief information about external evaluation team

### Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos, external evaluation team leader

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*Education background:* Awarded with the degree of Doctor of Philosophy by the Senate of the University of Glasgow.

*Current position:*

- ▶ International Consultant;
- ▶ Visiting Scholar at l' Université Catholique de Lille, France.

*Relevant experience:*

Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos has more than twenty years' experience in higher education, as a lecturer, researcher and senior administrator. During his career in higher education, he has made significant contributions to Arts, Humanities and Initial Teacher Education; been well-published in English Literature, Language and Education [his recent writing includes articles on the Bologna Process in Bosnia and Herzegovina]; been a Visiting Fellow of Oxford and Cambridge Universities and guest-lectured at many other UK universities; made international university teaching, programme leadership and examining experience (France); held posts as Deputy Rector of a Grammar School, Dean of Students and Head of English in the UK.

Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos is experienced in international quality assurance and higher-education reform. He has worked with the European Commission, ministries of education, universities and various higher-education agencies.

During 2009–2013, he travelled to many countries, where he has made contributions to University Reform, Quality Assurance and the Bologna Process as consultant, lecturer and staff-developer. This includes:

- ▶ University/European Consultancies: Extensive - in universities across more than 20 countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Kosovo, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania (2012), Malta, Poland, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain and Tunisia;
- ▶ Extended Consultancy: International Expert in the *Reform of Initial Teacher Education* (Serbia); International Expert in *Quality Assurance* and in the *Reform of Pedagogics* (Kosovska Mitrovica); International Expert in *Strategic Direction* (Bosnia and Herzegovina);
- ▶ Experience with the European Commission: Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA) listed expert in several fields relating to higher education; Evaluator of higher education labels for ECTS/Diploma Supplement (Brussels, 2009 - 2010); Directorate-General for Education and Culture (EAC/GHK) *Research and Study on Teacher Education in the Eastern Partnership* (2012 - Researcher, Writer and Presenter); Directorate-General for Education and Culture (EAC/GHK) *Research and Study on Teacher Education in the Western Balkans* (2013 - Researcher, Writer and Presenter);
- ▶ Quality Assurance/Accreditation: Experience in the UK, Armenia, Kosovo, Lithuania (2013), Serbia, Slovenia.

Dr. Terence Clifford-Amos has been Chair for more than 100 validations of degree programmes in Arts, Social Sciences, University Teacher Competences and subjects allied to Medicine.

Membership in professional bodies and other relevant organisations:

- ▶ Member of the International Board of Editors: The Quality of the Education System in Serbia from a European Perspective (Journal and Book Proceedings);
- ▶ Auditor/Reviewer: The Quality Assurance Agency, Gloucester, England;
- ▶ Member (Associate): The Quality Assurance Agency (Partners in Quality Ltd), Gloucester, England;
- ▶ Member (Appointed Foreign Expert): National Evaluation and Accreditation Agency, Bulgaria;
- ▶ Member (Appointed Foreign Expert): Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency (NAKVIS);
- ▶ Member (Appointed Foreign Expert): Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, Lithuania;
- ▶ Listed Foreign Expert: Swiss Centre of Accreditation and Quality Assurance in Higher Education;
- ▶ International Consultant and Adviser: EURASHE (European Association of Institutions in Higher Education).

#### **Dr. Csaba Forgács, external evaluation expert**

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*Education background:* Awarded with the degree of Doctor of Economic Sciences and habilitated.

*Current position:* Professor at Corvinus University of Budapest appointed by the President of the country.

*Relevant experience:*

- ▶ Teaching at Corvinus University of Budapest (and at its predecessors) since 1970;
- ▶ Research in the fields related to agricultural policy;
- ▶ Participating in a number of EU, other international and national research and teaching projects over two decades;
- ▶ Managing international relations of Budapest University of Economic Sciences [predecessor of Corvinus University of Budapest] as Director for International Affairs and later as Vice-Rector for International and Administrative Affairs (1991-2000);
- ▶ Evaluating curriculum development at Hungarian higher education institutions;
- ▶ Expert of National Evaluation Board of Institutional Development Plans for Hungarian higher education institutions;
- ▶ Member of international panel for accrediting study programmes at Lithuanian higher education institutions (two missions in 2013);
- ▶ Managing national and international associations as president (European Association of Agricultural Economists, Hungarian Scholarship Board, etc.) or secretary general (Hungarian Association of Agricultural Economics) over one and a half decade;
- ▶ Organizing and managing number of international workshops, training courses, seminars and congresses.

*Ernst & Young Baltic UAB consultants, external evaluation team members*

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- ▶ Artūras Piliponis, Partner
- ▶ Virginija Kargytė, Senior Consultant
- ▶ Rasa Činčytė, Consultant