



STUDIJŲ KOKYBĖS VERTINIMO CENTRAS

Alytaus kolegijos
**STUDIJŲ PROGRAMOS *TRANSPORTO IR LOGISTIKOS*
VERSLAS (valstybinis kodas - 653N18006)
VERTINIMO IŠVADOS**

**EVALUATION REPORT
OF *TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS BUSINESS* (state code -
653N18006)
STUDY PROGRAMME
at Alytus College**

Review' team:

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Išvados parengtos anglų kalba
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DUOMENYS APIE ĮVERTINTĄ PROGRAMĄ

Studijų programos pavadinimas	<i>Transporto ir logistikos verslas</i>
Valstybinis kodas	653N18006
Studijų sritis	Socialiniai mokslai
Studijų kryptis	Verslas
Studijų programos rūšis	Koleginės studijos
Studijų pakopa	Pirmoji
Studijų forma (trukmė metais)	Nuolatinė (3), iššęstinė (4)
Studijų programos apimtis kreditais	180
Suteikiamas laipsnis ir (ar) profesinė kvalifikacija	Transporto ir logistikos profesinis bakalauras
Studijų programos įregistravimo data	2013-03-04

INFORMATION ON EVALUATED STUDY PROGRAMME

Title of the study programme	<i>Transport and Logistics Business</i>
State code	653N18006
Study area	Social Sciences
Study field	Business
Type of the study programme	College studies
Study cycle	First
Study mode (length in years)	Full-time (3), part-time (4)
Volume of the study programme in credits	180
Degree and (or) professional qualifications awarded	Professional Bachelor of Transport and Logistics
Date of registration of the study programme	4 th March, 2013

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The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education

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I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the evaluation process

The evaluation of on-going study programmes is based on the **Methodology for evaluation of Higher Education study programmes**, approved by Order No 1-01-162 of 20 December 2010 of the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereafter – SKVC).

The evaluation is intended to help higher education institutions to constantly improve their study programmes 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) *visit of the review team at the higher education institution*; 3) *production of the evaluation report by the review team and its publication*; 4) *follow-up activities*.

On the basis of external evaluation report of the study programme SKVC takes a decision to accredit study programme either for 6 years or for 3 years. If the programme evaluation is negative such a programme is not accredited.

The programme is **accredited for 6 years** if all evaluation areas are evaluated as “very good” (4 points) or “good” (3 points).

The programme is **accredited for 3 years** if none of the areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point) and at least one evaluation area was evaluated as “satisfactory” (2 points).

The programme is **not accredited** if at least one of evaluation areas was evaluated as “unsatisfactory” (1 point).

1.2. Background of the HEI/Faculty/Study field/ Additional information

The objective of this report is to evaluate Alytus College’s (AC) “Transport and Logistics Business” (TLB) professional Bachelor’s study programme. It was introduced in 2014 and is now being offered in a full-time and a part-time format with identical contents. AC was founded as a state institution of higher education in 2000, when it emerged from the reorganisation of Alytus Higher Business School which, in turn, was established in 1960 and which was – inter alia – experienced in offering transport and logistics-related study programmes. Since 2000, it has prepared some 3.000 specialists for the labour market (30.000 since its beginnings in 1960).

AC, which is the only higher education institution in this region of Lithuania, has two faculties: “Management and Technologies” (which hosts the TLB programme) and “ICT”. Together, they offer a total of 13 study programmes at the professional Bachelor’s level with a focus on social sciences (six study programmes including TLB) technological sciences (six study programmes), and biomedical sciences (one study programme). Currently, some 2,000 students are enrolled at AC.

AC actively pursues an internationalisation strategy by being involved in a number of international exchange programs for students and staff members at the EU level (Erasmus+) and beyond. The college is especially active in attracting incoming students from abroad, including but not limited to other EU member states, the CIS countries and Asia, in particular from the Indian Subcontinent.

Transportation and warehousing services form the backbone of Lithuania’s economy with a 13 per cent share of the country’s GDP. As the sector is still growing, there is a clear market niche for trained specialists in this field. In this context, it is important to note that of the roughly 1.600 road haulage carriers which are registered in Lithuanian, around 100 are from the Alytus region.

Consistently, the TLB study programme was a key component of AC's Plan of Strategic Activities 2014-2016 and also firmly embedded in AC's mission. Accordingly, AC will offer study programmes which produce professionally qualified specialists in the fields of business and technology who are trained to work independently for the social and economic benefit of the Alytus region and Lithuania as a whole; moreover, graduates are expected to have grown into well-rounded, i.e. creative, enterprising and ethically responsible personalities during their studies at AC. The decision to offer an English variant of the TLB from 2018 therefore reflects, on the one hand, the increasing demand of employers for specialist with fluency in foreign languages. On the other hand, it is fully in line with AC's internationalisation strategy.

1.3. The Review Team

The review team was completed according *Description of experts' recruitment*, approved by order No. 1-01-151 of Acting Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. The Review Visit to HEI was conducted by the team on *24th April, 2017*.

1. **Dr. Andreas Knorr (team leader)**, *Professor of Economics: Economic Policy and Transport Policy, German University of Public Administration Sciences Speyer, Germany;*
2. **Mr. Nicholas Coleman**, *lecturer, Course Leader for Aviation Management, London Metropolitan University, United Kingdom;*
3. **Dr. Igors Graurs**, *Rector of Transport and Telecommunication Institute, Coordinator of Development Projects in Latvian Agriculture University (until 2016), Latvia;*
4. **Mr. Remigijus Šeris**, *Chief executive officer, JSC Lithuanian Radio and Television Center, Lithuania;*
5. **Mr. Linas Misevičius**, *student of ISM University of Management and Economics study programme International Marketing and Management, Lithuania.*

Evaluation coordinator – Ms. Dovilė Žeimienė.

II. PROGRAMME ANALYSIS

2.1. Programme aims and learning outcomes

Both the TLB's programme aims and learning outcomes are well documented in the SER (p. 9) and they are also published in full on AC's dedicated study programme website (<http://alytauskolegija.lt/transport-and-logistics-business/>; all internet sources quoted in this report were last accessed May 31st, 2017). Both are therefore fully accessible to all interested parties, especially the key stakeholders, i.e. enrolled students, prospective students, their parents, and social partners including employers.

The TLB study programme's aims, which are identical for both the full-time and the part-time version of the programme, are to train qualified transport and logistics business (emphasis added by the review team) specialists at the professional bachelor's level who are equipped with the latest relevant knowledge of the field, who are able to understand and manage transport and logistics businesses throughout the entire value chains, who are good communicators and act entrepreneurially (SER, p. 9; <http://alytauskolegija.lt/transport-and-logistics-business/>). The programme aims are identical for the full-time and the part-time variants of the study programme. The programme aims must then be broken down to and implemented through adequate learning outcomes which, in turn, require a variety of custom-tailored teaching, learning and assessment methods to instil in students the necessary skills, competences and

know-how to be able to act as good professional specialists in the job market. Learning outcomes are identical for the full-time and the part-time variants of the study programme.

The reviewers found that the programme aims and learning outcomes are logically consistent, well-defined, clearly formulated and carefully derived from and designed to fulfil AC's mission which is strongly focused on contributing positively to the economic growth and development of the Alytus regions and Lithuania as a whole by producing highly-qualified specialists for the labour market and to be a major source of know-how transfer into society. Programme aims and learning outcomes are also in line with international standards in the area of transport and logistics-related Bachelor' studies programmes which have a focus on the business (as opposed to the technical-engineering) side of the field. Accordingly, the title of the TLB study programme clearly reflects these specific programme aims and learning outcomes.

Due to the strict adherence to all pertinent legal requirements and through the continuous and comprehensive formalized stakeholder feedback procedures, programme management ensures that all relevant state, local and labour market needs are adequately considered in their definition. Moreover, the review team was able to verify in its interviews during the on-site visit that all relevant stakeholders – in particular lecturers and students - are familiar with both the programme aims and the learning outcomes.

Currently, a total of eight learning outcomes which reflect five different focus areas – knowledge and its application, ability to carry out research, special abilities, social abilities and personal abilities - were defined to ensure effective delivery of the TLB's programme aims (SER, p. 9; <http://alytauskolegija.lt/transport-and-logistics-business/>).

The review team acknowledges that these eight learning outcomes - and hence the academic and practical skills, competences and know-how which have been acquired by graduates upon the completion of the programme - correspond well to the formal, the academic and professional requirements of a level 6 study programme and especially to those of a professional Bachelor's degree.

In particular, the reviewers found the decision by programme management - in close cooperation with stakeholder groups - to limit to eight clearly defined and distinct one the number of learning outcomes to be a thoughtful approach to ensure their effective delivery throughout the programme. In short, this relatively low number makes it much easier for programme management and lecturers alike to avoid unnecessary redundancies and to use differentiated teaching, learning and assessment methods for their delivery. This positive assessment is mirrored from the students' perspective as they benefit from full transparency and no overload in the delivery of learning outcomes in the different programme components.

2.2. Curriculum design

As was well documented in the SER, and verified by the review team before and during the on-site visits, all legal requirements for a level 6 study programme in Lithuania are fulfilled by the TLB programme. In terms of ECTS, the TLB's scope is 180 credit points, both for its full-time and its part-time variant. The total number of study hours is identical for both variants and stands at 4.800 for each.

In both variants, ECTS credits are evenly spread out throughout every study year and amount to 60 ECTS/year for the full-time variant and to 45 ECTS/year for the part-time version of the TLB programme. While the number of ECTS/semester is the also same throughout the full-time variant (30 ECTS/semester), ECTS credits are more differentiated in the part-time variant which sees the yearly 45 ECTS subdivided into 24 in each odd semester (i.e. the first, third, fifth and

seventh semester) versus 21 ECTS in every even semester (i.e. the second, fourth and sixth and eighth semester). The allocation of ECTS to individual courses, practical trainings and the graduation thesis is reasonable differentiated at 3, 6 and 9 ECTS credit intervals to reflect actual student's workloads appropriately.

The review team found the information on the curriculum in the SER (p. 10-13) very detailed and informative. All relevant curriculum information is also made available to students in print and online. Moreover, lecturers provide all relevant information one more time at the beginning of each course. The generally good access to curriculum- and assessment-related information was confirmed by students and graduates in the interviews during the on-site visit.

Based on their analysis of the SER (including its pertinent Annexes) and their interviews with stakeholder groups, the review team concluded, first, that the TLB programme's course contents, syllabi and delivery methods are fully in line with the academic requirements for a level 6 professional Bachelor's programme. The review team concluded, second, that – throughout the entire curriculum – the TLB Programme does not only offer a well-balanced and comprehensive mix of general subjects, compulsory subjects, optional subjects and several regular practical trainings which are didactically relevant and necessary to achieving all defined learning outcomes of the TLB programme. Finally, the reviewers also found the proportion between theoretically based academic contents and practical training and their deep integration throughout the curriculum a very effective approach to achieving the programme aims and learning outcomes. Contact hours and independent study hours each account for 50 per cent of study time.

In this context, the variety and overall fitness for purpose of delivery methods was also verified by the review team; it found them to be reasonable and adequate for a level 6 studies programme in the area of transport and logistics business and with respect to achieving programme aims and, eventually, learning outcomes. In particular, the strong emphasis on self-study, both individually and, primarily, by group work supported by consultations was considered by the reviewers to be a strong point of the programme's curriculum design. This is also true of the part-time variant of the TLB which adequately addresses the specific needs of part-time students by the combination of 25 per cent contact hours with online delivery through e-learning and blended learning methods.

Reviewers found minimal content overlap between courses (both in the SER and in their interviews with stakeholders). This reflects well programme management's and lecturer's continuous efforts to deliver a well-synchronized sequencing in the delivery of the programme. Generally speaking, the curriculum's sequencing allows for the gradual acquisition of skills, competences and know-how, starting out with a robust theoretical foundation which gives way to more and more practical contents as students move from the first year of study to towards their graduation.

In close cooperation with social partners, the curriculum was reviewed once so far, in 2016. The review team learned from AC's leadership and from programme management that curriculum reviews will become a regular exercise in the future (all study programmes at AC will be covered). Based on pertinent feedback from stakeholders, in particular employers, some modifications were made to the original curriculum. To summarize, the primarily technical-engineering-oriented specialisation "Transport Management and Transport Logistics" was removed from the curriculum. With the objective to strengthen the business-related focus of the TLB, and to align curriculum contents as closely as possible with the study programme title, it was replaced with a new subject ("Freight Forwarding Service in the Logistics Business") (see SER, p. 11 for details).

Apart from the close interaction with stakeholders which ensures that their inputs and requirements are adequately considered in the curriculum (re)design process, the vast majority of lecturers in the programme (74 per cent; see SER, p. 14) have at least three years of practical experience. Most are involved in academic and/or practical projects and have regular access to and/or completed staff development measures such as conference presentations of their own programme-related (and other) research output and staff mobility programs.

The review team found that the overall curriculum is strongly and very consistently focused on the road haulage segment of the transportation and logistics business market. The current focus should, however, not lead programme management to ignore the changing dynamics of the transport market and future trends in the transport business. In particular, in close cooperation with stakeholders from the business, political and administrative communities, thought should be given to include intermodal transport solutions, not least with respect to sea freight and air cargo, to the curriculum, when and wherever appropriate. The additions may further increase the job market prospects on graduates in the future.

The review team also found that room for improvement exists with respect to the quality and quantity foreign language training within the curriculum. While the reviewers acknowledge, and are overall very satisfied with the strong focus on the specific needs of the local and regional labour market, they learned in their interviews with stakeholders, that some transport and logistics businesses in the region are beginning to gradually internationalize their operations. Accordingly, good foreign language proficiency is likely to become an asset for graduates of the TLB programme in the near future. The current curriculum only partly reflects this requirement as the foreign language (students are allowed to choose among English, Russian and French) is only taught in the first two semesters of the study programme as an integral part of the general subjects section of the full-time curriculum before it becomes optional in the second year (in the part-time study plan, the optional part is offered in the fourth and fifth semesters). In the interviews, the review team learned that language training is primarily focused on general language skills only, while specific programme-relevant language skills are notably absent from the curriculum. While the review team acknowledges and appreciates AC's strategic decision to offer an all-English version of the TLB from 2018 to address this shortcomings, enhancements of foreign language training in the 'traditional' TLB should be considered. In particular, the specific (linguistic and intercultural) challenges with respect to providing transport and logistics services to, from and in transit of the CIS countries should be given more space in the curriculum. This includes intensified foreign language training in Russian.

Finally, the review team also found that programme management should actively explore with trade associations and the relevant government bodies whether the study programme's attractiveness may be enhanced further if students were offered the option to acquire professional badges – special certificates, e.g. for dangerous goods handling – in addition to completing the TLB study programme.

2.3. Teaching staff

As for the academic staff who are involved as lecturers in the TLB programme, all legal requirements of Lithuania are fulfilled. This includes the recruiting procedures for new lecturers – by competition for 5 (potentially renewable) year contracts - which are made fully transparent to potential candidates (and which were also made transparent to the review team).

To provide more detail, according to the SER (p. 4; Annex 3.2.), all lecturers have acquired a tertiary level qualification, i.e. at least a Master's degree or an equivalent formal qualification; six hold the degree of Doctor of Science. As was mentioned above, and as was verified by the

analysis of their CVs by the review team, 74 per cent have at least three years of practical experience in a field which is relevant to their teaching areas. A quarter of all subjects taught are delivered by the 6 lecturers who are holders of the degree of a Doctor of Sciences.

As for the age distribution, the average age of the 27 lecturers who are active in the TLB programme – 6 of whom teach the general subject and 21 of whom teach the specific subjects of the TLB programme – currently stands at 49 years which also corresponds roughly to the lecturers' median age. Overall, given the well-balanced mix of older, middle-aged and younger lecturers and their respective professional and academic backgrounds (as evidenced by their CVs and through the interviews conducted by the review team), the lecturer team does provide the broad range of academic qualifications and practical experience which are required to deliver the TLB programme in line with the states programme aims and the learning outcomes.

The ratio of lecturers to students – 1:11 – is good and has remained stable since the programme was started. This is an average figure, however, and, as was verified by the review team on site, and both group work and master thesis supervision is executed with even lower ratios.

Staff turnover is at very low levels – and overall staff satisfaction appears to be high - which has so far guaranteed the stable delivery of the TLB programme over time. However, a low turnover rate may contribute in the long run to somewhat 'sclerotize' the lecturer corps. This may eventually result in outdated delivery methods and lack of exposure to state-of the art academic and practical knowledge. Obviously, this specific programme should only be a concern if the number of (equally or even better qualified) new recruits falls substantially below the number of lecturers who leave, and if no adequate staff development measures are available. As the ample evidence to the contrary in the SER (p. 14-17; Annex 3.4.) demonstrates, there is no reason for concern in this area at the moment. This is because ample opportunities for staff development of all sorts, including staff mobility programs and internships in business, project work, conference participations and other forms of professional and personal development exist, which are also used on a regular basis by the majority of the teaching staff. Examples include staff mobility activities in 23 European and Non-European countries (for a detailed list see Annex 3.3)(complemented by a number of visiting professors from AC's partner institutions in Eastern and Western Europa and the USA), staff development measures in the area of internal quality assurance, and project work under the European social Fund framework, the Leonardo da Vinci innovation transfer programme and the INTERREG IIIa and INTEREG IVc programmes. Moreover, demonstrable evidence exists that the vast majority of lecturers continues to publish their own programme-related research – 43 research articles were published during the assessment period alone -, but also textbooks and methodological guides on a regular basis (although efforts should be made to increase the number of publications in leading Western journals and conference proceedings). The review team therefore concludes that AC's management incl. programme management make adequate precautions so that lecturers remain fully qualified to deliver in terms of the TLB's programme aims and learning outcomes.

2.4. Facilities and learning resources

During the on-site visit, the review team inspected AC's generic and programme-related facilities and learning resources to verify the information which was provided in the SER (p. 17-23). The reviewers found no reasons to complain about the quantity and quality – i.e. the size and the available technical and other equipment – of the classrooms and the labs which are used for the TLB programme. More specifically, 12 study rooms which typically seat up to 30 students are available. They are complemented by three larger auditoriums with 40 to 120 seats where most of the larger groups in the general subjects are taught. 7 rooms are available for practical training which also seat up to 30 students at a time. Due to the smaller number of

students who are enrolled in the TLB programme, facilities are more than adequate in terms of the space provided.

All classrooms are equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual teaching infrastructure, including computers, beamers, whiteboards and TV sets. Wi-Fi access is available throughout the building but also in the student dorm so that students can access the databases and other electronic library resources 24/7.

In order to ensure the adequate delivery of the practical components of the TLB programmes, AC provides two computer labs, a warehouse logistics lab, a load carriage technology lab, a business incubator lab (to host business simulation companies run by student groups), a modern language learning centre which allows for self-study as well as regular language courses, and a computer-aided study room for financial accounting training. All these labs are equipped with current versions of standard software packages and specialized transport and business studies software programmes which are also common in transport and logistics companies throughout Lithuania (see SER, p. 19, for a comprehensive overview of the available TLB-related software). In addition, AC cooperates closely with outside academic and commercial partners (in particular Kaunas University of Technology and the MSDN Academy Alliance) to guarantee that lecturers and students have access state-of-the-art generic and professional software applications for academic and professional training in the TLB programme. Close cooperation have also been established with transport and logistics companies of the Alytus region in the area to offer TLB students a broad range of practical training opportunities.

AC's Information and Independent Studies Centre (IISC) is the principal access point for student and lecturers to generic and programme-related academic literature, databases (e.g. EBSCO) and other relevant print and online resources such as e-books and e-periodicals. The IICS is well-stocked with generic but also TLB-relevant learning and research resources, i.e. textbooks, academic and practitioners' journals, transportation-, logistics- and business-related databases and software solutions which are fully accessible to students in the IISC, specialized labs and - wherever relevant for individual courses - via MODDLE; it is also a full member of the Association of Lithuanian Science Libraries (LMBA) and the Association of Lithuanian College Libraries (LAMB) which allow it to share resource with other higher education institutions throughout Lithuania. Its reading room is open to all students and lectures that enjoy full access to IISC's resources. Adequate seating is provided at all time including examination periods.

Lecturers as well as full-time and part-time students have access to a MOODLE platform to share teaching materials and assignments. Students and lecturers confirmed in the interviews conducted during the on-site that MOODLE is widely and regularly used in in TLB study programme.

Adequate hostel facilities and a canteen is available for full-time and part-time students near the campus. Moreover, sports facilities, including a gym, exist which are currently being expanded to include a small stadium for all sorts of field sports.

2.5. Study process and students' performance assessment

Admission to the TLB study programme is by means of transparent and publicly available admission regulations and procedures, the AC's student admission rules. These rules are also made available to all interest parties on AC's website and are in line with the general legal (minimum) admission requirements which apply to all higher education institutions in Lithuania.

The entrance score is calculated as the weighted average of four key subjects in Lithuania's general higher education admission's test: Mathematics (weight: 0.4), Lithuanian language and

literature (weight: 0.2), foreign language (weight: 0.2) and history or geography (weight: 0.2). The average entrance score in 2016 was rather low at 1.58 points (maximum: 10 points) for full-time students and 2.81 points for part-timers. What is even more concerning, is that average scores deteriorated steadily since the first student cohort was admitted in 2014 (see SER, table 10, p. 23 for details).

The average drop-out rate was 36 per cent of all students who were enrolled in the TLB programme. During the interviews, the review panel learned that most drop-out were not due to the rather low entrance scores, however, but primarily the result of financial pressures, followed by emigration to seek work abroad. In their effort to lower the number of drop-out, AC has reacted with a mix of measure which include more information on the social and financial support which is available for students, in combination with more intense academic supervision of students in the form earlier feedback on their performance and a strengthening of the role of consultancies and social partner involvement in the study process. While it is still too early to assess the effectiveness of these measures in addressing, and potentially reversing the drop-out rate, the review team is satisfied that AC's leadership and the TLB's programme management are fully aware of the problem and have demonstrated their keen interest in investigating the underlying reasons to identify and implement adequate countermeasures.

These extra efforts notwithstanding, and verified in the interviews conducted by the review team with students and graduates, AC has a good tradition of offering all students substantial flexibility with respect to tuition fee payments and the scheduling of classes and examinations to assist them in accommodating their studies with the specific requirement of their work schedules and/or family requirements. It is also noteworthy in this context, that all newly enrolled students are – by groups of four – assigned a tutor is supposed to support them by providing information, consulting students and organising social events. In conclusion, reviewers consider the social and academic support offered to students to be very comprehensive and effective.

Finally, the review team learned from their interviews that well-designed formal arrangements are in place, and work very effectively, to accommodate incoming foreign students, in particular non-EU students, after their arrival and throughout their studies. The pertinent efforts are undertaken by AC's management, programme management, individual lecturers and students and are meant to ensure that these students are quickly and successfully integrated into the local community. Activities include excursions planned and conducted by Lithuanian fellow students, and a comprehensive “welcome package” for newly arriving incomings.

The study process is organized in such a manner that the study plan allows all students to study curriculum, in principle, in the correct sequence and within the specified time frame so that all programme aims and learning outcomes will be achieved. Moreover, the maximum number of classes is capped and must not exceed 8 academic hours per day. Theoretical and practical contents are synchronized well in all study years, both in the full-time and part-time variants of the TLB study programme.

Every semester concludes with a 2 to 3 week examination period; students are allowed to retake examinations they failed (up to three times per failed exam and within a specified period of time). A formalized, clear and transparent procedure for complaints and appeals exists and is communicated to students. Students with handicaps and disabilities are adequately taken care with respect to all aspects of the TLB study programme including examinations. The examination regulations, including rules regarding good academic practice, are made transparent and explain to all students repeatedly throughout their studies. Students are also fully informed about the specific assessment procedures with respect to learning outcomes by lecturers of the TLB study programme, while general assessment rules regarding assessment methods to learning

outcomes are also published on AC's website (http://alytauskolegija.lt/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/Studiju_reglamentas_XVI-dalis_En.pdf).

Among the students and graduates the review team interviewed during their site visit, overall satisfaction with the assessment system was high. There were no allegations of unfair treatment with respect to marking criteria and assessment procedures, and students and graduates were very positive with the feedback they received regularly by lecturers on their academic achievements.

AC actively encourages all students to participate in local, regional, national and international competitions as well as scientific conferences and seminars (some illustrative examples, which are of relevance for the TLB study programme, are listed in the SER, p. 25; they include the "International Quality Management Olympiad", the "National Entrepreneurship Day's" contest "Profadienis" and several seminars in cooperation with business associations and government agencies on topics like sustainable mobility and the protection of intellectual property and customs control). In the interview with the review team, students confirmed that participation in these events is open to all interested students; pertinent information is provided by AC to all students and lecturers.

TLB programme students are offered participation in international student mobility schemes, in particular Erasmus+ programmes. However, the number of TLB students who actually participated is rather low as they are only open to students who achieve good results. In 2015 and 2016, a total of 5 students – for full-timers and one part-timer – have taken the opportunity to study abroad. By comparison, lecturers' participation in international mobility schemes is relatively higher.

A Career and Public Relations Center (CPRC) has been established at AC with the mission to assist all students and graduates in their interaction with social partners and to advise them on key aspects of career planning (including trainings for CV and application writing). Graduates and social partners who were interviewed by the reviewers were generally satisfied with the qualifications which can be acquired in the TLB programme. Around 70 per cent of the programme's graduate work for local and regional companies, most at or above the qualification levels for which they were trained in the TLB study programme (according to the responses the reviewers obtained in their interviews and the results of AC's tracer studies). Some also reported to the review team that they have received assistance from lecturers to set-up their own start-up businesses successfully.

2.6. Programme management

Programme management for the TLB study programme is excellent throughout. All processes are described in full details and very well organised (see SER, p. 31-34). There are also fully in line with the internal definition and distribution of all responsibilities which are also fully transparent to all parties involved in the process. The TLB's programme management is fully embedded into AC's comprehensive and highly differentiated internal quality assurance system also meets the ISO 9001 standards. It was implemented and first certified in 2013 and was recertified in May 2016 until September 15, 2018. A detailed quality management handbook exists, is fully implemented in all study programme-relevant areas and is regularly updated.

The key player in the comprehensive and well-organized internal quality assurance system at AC is the respective Study Programme Committee (SPC). It has seven members headed by the study programme coordinator and represents all study programme-relevant stakeholder groups including students and employers. Experts may be invited to assist in fulfilling its tasks which

is, primarily to collect and analyse twice a year all relevant programme-related data, and the status quo of its implementation and organisation with the objective to produce proposals for programme enhancements, including curriculum redesign, for the Faculty Council. Every three years, the SPC conducts an internal self-assessment of the respective study programme with formalized involvement by all relevant outside stakeholders, in particular, employers' associations, and the regional Chamber of Commerce. In addition, annual surveys are conducted among graduates and employers. Internally, student evaluations are a regular occurrence and are aimed at evaluating not only the lecturers' qualifications and commitment but also students' awareness of and familiarity with learning outcomes. The result of the internal quality assurance systems are communicated at least twice a year to AC's Directorate, the Faculty council, the Academic Board – which represents key academic stakeholders and social partners and primarily has an advisory role - and other relevant bodies. Moreover, seminars and round-table discussions are organised on a regular basis on select quality assurance and programme improvement issues.

In this context, the review team was particularly impressed with the outstanding level of (institutionalized) interaction between the college on the one hand and the local and regional social partners in the business world and in the political and administrative domains strongly follows a holistic triple helix approach of a comprehensive university-industry-government relationship to stimulate economic growth by creating adequate institutions to synchronize the production, the transfer and the application of knowledge. All three sides do not only acknowledge that for the benefit of the region, the municipality and the college, intense cooperation is required. In fact, all relevant decisions are prepared jointly and representatives of all three sides sit on the relevant local and regional decision making bodies.

To summarize, the review team was able to verify during the on-site visits through document checks and the interviews conducted that the internal quality assurance system is an excellent tool which is extremely effective to generate continuous feedback flows from all stakeholders and to effectively process it with the aim of continuously improving internal procedures, study programmes and AC's transfer performance to the regional economy and community as a whole.

2.7. Examples of excellence

First, not only does the college go to great lengths to attract incoming international students, especially from non-EU countries. Most of all, all involved – AC's management, programme management and students – undertake outstanding efforts to ensure incoming foreign students are well taken care of at the college, but are also successfully integrated into the local community. Activities include excursions planned and conducted by Lithuanian fellow students, and a comprehensive “welcome package” for newly arriving incomings.

Second, the (institutionalized) interaction between the college on the one hand and the local and regional social partners in the business world and in the political and administrative domains strongly follows a holistic triple helix approach of a comprehensive university-industry-government relationship to stimulate economic growth by creating adequate institutions to synchronize the production, the transfer and the application of knowledge. All three sides do not only acknowledge that for the benefit of the region, the municipality and the college, intense cooperation is required. In fact, all relevant decisions are prepared jointly and representatives of all three sides sit on the relevant local and regional decision making bodies.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Programme management should actively explore with trade associations and the relevant government bodies whether the study programme's attractiveness may be enhanced further if students were offered the option to acquire professional badges – special certificates, e.g. for dangerous goods handling – in addition to completing the TLB study programme.
2. Programme management should continue to take a dynamic perspective on learning outcomes; these should be regularly reviewed with social partners with the aim to preserve their adequacy and up-to-dateness. This has two dimensions: First, a regular revision would help to ensure high levels of employability among graduates. Second, it is a useful tool to monitor and guarantee the adequate levelness of the study programme's learning outcomes. The existing internal quality assurance system is well-designed and effective to fulfil this task also in the future.
3. The current strong focus on road haulage should not lead programme management to ignore the changing dynamics of the transport market and future trends in the transport business. In particular, thought should be given to include intermodal transport solutions, not least with respect to sea freight and air cargo, to the curriculum, where appropriate. The additions may further increase the job market prospects on graduates in the future.
4. The specific challenges with respect to providing transport and logistics services to, from and in transit of the CIS countries should be given more space in the curriculum. This includes intensified foreign language training in Russian.

IV. SUMMARY

Overall, AC's TLB's professional Bachelor's studies programme provides high quality for all stakeholders. In terms of curricular contents, the main feature of the programme is its clear focus on the business-side of the transport and logistics markets (as opposed to the traditional focus on the technical and engineering aspects of this industry).

Programme aims and learning outcomes are clearly defined in close cooperation with all stakeholders. They are very effectively delivered throughout the curriculum through a good mix of teaching, learning and assessment methods, in particular by means of the very good integration of theoretical and practical components and adequate assessment methods.

The curriculum is well-designed, overlaps are reduced to the didactically necessary minimum and all programme-relevant information is easily accessible for students, prospective students and the public as a whole. Nevertheless, programme management should continue to ensure a continuous review process of the programme in the future using the feedback generated by the excellent internal quality assurance system. In particular, the adequacy of strong focus on road haulage should be reviewed regularly because of the emerging trend towards inter-modal and multi-modal transport and logistics networks. Moreover, the specific requirements of internationalisation in the sector at the crossroads between Western and Eastern Europe (especially the CIS states) should be continuously monitored with stakeholder and, where appropriate, be reflected more strongly in the programme. This includes foreign language training.

Teaching staff fulfil and partly exceed all legal requirements. Staff development measures are in place and lecturers are actively encourage to make regular use of them. Teaching staff participation in mobility programmes is high, as are conference participations and involvement in project work. Teach staff turnover is low which reflects high levels of job satisfaction.

Nevertheless, programme management should ensure that the current balance between young, middle-aged and very experienced senior lecturers is maintained in the future. Facilities and learning resources are fully up to the task to effectively deliver the programme. In particular, students enjoy access to very good practical labs where languages and the use of professional software packages are effectively trained. AC invests in further improving and expanding housing and sports facilities for students.

Entrance requirements are in line with legal regulations, transparent and publicly accessible. However, the average entrance scores are rather low, while the drop-out rate is rather high at 36 per cent. Apart from external factors such as the demographic situation which cannot be influenced by programme management, AC has undertaken comprehensive efforts to address this problem, e.g. by offering additional educational training for low-performing students and through flexible payment schemes for tuition fees as well as through flexible scheduling of classes and examinations. Student support is very good overall, the special efforts undertaken by the institution including students to accommodate international students, especially from non-EU countries, and to integrate them effectively and quickly into the student body and the local community, are exceptional.

Programme management and internal quality assurance are excellent throughout. All relevant processes are described in full detail and individual responsibilities are precisely assigned and transparent to all stakeholders. The ISO 9001-certified internal quality assurance is very effective in generating and processing highly relevant feedback from stakeholders. Programme management and internal quality assurance also benefit massively from the excellent involvement of social partners throughout the Alytus region. Their very comprehensive and active involvement does not only include local transport and logistics companies, but also key decision-makers at the local and regional government level according to the triple-helix approach of regional economic development.

V. GENERAL ASSESSMENT

The study programme *Transport and Logistics Business* (state code – 653N18006) at Alytus College is given **positive** evaluation.

Study programme assessment in points by evaluation areas.

No.	Evaluation Area	Evaluation of an area in points*
1.	Programme aims and learning outcomes	3
2.	Curriculum design	3
3.	Teaching staff	3
4.	Facilities and learning resources	3
5.	Study process and students' performance assessment	3
6.	Programme management	4
	Total:	19

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

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

3 (good) - the field develops systematically, has distinctive features;

4 (very good) - the field is exceptionally good.

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