



**VILNIAUS KOLEGIJA / HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION**

Study Field:

**ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING (E03)**

## **SELF-EVALUATION REPORT**

October 2024

### Study Field Programme

No.	Name	State code	Type	Level of study/ LTQF level	Mode of study and duration in years	Scope in credits	Awarded degree and/or professional qualification	Instruction language	Admission requirements	Date of registration	Place of implementation
1.	Landscape Design	6531EX029	College	First cycle of studies	Full-time studies – 3 years	180	Professional Bachelor in Engineering Sciences	Lithuanian		31/08/2001 No. 1254, Re-registered 26/06/2002 No.1190	

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## INTRODUCTION

Vilniaus kolegija / Higher Education Institution (hereinafter referred to as Kolegija) is an accredited state higher education institution in the Republic of Lithuania, offering higher education studies, applied research, and professional art programmes. Kolegija was established in 2000 through the merger of several specialized higher education institutions.

As of June 5, 2024, following a decision by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, the Vilnius College of Technology and Design was incorporated into Vilniaus kolegija / HEI. Currently, it is the largest institution of professional higher education in Lithuania, catering to the needs of the Vilnius region as well as applicants from Lithuania and the Baltic countries.

The mission of Kolegija is to provide modern higher education studies that meet European standards, promote nationally and internationally recognized applied research and professional art in close cooperation with the business community, and support students in achieving successful professional careers. Through the efforts of its socially responsible academic community, Kolegija contributes to the prosperity of both the Vilnius region and Lithuania.

Kolegija organizes studies at ten faculties: Agrotechnologies, Economics, Electronics and Informatics, Arts and Creative Technologies, Pedagogy, Health Care, and Business Management, Construction, Design, and Technology.

As of October 1, 2024, Kolegija offers 58 study programmes across 12 study field groups and 34 specific study fields, with 6,637 students enrolled in professional bachelor's and short-cycle programmes. Among these students, 553 are international students studying full-time.

As of October 1, 2024, Kolegija employed 560 lecturers. Of these, 0,36% are professors, 18,57% are associate professors (including 6,61% visiting associate professors), 62,86% are senior lecturers and lecturers, 16,77% are practice teachers, and 1,44% are assistants. 120 lecturers hold a scientific degree.

Kolegija has 280 cooperation agreements with international partners from 42 countries. Most of its international partners are higher education institutions within the European Union, but recently its partnerships have expanded to Asia (China, Japan, India) and other regions around the world.

Each year, Kolegija participates in approximately 20 different projects from various programmes, including Erasmus, Nordplus, COST, INTERREG, and others. To achieve its objectives in applied research and experimental development, Kolegija operates 44 research teams, covering 14 research fields and 3 art fields.

Kolegija is actively involved in numerous international organizations and networks, such as EURASHE, UAS4EUROPE, EAIE, EERA, COST, CDIO, BUSINET, ENPHE, EFAD, EFRS, FINE, VETNNET, EAAP, ECLAS, OMEP, COMENIUS ASSOCIATION, ILITE, ELIA, ULIXES, among others. Nationally, it participates in the Rectors' Conference of Lithuanian University Colleges, the Knowledge Economy Forum (KEF), Vilnius Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, the Lithuanian Consortium for the Maintenance and Development of the Lithuanian Research and Study Information System (EDINA), and other organizations and associations. Kolegija also has an extensive international cooperation network, working with more than 290 foreign higher education institutions. It is recognized as one of the leading higher education institutions in Lithuania in terms of student and staff mobility.

Kolegija has consistently ranked highly in national rankings and received prestigious awards. It has been nominated four times (in 2005, 2007, 2017, and 2022) for the "Už pasiekimus" (For Achievements) award among higher education institutions by the Vilnius Chamber of Industry, Commerce, and Crafts. The "Investors' Spotlight" Quality Label was awarded to the Accounting study programme in April 2018 and the Electronic Engineering study programme in June 2020. Kolegija has been participating in the "U-Multirank" World University Ranking since the beginning

of this project. In 2010, Kolegija was awarded the Diploma Supplement label by the European Commission.

Kolegija enjoys autonomy in its academic, administrative, economic, and financial management activities, adhering to the principles of self-governance and academic freedom. This autonomy is balanced with accountability to the public, the Government, and the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport.

Kolegija has collegial governing bodies—the Council and the Academic Council—as well as a single-person governing body, the Rector (hereinafter referred to as the Rector). The Council is responsible for the overall governance of Kolegija, while the Academic Council oversees academic matters. The Rector is the sole executive authority of Kolegija, acting on its behalf and representing it in official matters.

Student interests at Kolegija are represented by the Student Association, which operates as an independent legal entity. Student representation is ensured in both the Academic Council and the Kolegija Council, with one student serving as a member of the Kolegija Council and ten students representing all faculties in the Academic Council. Additionally, student representatives participate in Faculty Councils, the Teaching Competition, the Attestation Committees, and the Curriculum Committees.

Kolegija has the necessary administrative structures to support its various functions, including the administration of its departments, the execution of research and experimental (social and cultural) development tasks, and the management of economic activities. The Faculty is the main organizational unit of Kolegija, responsible for overseeing the studies, applied research, and/or artistic activities related to specific study field groups. It ensures the quality of academic activities and manages the planning and development of the Faculty's operations. Each Faculty consists of departments, laboratories, centers, units, and other services.

Career advice and information services for students are provided by the Career Centre. The centre offers guidance on internships, job searches, labor market trends, and career planning. It also plays a key role in fostering entrepreneurial skills among students.

The Centre for Physical Education and Sports coordinates physical education, sports, and fitness activities for both students and lecturers. It provides opportunities for participants to maintain and improve their health, engage in their favorite sports, and take part in competitions. Students can also explore artistic expression through Kolegija's ensemble "Voruta" and the girls' choir "Vaidilutės".

The Faculty of Agrotechnologies (hereinafter referred to as the Faculty) is a unit of Kolegija responsible for organizing studies and applied research within relevant study field groups, ensuring the quality of academic activities, and planning the Faculty's operations. The Dean manages and represents the Faculty, while the Vice-Dean coordinates academic activities. The Faculty comprises three departments: the Department of Landscape Management and Agribusiness Technologies, the Department of Chemistry and Food Technology, and the Department of Veterinary. Each department is headed by an appointed leader who reports to the Vice-Dean. The study process within the Faculty is overseen by the Vice-Dean, under the authority of the Dean and the Study Department. Students' interests are represented by the Faculty's Student Association. The academic self-governance of the Faculty is managed by the Faculty Council.

There is only one study programme (hereinafter referred to as the Programme), *Landscape Design* (6531EX029), in the *Environmental Engineering* (E03) study field under the Engineering Sciences (E) study field group at Kolegija. The Programme has been offered at Kolegija since September 1, 2001. It was accredited by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (hereinafter referred to as the Centre) under Order No. 1-73 "On the Accreditation of Study Programs" dated August 17, 2009.

In 2012, the Landscape Design programme (formerly named Landscapes and Their Design) was accredited for a period of six years, receiving a score of 19 out of 24. In 2014, following surveys of employers, students, and lecturers, as well as discussions within the study programme committee, the programme's name was changed from “Landscapes and Their Design” to “Landscape Design” to better reflect the full scope of activities performed by specialists in the Field. Until 2016, according to the list of study fields approved by Order No. V-222 of the Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on February 19, 2010, the programme belonged to the study field of Engineering (H900) and the branch of Landscape Design (H930).

The Minister of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania approved a new list of study fields and study field groups for higher education studies, as well as a revised qualification degree structure, by Order No. V-1075 of December 1, 2016 (updated by Order No. V-1298 of July 19, 2021). Currently, the Landscape Design programme is part of the Engineering Sciences (E) study field group and the *Environmental Engineering* (E03) study field. Environmental Engineering was accredited for a period of three years on May 4, 2022, based on the external evaluation report (No. SV4-42) prepared by expert reviewers.

The *Environmental Engineering* Study Field Committee (SFC), considering the conclusions from the expert evaluation and the 2022 Quality Monitoring Report of the Environmental Engineering study field, decided to conduct a survey of employers and social partners regarding the need for the Programme, as well as the results and content of the studies (Protocol No. 12 from the meeting on September 30, 2022). Based on the survey results, the Environmental Engineering Study Field Committee (Protocol No. 13 from the meeting on November 21, 2022) established a working group (Order No. AT V1-34 from the Dean of the Faculty of Agrotechnologies, dated December 21, 2022), which updated the description of the *Landscape Design* programme to align with the *Environmental Engineering* Study Field.

## STUDY FIELD ANALYSIS

### 1. Study aims, learning outcomes, and content

**1.1. Evaluation of the conformity of the aims and outcomes of the field study programme to the needs of society and/or the labor market.** Based on the conclusions of the international experts from the external evaluation of the first cycle of the *Environmental Engineering* study field (hereinafter referred to as the Study Field), as well as the description of the Engineering Sciences study field group approved by Order No. V-948 issued by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania on July 5, 2023, and the Law on Green Spaces of the Republic of Lithuania (March 23, 2021, No. XIV-199), improvements have been made to the programme outcomes and the study plan for full-time (both full-time and sessional) students. Additionally, meetings were held with students, employers, and social partners to clarify and affirm the relevance of the *Environmental Engineering* study field Programme. In the autumn semester of 2022, a survey was conducted on the need for the Programme, its learning outcomes, and its content. The survey included representatives from private, public, and private limited companies that provide landscaping services. The results showed that a majority of respondents (66.7%) supported the inclusion of the programme in the *Environmental Engineering* study field, while less than a third (30%) saw it fitting within the Agricultural study field, and only a small fraction (12.5%) considered it part of the Arts study field. Notably, more than half of the respondents (66.7%) indicated that graduates would be more marketable if they had additional engineering knowledge.

The population of the Vilnius region has grown by 8.5% over the last decade. Real estate development trends are towards single-family or detached residential houses with private land plots, which creates preconditions for the growth in the scope of activities for environmental management specialists in the Vilnius region.



The programme aims to train professional bachelors of engineering sciences who are capable of: designing and implementing landscaping projects for residential building plots and small-scale landscape architecture objects; executing the design of landscape structures and facilities; participating in the design of engineering systems for planted areas; managing greenery maintenance; and organizing the cultivation of ornamental plants.

The learning outcomes of the Programme are relevant, addressing the needs of individuals and society in professional fields. They encompass graduates' knowledge and its application, research capabilities, and their development of specific, social, and personal skills. A detailed description of the Program is provided in ANNEX 1A. The *Knowledge and its Application* (A) group includes three (3) programme learning outcomes, the *Ability to Conduct Research* (B) group includes two (2) learning outcomes, the *Special Skills* (C) group consists of nine (9) learning outcomes, the *Social Skills* (D) group includes three (3) learning outcomes, and the *Personal Skills* (E) group includes two (2) learning outcomes. Each set of learning outcomes, which characterizes a particular level of study, is pursued through the relevant subjects within the Programme.

**1.2. Evaluation of the conformity of the field study programme aims and outcomes with the mission, objectives of activities and strategy of the HEI.** By implementing the Field Programme, the Faculty fulfills the [\*Mission of Vilniaus Kolegija\*](#): to provide modern higher education that meets European standards, to foster the development of nationally and internationally recognized applied research and professional art, and to ensure effective collaboration with the business world. These efforts aim to support students in achieving successful professional careers and contribute to the well-being of the Vilnius region and the State of Lithuania through the work of a socially responsible academic community.

The aim of the programme and its learning outcomes align with the main operational objectives outlined in Kolegija's 2021-2025 Strategy: to provide professional higher education and lifelong learning that meet the demands of both the Lithuanian and international labor markets; to advance applied research, experimental development, and impactful professional art that are relevant to the world of work; to enhance the institution's positive impact on the country and region; and to foster an organizational culture centered on community engagement and a socially responsible spirit. The connections between the programme's learning outcomes and specific subjects are detailed in ANNEXES 3A and 3B.

The Programme is designed in accordance with the requirements set forth in national and European Union legislation, as well as other documents that outline the professional and general competency standards for graduates of professional higher education (see ANNEX 1B).

### **1.3. Evaluation of the compliance of the field study programme with legal requirements.**

The structure of the Programme complies with the requirements of the General Description of the Conduct of Studies (see ANNEX 1C). The Programme consists of 180 credits. Of these, 13 credits are allocated to general subjects of higher education studies, and 163 credits are dedicated to the study field. Specifically, 118 credits are allocated to study field subjects, 35 credits - to professional practice, and 10 credits - to the preparation of the final thesis. Free elective subjects account for 4 credits. A total of 1,641 hours (34%) is dedicated to practical training, while contact work accounts for 2,529 hours (52.7%) and independent student work for 2,271 hours (47.3%). The duration of the Programme is 3 years, comprising 6 semesters, with 30 credits per semester.

The study plan of the Programme (ANNEX 2) is designed with a balanced ratio of theoretical and practical classes, along with hours dedicated to independent work. The focus is on developing and strengthening practical skills, as well as fostering purposeful and creative independent work abilities. All subjects are assessed either through examinations or project work. The scope of each course is determined by evaluating the student workload necessary to achieve the intended learning outcomes. The primary references for preparing the Programme Description (the Committee of the *Environmental Engineering* Study Field (SFC), on November 10, 2023, meeting Protocol No. 15)

were [\*Description of the Engineering Science Study Field Group\*](#) (approved by Minister of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania Order No. V-948 on July 5, 2023), and the [\*New version of the Law No. X-1241 on the green spaces of the Republic of Lithuania\*](#) (published by President of the Republic of Lithuania Order No. XIV-199 on March 23, 2021).

The Programme aims to achieve its objectives through its learning outcomes, which emphasize student-centered learning. This is accomplished by selecting study methods, assessment techniques, and activities that empower students to take an active role in their own learning process.

**1.4. Evaluation of compatibility of aims, learning outcomes, teaching/learning and assessment methods of the field study programme.** The coherence between the Programme's learning outcomes and the learning outcomes of individual subjects is detailed in the course descriptions. These descriptions outline the course's purpose, the expected outcomes, how these outcomes align with the Programme's learning outcomes, the required preparation, the balance of contact and independent work, the main topics covered, the teaching methods used, and the methods and criteria for assessing student achievements. The connections between the program's learning outcomes and those of the individual subjects are provided in ANNEX 3A.

The learning outcomes assessment system provides a clear overview of how well a student is progressing in achieving the intended learning outcomes, allowing for timely identification of deviations, feedback, and ongoing monitoring of student progress. The study process employs teaching and assessment methods that align with the learning outcomes. The Programme's learning outcomes are closely interconnected and reflected in the learning outcomes of individual subjects, complementing one another to achieve the Programme's overall objectives. Future professionals are educated through a variety of study methods, including academic lectures, interactive lectures, problem-based learning, individual practical tasks, problem-solving, practical assignments, creative work, case studies, discussions, group work, project work, group creative projects, individual counseling, consultancy, literature reviews, the study of educational and scientific literature, reference sources, and independent work (project).

The connections between the Programme's aim, learning outcomes, subjects, study methods, and assessment methods are outlined in ANNEX 3B. The Programme is designed to teach students how to apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations. A cumulative assessment approach is used to evaluate student achievement. The final assessment is composed of the results of interim evaluations and a final assessment, which could be an examination or project. Student achievement is evaluated using a criterion-based system, with assessments based on predetermined criteria.

The assessment of learning outcomes follows the [\*Outline of Procedures for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes\*](#). The assessment process is objective, with students being informed of the assessment criteria and procedures for each subject at the beginning of the semester. The assessment is impartial and designed to motivate students to learn and achieve their learning outcomes. Final assessments are conducted during the examination period and may be completed in the virtual learning environment (VLE) MOODLE. In subjects where the final assessment involves a project, project defenses are organized.

**1.5. Evaluation of the totality of the field study programme subjects/modules, which ensures consistent development of competencies of students.** The curriculum of the Programme is structured coherently, with specific subjects aligned to the Programme's learning outcomes. The content of the subjects is developed collaboratively by the lecturers, ensuring alignment with the latest trends in the sector and coordination with the SFC. This approach avoids content duplication and ensures the complementarity of study subjects. The course outline indicates the sequence in which courses should be taken. The logic of the Programme's content is detailed in ANNEX 4. All ideas for improving the Programme are discussed and documented during SFC meetings. The study process follows the principles of Bloom's taxonomy. First, students acquire foundational knowledge and are encouraged to develop understanding. Then, through practice-oriented tasks, students demonstrate

their ability to apply knowledge and perform analysis. Finally, through projects or complex assignments, students showcase their synthesis and evaluation skills.

The autumn and spring semesters of the first year cover the general subjects of higher education, which are important not only for building subject-specific skills but also for developing personal and social experiences that will support further studies. The **Professional Foreign Language** course is structured around the key element of foreign language learning—the communicative field. It develops the language skills necessary for professional contexts, including understanding and analyzing texts on professional topics, creating or summarizing professional texts, and using key forms and structures of professional language. The course includes topics related to studies and career opportunities, the importance of plants in human life, horticulture, general design principles, landscape design, environmental engineering vocabulary, and communication and presentation skills.

The **Research Methodology** course provides students with knowledge of the principles, methods, and tools for collecting, processing, analyzing, and interpreting information. It aims to develop students' ability to apply this knowledge in practical activities, foster logical and critical thinking, and enhance problem-solving competencies.

**Basics of Communication** introduces the fundamental principles of positive communication, communication techniques and styles, public speaking skills, and listening culture. It also covers communication in professional environments, working in groups or teams, self-awareness, and the evaluation of oneself and others, as well as conflict resolution strategies.

**Applied Mathematics** equips students with knowledge of mathematical models and methods, along with their practical applications. This course enhances students' competencies in analysis, logical and critical thinking, and problem-solving.

In the first semester, the **Fundamentals of Natural Science** course is taught to explain the interrelationships between the processes that shape natural complexes, providing essential knowledge and practical experience in protecting landscape values and planning activities within a sustainable development context. The course covers landscape features and values, the system of protected areas, soil-water processes, principles of soil diagnosis, and the sustainable use of natural resources.

The **Herbaceous Ornamental Plants** course provides students with knowledge of herbaceous ornamental plants suitable for landscapes, including their classification, morphological, ornamental, and bioecological characteristics, as well as the principles of propagation, cultivation, and usage in landscape design. It also introduces students to the basics of creating naturalistic-style flowerbeds.

**Applied Dendrology** offers fundamental knowledge of plant morphology and systematics, including an overview of the pine and woody magnolia genera that grow and are cultivated in Lithuania, along with the most commonly cultivated species and varieties. The course explores the possibilities of using woody ornamental plants in landscapes and helps students develop plant characterization skills.

**Architectural Graphics** develops students' drawing and compositional skills, along with the ability to process, evaluate, and summarize graphic data, and apply them in landscape design projects.

**Engineering Graphics** introduces students to engineering graphics objects, international and national standards, drawing design, geometric drawings, projection drawings, technical drawings, building drawings, landscape drawings, and the use of AutoCAD for automated design.

In the spring semester, the study of **Herbaceous Ornamental Plants** continues, reinforcing the knowledge gained through the **Applied Practice of Herbaceous Plants**. This practice focuses on developing the ability to categorize herbaceous ornamental plants based on their usage in the landscape. Students practice identifying herbaceous ornamental plants in field collections, analyzing their growing conditions, and learning propagation techniques. Similarly, the knowledge acquired in the autumn semester in **Applied Dendrology** is reinforced through the **Applied Practice of**

**Dendrology**, which deepens students' understanding of the most important ornamental woody plant species. This practice covers their use in green areas and enhances the ability to identify, characterize, and incorporate woody plants into landscape designs.

In the second semester, the **Computer Graphics** course introduces students to the main methods of modern graphic editors and systems, discussing their capabilities and limitations. It develops the ability to independently create and retouch photographs and montages using Photopea software. Additionally, students gain skills in creating landscape design projects using SketchUp. Simultaneously, the **Basics of Landscape Composition** course is taught, which analyzes the objective requirements, physiological and biological conditions, and vegetation that influence landscape layout. It introduces the artistic principles of landscape design and the bio-constructive role of woody plants in a landscape. The course also covers the development of regular and free-standing garden structures, helping students build skills in designing landscape projects.

In the autumn semester of the second year, the course **Basics of Environment Management Construction** is designed to develop students' ability to select appropriate materials for landscaping design projects, considering material properties, their intended purpose, and environmental conditions. Students learn to understand which products are suitable for different operating conditions and develop practical skills in selecting materials for landscaping projects. This includes preparing technical specifications, identifying material properties, and ensuring materials are used according to their intended purpose. The **Basics of Arboriculture** course focuses on arboriculture as an interdisciplinary activity aimed at managing the growth of woody plants while maintaining their biological viability, health, and protection within an ecological and landscape context. Arboriculture involves various technical, physical, legal, social, and ecological factors. The knowledge of basic natural sciences and applied arboriculture gained during the first year of study is essential for successfully studying arboriculture in this course.

**Landscape Architecture** is taught during both the autumn and spring semesters of the second year. By this time, students have already completed courses in *Engineering Graphics*, *Architectural Graphics*, *Basics of Landscape Composition*, *Applied Dendrology*, and *Herbaceous Ornamental Plants*, as well as practical training in both *Applied Dendrology* and *Herbaceous Ornamental Plants*. The knowledge and skills acquired in the first year are essential for *Landscape Architecture* studies, where students learn to evaluate existing green spaces and develop landscape design or reconstruction projects. The **Measurement Technology for Engineering** course provides students with foundational knowledge in surveying. Students learn how to perform basic geodesic measurements using modern geodesic instruments, understand coordinate and elevation systems, analyze topographic plans and terrain, determine point altitudes, and gain an understanding of land surveying techniques.

The purpose of the **Machinery for the Installation and Maintenance of Landscapes** course is to provide students with knowledge of machinery and tools used for the installation and maintenance of landscapes. In the autumn semester, students undertake a **Practice in the field of Landscaping**, where they acquire specific skills related to landscaping and develop the ability to work independently in organizing landscaping tasks, as well as collaborating effectively in group settings.

The **Landscape Maintenance and Management** course focuses on the cultivation and care of ornamental plants, including plant protection measures and their implementation. It covers the planning and organization of technological processes for plant care. At the end of the spring semester, students undertake the **Practice of Landscape Maintenance and Management**, which is designed to provide hands-on experience in landscape maintenance techniques and management. This practice aims to develop competencies in the cultivation and upkeep of herbaceous and woody ornamental plants, as well as the effective use of tools for maintenance and management.

The subject of **Environmental Engineering** spans three semesters (3rd, 4th, and 5th semesters) and provides knowledge in the design of engineering preparation networks for territories.

It develops practical skills in applying this knowledge to prepare project plans for land-use planning, water supply and wastewater drainage assessments, technical drawings for landscape design, building construction (site improvement), and landscape architecture. These projects are evaluated according to the Green Deal and Ecodesign Directive requirements, using the Green Index indicators. The knowledge gained from the study of *Applied Mathematics*, *Fundamentals of Natural Sciences*, *Research Methodology*, *Engineering Graphics*, and *Measurement Technology for Engineering* is crucial for the subject.

The **Ornamental Plant Growing Technology and Engineering** course, taught in the 5th semester, provides students with the knowledge and skills necessary for competence in ornamental plant growing technology and engineering. The purpose of the **Residential Landscape Architecture** course is to equip students with the knowledge and practical experience required to design landscapes for single-family residential plots.

In the autumn semester of the third year, students take the **Engineering Economics** course, which explains how to organize business activities, calculate, and evaluate the material, labor, financial, and investment needs of an enterprise, as well as the available resources. In the spring semester, the **Business Management** course analyzes the business environment and principles, comparing the advantages and disadvantages of different types of business organizations. It also covers the concept of small and medium-sized businesses and sustainable management practices.

The **Practice of Computer Design**, conducted during the 5th and 6th semesters, equips students with the skills to convey ideas and solutions using computer programs such as AutoCAD and SketchUp. It also develops their ability to visualize landscaping designs using Lumion software.

The **Landscape Structures and Installations** course provides practical skills in preparing original designs, selecting landscape structures and installations, and creating technical drawings and specifications. It offers knowledge of construction techniques for landscape structures and installations, focusing on the use of specific materials or products, the unique characteristics of these structures, and the technology involved in construction processes. The course also helps students develop the ability to select durable materials and products for designing and constructing landscape structures and installations.

The **Final Professional Practice** takes place during the 5th and 6th semesters and is designed to deepen students' practical skills while ensuring the integration of theoretical knowledge into specific real-world activities. This practice helps students acquire essential organizational and practical skills and gather material for their final thesis. During the *Final Professional Practice*, students observe, analyze, and actively participate in the operations of a landscaping company. They gain experience in organizational and management methods, analyze design documentation for landscaping projects prepared by the company, and familiarize themselves with installed and maintained green areas as well as new landscaping projects in development.

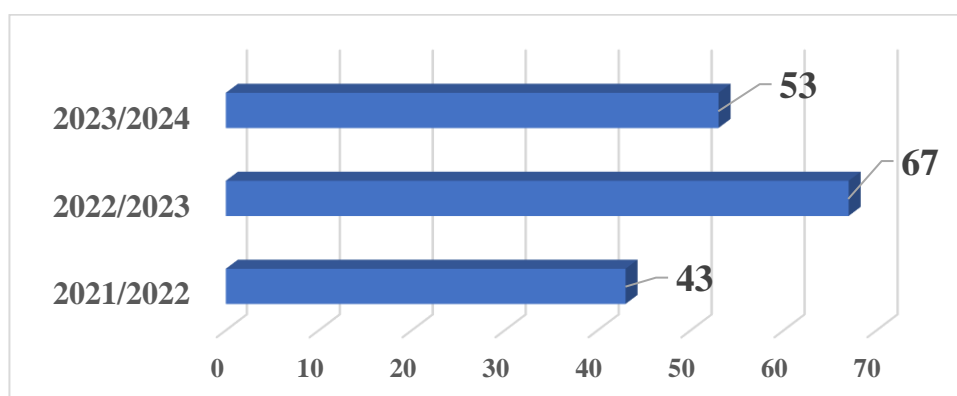
**1.6. Evaluation of opportunities for students to personalize the structure of field study programme according to their personal learning objectives and intended learning outcomes.** The individualization of study plans during the period under review was implemented in the following ways: by including partial learning outcomes and allowing students to choose subjects from a list of free electives. Students have the option to freely select subjects from the list offered by their Faculty as well as from other faculties. The Programme students were offered the following free electives: **Web Development Tools and Management** (4 credits), **Customer Behavior and Communication** (4 credits), **Wellness and Physical Activity** (4 credits), or courses offered by other faculties.

The updated *Description of the Procedure for the Organisation of Free Elective Subjects (Modules) Studies* (approved by the Academic Council Resolution No. AT N-7 on June 5, 2024) outlines the planning of free elective subject (FES) studies, the process for student selection, and the procedures for organizing FES studies at Kolegija. This update provides students with a broader range of opportunities to freely choose subjects from other faculties. Students can select free elective



subjects based on their interests, hobbies, opportunities, and their intended or preferred career path. The cases and procedures for the individualization of the study plan are governed by the [Description of the Procedure for Individualisation of the Study Plan](#).

**1.7. Evaluation of compliance of final theses with the field requirements.** The **Final Thesis** (hereafter referred to as the FT) is prepared and defended during the sixth semester. Through the preparation of the thesis, students develop critical and analytical thinking skills. The themes of the FT focus on achieving learning outcomes, developing general and professional competencies, and fostering social responsibility. A list of the *Final Theses* from the last three years' graduates, including the topic, supervisor, and grade, is provided in ANNEX 5. Some of the FTs are commissioned by companies and institutions, and the resulting landscaping projects are made available to natural and legal clients. The importance of commissioned FTs is undeniable, as it fosters collaboration between students, lecturers, and clients, promoting a meaningful dialogue. It also encourages natural or legal clients to engage with the academic community of the Faculty. In the academic year 2021-2022, fourteen (14) students from the Programme successfully defended their theses, with 6 graduates (43%) working on commissioned projects. In 2022-2023, twenty-one (21) graduates defended their FTs, with 14 (67%) working on commissioned projects. In 2023-2024, seventeen (17) students defended their FTs, and 9 (53%) thesis were commissioned (Figure 1). The percentage of commissioned projects in the total number of FTs in the Programme is among the highest at Kolegija.



**Figure 1.** Part of commissioned projects (FT) as a percentage of all Final Theses produced by programme students in 2021-2024.

The *Final Theses* (FTs) commissioned by social partners and defended by students of the Programme from 2021 to 2024 are presented in ANNEX 6A. Noteworthy commissioned projects include the “Landscaping Project of Leisure and Sports Center at 41 Kalnalaukio Street in Širvintos” (2021-2022), commissioned by the administration of the Leisure and Sports Centre of Širvintos district. The Vilnius University Botanical Garden commissioned a project in 2022-2023 titled “Collection Development Project of the Variety of Ligneous Plants with Edible Fruits in VU Botanic Garden in Kairėnai”. Another notable project, the “Landscape Design Project of M. K. Čiurlionis Art School Recreation Area at 29 Užkanavės Street in Kunigiškės, Palanga Town” (2022-2023), was commissioned by the National M.K. Čiurlionis School of Arts Administration. Additionally, the Jakai Community Centre commissioned a landscaping project titled “Arrangement Project of Community Park in Jakai Urban Settlement” (2022-2023).

A significant request in 2023-2024 came from the Municipality of Šalčininkai District, leading to two commissioned FTs: “Design Proposals for the Landscaping of the Entrance Area of the Civil Registry Office of Šalčininkai District Municipality” and “Redevelopment Project of the Green Spaces of Šalčininkai District Municipal Square Located at 49 Vilnius Street in Šalčininkai”.

The *Final Theses* are prepared and defended in accordance with the [Procedures for the Preparation and Defence of Final Theses \(Projects\) of Kolegija and the methodological guidelines](#)

for the preparation and defence of the Final Thesis (project) of the study programme Landscape Design (ANNEX 6B), approved by the Dean of the Faculty under Order No. AT V1-44, dated December 30, 2023.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Study aims, outcomes and content</i>			
1.	Recommendation	Actions taken	Comments
	The curriculum should focus more on architecture and design and less on engineering. Students and employers are interested in the landscape design, horticulture and gardening aspects of the study programme, but there is little interest in the engineering part of the programme, and there are not enough competent lecturers specifically in the field of civil engineering. It is considered that it is inappropriate to classify the study programme as an Environmental Engineering study field programme and that it could be better classified as a Landscape Architecture study field programme or, possibly, an Urban Green Infrastructure study field programme.	<p>A survey was conducted to assess the need for the program, its outcomes, and content. Representatives from private companies, public institutions, and limited liability companies participated in the survey, with the majority (66.7%) supporting the inclusion of the Programme in the <i>Environmental Engineering</i> study field.</p> <p>In accordance with the Description of the Engineering Sciences Study Field Group (Order No. V-948 of the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, dated July 5, 2023) and the Law on Amendments to the Law on Landscapes of the Republic of Lithuania (No. X-1241, No. XIV-199 of March 23, 2021), the programme's learning outcomes and study plan for full-time (both full-time and sessional) students were updated.</p> <p>Meetings with students, employers, and social partners were organized to gather suggestions for improving the program and to validate the relevance of its content and learning outcomes within the <i>Environmental Engineering</i> study field.</p>	

The main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Study aims, outcomes and content</i>	
<b>Strengths</b>	
<p>1. The Landscape Design study field programme integrates three disciplines: natural sciences, engineering sciences, and design. The updated description of the study programme and study plans (approved by Academic Council Resolution No. ATN-2 on February 22, 2023) reflect the latest trends in the field of <i>Environmental Engineering</i> science and studies.</p> <p>2. Students have the opportunity to personalize their study plans to align with their individual study goals and learning outcomes.</p>	
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	
Shifting trends and advancing technologies in environmental management drive the continuous updating of study content.	

## 2. Links between science (art) and study activities

**2.1. Evaluation of the sufficiency of the applied science activities implemented by the HEI for the field of research related to the field of study.** In line with other EU countries, Lithuania is increasing public funding for studies, research, and experimental development (R&D) activities, making R&D a compulsory prerequisite for higher education studies. To improve the quality of higher education, institutions are now required to engage in R&D activities as an integral part of their educational programmes. Beginning in 2028, higher education institutions will directly link their studies to applied R&D activities. The expert evaluation of applied R&D activities at higher education institutions is set to begin in 2028. The evaluation of Kolegija's R&D activities will assess their quality, economic and social impact, and future potential. The evaluation will be organized by the Research Council of Lithuania, with participation from independent experts from international professional higher education institutions.

It is important to note that Kolegija joined the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (CoARA) and signed the agreement on October 4, 2023. This agreement on research assessment reform sets a common direction for changes in the assessment practices of research, researchers, and research organizations, with the ultimate goal of maximizing the quality and impact of research. It outlines the principles, commitments, and timeframes for reform and establishes a coalition of organizations committed to working together to bring about meaningful change. Research, experimental development (R&D), and artistic activities at Kolegija are conducted under the [\*Kolegija R&D and Artistic Activities programme 2022-2025\*](#) (approved by the Academic Council Resolution No. AT N-5 on April 6, 2022). The programme aims to enhance the level of R&D and artistic activities at Kolegija, in line with the institution's 2021-2025 strategy, and to create a positive impact on the country and region.

By Order No. V-112 dated May 4, 2023, from the Rector of Kolegija, titled “On the Approval of the List of Research Groups and Their Coordinators at Kolegija According to the Scientific/Artistic Fields of Study for 2023-2024”, 14 scientific/artistic research groups and 3 artistic research groups, covering 27 study fields, were formalized. Prospective guidelines for R&D and artistic activities are updated annually with the goal of planning, organizing, evaluating, and coordinating the activities of research teams across different scientific and artistic fields. Based on these guidelines, Field research group annually develops activity plans and conduct [applied research](#). Projects such as residential landscaping, public institution plot development, recreational space development as well as landscaping projects for spaces adapted for educational purposes should be mentioned.

Students are actively integrated into research teams according to their field of study. Those involved in R&D activities are eligible for targeted allowances, particularly in cases where additional resources are required for their research. The [\*Description of the Procedure for Awarding Scholarships for Scientific or Artistic Achievements and Targeted Payments to Students for Scientific and Artistic Activities\*](#) (approved by Order No. V-62 of the Rector on February 29, 2024) regulates the awarding and payment of scholarships for academic and artistic achievements at Kolegija, as well as the procedure for targeted payments to students engaged in scientific or artistic activities.

The Rules of Procedure of Kolegija Research Ethics Compliance Committee (approved by Order No. V-214 of the Rector on September 8, 2022) were prepared in accordance with the [\*Guidelines for the Assessment of Research Ethics Compliance\*](#). The composition of the Committee on Compliance with Research Ethics was approved by Academic Council Resolution No. AT N-9 on October 25, 2023.

To support the academic community in assessing research ethics compliance, ensuring adherence to the principles of academic integrity, and protecting the interests of research subjects, including humans and animals, the *Description of the Procedure for the Assessment of Compliance with Research Ethics* was adopted by Academic Council Resolution No. AT-1 on January 23, 2024. This procedure is intended to serve as a quality indicator for research, addressing issues of reliability, integrity, completeness, and data management. Major changes in this area are necessary due to rising global demands for academic ethics, as researchers are increasingly required to have research ethics approval to secure funding or publish results in high-impact journals. The document outlines general and specific ethical provisions that must be applied to research requiring critical evaluation and reflection.

Kolegija is committed to disseminating its research to the public, following the recommendations outlined in the *Procedures for the Assessment of Compliance with Research Ethics*. An institutional research register has been created and is published on the [Kolegija website](#).

**2.2. Evaluation of the link between the content of studies and the latest developments in science and technology.** To familiarize the academic community with the new Framework Programme for Research and Innovation [“Horizon Europe”](#), Kolegija is organizing meetings with National Contact Points (NCPs) starting in January 2024. These meetings will provide up-to-date information and comprehensive guidance on various topics related to the programme's rules and



participation. To further strengthen the competencies of the institution's researchers, periodic training courses are being organized in cooperation with national and international institutions such as the Lithuanian Research Council, the Office of the Ombudsperson for Academic Ethics and Procedures of the Republic of Lithuania, EURASHE, and others.

Teachers in the Field actively participate in the EU research and innovation programme Horizon Europe. Kolegija serves as the national center in Lithuania for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT) educational programme "FoodEducators." In September 2024, additional applications were submitted under two new calls of the Horizon Europe programme:

HORIZON-WIDERA-2024-TALENTS-03: Building Research Excellence and Innovation Capacity in WIDERA Agriculture for the Twin (Green and Digital) Transition (Coordinator: Poland, Duration: 48 months).

HORIZON-EIE-2024-CONNECT-02: AgriTECHuptake: Elevating Skills and Integrating Next-Generation Smart Farming Technologies within Research, Education, and SMEs (Coordinator: Greece, Duration: 24 months).

Examples of the integration of applied research results into the Programme studies are provided in ANNEX 7A. Applied research conducted by lecturers is closely linked to the learning outcomes of the subjects they teach, and students engage in research activities through practical and project work. For instance, the research project "Reuse of Rainwater" is integrated into the studies of the *Environmental Engineering* course. The *Basics of Environment Management Construction* course incorporates studies on "The Use of Waste in Environmental Management" and "Purpose of Innovative Materials." The course *Landscape Structures and Installations* includes the study "The Use of Secondary Raw Materials in the Construction of Landscaping Structures".

The study "Evaluation of the Variation of Soil Physical Properties Depending on the Use of Frass Fertilizer" has been integrated into the *Fundamentals of Natural Sciences* course. In 2022, first-year students gained subject-specific and research competencies through the *Practice of Applied Herbaceous Plants*, which included the study "Selection of an Assortment for Naturalistic Planting."

Additionally, students of the *Research Methodology* course conducted a study in 2022 on "Vertical Planting Features in Vilnius City," the results of which are applied in the *Landscape Architecture* course. Every year, during the *Practice of Applied Dendrology*, students carry out the study "Arboricultural Assessment of Newly Planted Trees in Vilnius," providing important skills for further studies in *Basics of Arboriculture* and *Landscape Architecture* courses.

The practical classes for the *Environmental Engineering* course, specifically in *Site Engineering Preparation*, include on-site practical work (2022-2023, 2023-2024). During these sessions, students conduct the study "Rainwater Quantity Surveys and Qualitative Cluster Assessment."

Third-year students actively participated in a workshop for the European Waste Reduction Week on November 24, 2021. Seminar materials and presentations were prepared and delivered by the following individuals: Liubou Vinslovė: "Protecting the Dark: Light Pollution in Cities"; Eglė Cibulskienė and Lina Tirevičienė: "Cleaning Products for a Sustainable Household"; Eglė Makselytė: "Sustainable Creative Solutions in Art"; Audrius Garunkštis: "Application of Zero-Waste Technology in Ornamental Plants' Nurseries".

In 2021, lecturers from the field conducted a commissioned study titled "Effect of Biochar-Enriched Substrate on the Production Quality of Spinach (*Spinacia oleracea*).” Contract No. TMV-5 for this commissioned study was signed on April 12, 2021, with the commissioning body UAB MRE Investicija.

In 2023, field lecturers carried out a commissioned study titled "Effect of Frass-Enriched Soil on the Productivity of White Mustard (*Sinapis alba*)" in collaboration with researchers from the Chemistry area of the Natural Sciences. The study focused on the excrement of larvae from the Frass

giant Molitor (*Tenebrio molitor*). Contract No. TMV-16 for the commissioning of the study was signed on May 31, 2023, with the client UAB Divaks.

Two objectives were set for the study: to investigate the agrochemical properties of the soil used; and to assess the effect of different Frass enrichments on the productivity of white mustard. The study was conducted in the teaching plant and the applied research laboratory of the Faculty of Agrotechnologies at Kolegija. Six students from the Programme participated in the preparatory phase, and two students were involved in the implementation, data collection, and analysis.

In 2024, activities with the research sponsor, UAB Divaks, continued with the study "Influence of Soil Enriched with Frass Fertilizers on the Productivity of Horticultural Plants." Contract No. TMV-21 for this study was signed on May 9, 2024, and it includes research on additional plant varieties.

**2.3. Evaluation of conditions for students to get involved in applied science activities consistent with their study cycle.** The Faculty annually organizes the international scientific-practical conference *Modern Technologies for Sustainable Environment*, which helps students develop competencies in conducting applied research, analyzing research data, preparing papers, and disseminating their findings at conferences and seminars. The papers presented at the conference address current trends in human well-being, technological advances, digitalization solutions in business, and environmental and sustainability issues. In 2022, five (5) students from the Programme presented papers at the Scientific and Practical Conference "Modern Technologies for a Sustainable Environment 2022" (ANNEX 7B).

During the 2022-2023 academic year, M. Rutalė (ZD21), a student in the Programme, actively participated in AR&D activities, conducting research on the biological potential of plants. The research results were presented at the Faculty's scientific-practical conference *Modern Technologies for Sustainable Environment 2023*, and a publication was prepared for the conference proceedings.

Two (2) students from the Programme, Evelina Verbickaitė (ZD23) and Mindaugas Rutalė (ZD21), presented their papers at the Faculty's International Scientific and Practical Conference *Modern Technologies for Sustainable Environment 2024*. These papers will be published in the Conference Proceedings in autumn 2024. Additionally, in 2024, Mindaugas Rutalė (ZD21), a third-year student in the Programme, presented two poster presentations at the VMU 30th International Scientific and Practical Conference "Human and Natural Safety 2024."

Dr. R. Kondratienė and R. Kondratas, study field lecturers, along with second-year students from the Programme, participated in the "Green Ideas" festival for schoolchildren held at the Presidential Palace on June 5, 2024, where they showcased an innovative technology for vertical plant cultivation.

Second-year students Ugnė Bujanauskaitė, Gintautas Kerpiškis, Rokas Kalibatas, Loreta Bačiulienė, and Mindaugas Rutalė, together with their lecturers, Prof. Dr. Marina Valentukevičienė, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ramunė Žurauskienė, and Rita Šuminskienė, participated in the 2024 workshop of the project "[Smart City 10](#)", organized by the social media magazine Structum. During the workshops, the Faculty of Agrotechnologies team met with representatives from the Vilnius District Municipality and 16 project sponsors. The students presented their innovative and sustainable solutions for the environmental improvement project of the Kasmiškės Community Centre. They discussed project-related concerns and received valuable advice on achieving the best results in creating an attractive environment for the community. Considering the evaluation criteria and the solutions proposed for the project, the team developed an environmental improvement [project](#) based on innovative and sustainable solutions for the Kasmiškės Community Centre.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Links between science (art) and study activities</i>			
I.	Recommendation	Actions taken	Comments

The amount of research carried out by lecturers should be increased. This would only be possible if the number of PhD holders in Kolegija increased.	<p>Seven (7) PhD holders teach in the <i>Environmental Engineering</i> study field, representing more than half of the total lecturers in the field. Lecturers continuously work to improve their research competencies.</p> <p>Applied Research and Experimental Development (AR&amp;ED) activities constitute 33% of an assistant professor's total workload and 10% of a lecturer's total workload.</p>	
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The main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Links between science (art) and study activities</i>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students participate in the annual international scientific and practical conference "Modern Technologies for a Sustainable Environment", delivering presentations and preparing publications.</li> <li>2. Lecturers are involved in commissioned project activities and applied research, successfully integrating their research findings into the subjects they teach.</li> <li>3. Lecturers continuously develop their subject expertise and research competencies.</li> </ol>
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Expand the dissemination of applied research results at conferences both in Lithuania and abroad.</li> <li>2. Increase student involvement in applied research and commissioned project work, and motivate them to participate in the activities of the Student Scientific Society (SSS).</li> <li>3. Publish articles in scientific journals and engage in interdisciplinary research.</li> <li>4. Enhance the internationalization of studies and research by collaborating with foreign higher education institutions on projects and research activities.</li> </ol>

### 3. Student admission and support

**3.1. Evaluation of the suitability and publicity of the student selection and admission criteria and process.** Student admission to the study field Programme is conducted according to the student admission rules approved by the Academic Council of Kolegija. Admission requirements for applicants are published on [Kolegija website](#), and the admission process is organized and administered by LAMA BPO. The common student admission system enhances the accessibility of information about study programmes, simplifies document processing procedures, and ensures transparency in both the admission process and the publication of results.

Admission requirements for applicants are established in the *Description of the Procedure for Establishing the Competitive Queue*, as approved by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania. The primary admission criterion is the applicant's attainment in secondary education, which includes their scores in state matriculation examinations (or equivalent) and the minimum competition score.

The list of competitive subjects by study field is published by Kolegija at least two years before the start of the relevant academic year. The minimum requirements for admission are determined by an order from the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport, based on the year of secondary education and the minimum competition score, and are published on the [Kolegija website](#).

The competition score is calculated as the sum of the marks obtained in the maturity certificate subjects and/or entrance examinations, multiplied by specific weighting factors, along with additional points for the applicant's other achievements. For the period 2021-2023, the minimum admission score set by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania was 4.3.

Starting from 2024, the Ministry introduced a new requirement for all applicants to have passed at least three (3) state matriculation exams: Lithuanian Language and Literature, Mathematics, and a third exam of their choice. The arithmetic average of the marks in these state matriculation exams must meet the satisfactory level of learning achievement as outlined in the matriculation examination syllabuses, as determined by the Minister of Education, Science, and Sport.

As of 2024, higher education institutions set their own minimum competition scores, with Kolegija establishing a minimum competition score of 3.2 for admission.

Additional marks for other achievements are added to the competition score as specified in the *Description of the Procedure for Establishing the Competition Queue*. These additional points are awarded for the following:

for applicants to all fields of study, achievements in international and national Olympiads and competitions are considered. Points are added for 1st place or gold medal, 2nd place or silver medal, 3rd place or bronze medal. Only Olympiads and competitions included in the procedures for establishing the competition queue, as approved annually by the Minister for Education, Science, and Sport, are eligible for additional points;

applicants who have completed vocational training programmes in the same field of education with distinction, or those with at least one year of work experience in the same field of education, also receive additional points;

additional points are also awarded to applicants who have participated in international volunteering projects funded by Erasmus+ or the European Solidarity Corps, or in the National Youth Voluntary Action Programme, where the volunteering activity lasted at least 3 months, or in the Youth Voluntary Service (YVS) programme, where the voluntary activity lasted at least 6 months;

After the general admission period, institutional admissions to non-state-funded places are organized by the faculties until August 31. Information about available study places is published on the Kolegija website, as well as on Facebook and Instagram, and is also available by phone and email. Candidates must apply form, copies of relevant documents, and meet the minimum entry requirements.

Student selection and admission procedures are publicized through various channels, including: on the Faculty website under [Admissions](#); on the [Lamabpo.lt website](#); at thematic exhibitions and fairs, such as Studies (Vilnius) and the Higher Education Institutions Fair (Kaunas); During VIKO Open Days (Vilnius); in the magazine “[Where to Study?](#)” (lt. Kur stoti?); at meetings with students and social partners; through email and telephone consultations; at the International Agricultural Exhibition “What Will You Sow...” (lt. Ką pasėsi...) (Kaunas).

To encourage young people to take an interest in the Programme, Kolegija and the Faculty organize Open Days, visits to schools, lessons for students, and science promotion events.

When submitting their applications, applicants indicate their preferred type of funding: a state-funded study place (vf), a non-state-funded study place (vnf), or a non-state-funded study place with a study scholarship (vnf/st).

Data on enrolment results are presented in Table 1. The first-choice competition rate over the last three years has ranged from 0.73 to 1.80. The number of students signing contracts has remained relatively stable between 2021 and 2023, with a slight decrease in 2022 and a return to 2021 levels in 2023, influenced by the results of state matriculation exams and the competition scores of applicants.

**Table 1.** Number of applicants to the study programme *Landscape Design* for 2021 – 2023.

Year	Study programme	Candidates (first choice/all choices)	Number of contracts signed (for state-funded places)	Number of contracts signed (for non-state-funded places)	Total number of admissions
2021-2022	Landscape Design	59/174	24	5	29
2022-2023	Landscape Design	51/174	18	6	24
2023-2024	Landscape Design	28/105	27	1	28

Data on the competition scores of students admitted to the Programme for 2021-2023 are presented in Table 2. The Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania has

adopted a minimum competition score of 4.3 each year, and the analysis will discuss each year's estimate separately. The enrolment scores for 2021-2023 are relatively high. The average admission score is highest in 2021.

**Table 2.** Entry scores for the *Landscape Design* study programme for 2021-2023.

Year	Study programme	Entry score		
		Highest	Lowest	Average
2021-2022	Landscape Design	9,20	4,32	6,76
2022-2023.	Landscape Design	9,24	4,56	6,46
2023-2024	Landscape Design	9,07	4,32	5,14

The entry scores of applicants to the Programme are an indication of their sufficient readiness to study. The difference between the first admitted student and the last admitted student was 4.88 in 2021, 4.68 in 2022, and 4.75 in 2023. The difference in competition scores between the first and the last admitted students varies from year to year, reflecting the heterogeneity of the academic groups in the programme.

**Table 3.** Number of students studying in the Programme of *Environmental Engineering* study field in 2021 – 2023.

Study Field Programme	2021	2022	2023
Landscape Design	72	70	65
<b>Total in Environmental Engineering study field:</b>	72	70	65

The number of students in the field is given on October 1 each year (Table 3). The number of students enrolled has decreased by 9.7% over the last 3 years. Due to negative demographic trends, enrolments are decreasing, partly as a result of the minimum competition score which is strictly enforced in the admissions process of Kolegija.

**3.2. Evaluation of the procedure of recognition of foreign qualifications, partial studies and prior non-formal and informal learning and its application.** The assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications for applicants is organized and carried out by a member of the Study Centre personnel appointed by order of the Rector of Kolegija. The procedure for the assessment and academic recognition of foreign qualifications is outlined in the [Rules for the Academic Recognition of Education and Qualifications Related to Higher Education and Obtained Under the Educational Programmes of Foreign Countries and International Organisations for Applicants to Kolegija](#).

The procedure for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning is outlined in the [Procedures for the Assessment and Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning Achievements at Kolegija](#). This document specifies that candidates who have acquired knowledge and skills through experience—whether in work or voluntary activities, non-formal education programmes, or self-directed learning—are eligible to participate in the assessment and recognition process for non-formal and informal learning achievements. The main requirements include a minimum of secondary education and at least three years of work experience in the relevant field. There have been no candidates seeking recognition of qualifications obtained abroad or competencies acquired through non-formal and informal learning in the Field.

The procedure for crediting partial learning outcomes is outlined in the [Learning Outcomes Crediting Procedure](#). Following the regulations, an individual seeking credit for previous study results must submit the following to the Head of the Study Department: a certificate of studies from a higher education institution in Lithuania or abroad, a copy of the diploma supplement, a request for crediting courses, and a description of the courses to be credited. Once the formal requirements are reviewed, the documents are forwarded to the Head of the Department. Based on the submitted documents, the Head of the Department assesses the alignment of the individual's learning outcomes with the requirements of the relevant study programme or its components. A Credit Card is then completed to



record the decision. The decision on partial crediting of learning outcomes is formalized through a learning outcome credit card, which must be approved and registered by the Dean on the recommendation of the Head of the Faculty's Study Department within one month of receiving the documents. Credits are awarded if the learning outcomes are substantially equivalent to those of the programme or part thereof. There are no restrictions for crediting free elective courses. However, the final thesis cannot be credited, and no more than 75% of the study programme can be credited.

In the academic year 2021-2022, 35 requests for credit were received. All requests met the requirements for partial credit, and a total of 200 credits were granted. In the academic year 2022-2023, thirty-one (31) requests were received, including four (4) for Erasmus+ mobility credit. All applications fulfilled the requirements for partial credit, resulting in 256 credits being awarded, with 116 credits coming from Erasmus+ mobility. For the period 2023-2024, 38 student applications were received, including four (4) for Erasmus+ credit. All requests were approved, and a total of 243 credits were awarded, fifty-two (52) of which were from Erasmus+ mobility. The percentage of students who participated in part-time studies at higher education institutions abroad (with at least 15 study credits) as a proportion of the total number of students enrolled in the study field has increased by 5.71 percentage points over the last three years.

**3.3. Evaluation of conditions for ensuring academic mobility of students.** The Erasmus+ exchange programme is the primary tool for student mobility and is open to advanced students in all courses. Information about the conditions and opportunities for participating in the programme is available on the Kolegija website in both [Lithuanian](#) and [English](#). Announcements about the Erasmus+ competitions are published on the Kolegija and Faculty websites, on Kolegija's social media accounts, and sent to students via email. Erasmus+ information events are organized, and students in each academic group receive individual counseling.

Students are provided with a list of higher education institutions with which bilateral agreements have been established. They complete their applications through a shared electronic system. The selection of students is conducted by a selection committee appointed by the Dean of the Faculty.

Preparation for mobility is facilitated by information published on the Kolegija and Faculty websites, and through group emails. Additionally, students receive individual advice from the Faculty's Erasmus+ Coordinator. For successful applicants, Kolegija organizes an information seminar led by the *Project Manager for International Relations and Projects*, who oversees the mobility of outgoing students, providing detailed instructions on how to prepare for mobility.

The Faculty's Erasmus+ Coordinator assists students in establishing contact with the foreign higher education institution and in preparing the necessary documents for participation in the Erasmus+ programme. The Department's lecturers also actively encourage students to gain experience by studying in an international environment.

After completing their studies abroad, students submit documents verifying the duration of their stay and the grades they received for the courses taken. They also fill out a descriptive study exchange report and share their best practices, which are published on the [Faculty website](#). Outgoing students are encouraged to participate in mobility programmes by interacting with lecturers from foreign higher education institutions who visit the Faculty to give lectures during the study process as well as during international weeks.

Faculty lecturers who return from mobility teaching visits to foreign higher education institutions also share valuable information about those institutions with students. Additionally, students studying in non-state-funded places are exempted from paying tuition fees during their mobility period.

Students also participate in other international mobility opportunities, such as Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs). During the academic year 2023-2024, the Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) titled "Sustainable Landscaping Solutions for Urban Areas" was implemented,

aimed at developing skills in applying sustainability-oriented solutions in landscaping to connect people with nature. The programme was attended by 20 students and 5 lecturers from VIVES University of Applied Sciences (Belgium) and University of Life Sciences “King Mihai I” in Timisoara (Romania), along with 7 students and 6 lecturers from this study programme. Students who successfully completed the BIP activities were awarded a 3-credit free elective course.

During the period under analysis, students from the Programme also participated in partial studies at foreign higher education institutions, including the Slovak University of Agriculture in Nitra, Slovakia, and University College Ghent in Belgium. Additionally, students completed practical training at the University of Life Sciences “King Mihai I” in Timisoara, Romania (Table 4).

Eight (8) students came to Kolegija for part-semester studies, including one from Royal Thimphu College, Bhutan, and seven (7) from Gdansk University, Poland. Three (3) of the Gdansk University students extended their Erasmus+ part-semester studies for an additional semester.

**Table 4.** Mobility during studies of incoming/outgoing students for part-time study or practice (of at least 15 study credits) in the study field.

Year of study	Number of students per study field	Number of outgoing students	Percentage of outgoing students, %	Number of incoming students	Percentage of incoming students, %.
2023-2024	65	1	1,54	7	10,8
2022-2023	70	4	5,71	1	1,43
2021-2022	72	4	5,56	0	0

During the three-year period analyzed, no international students enrolled for full-time study.

**3.4. Assessment of the suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of the academic, financial, social, psychological and personal support provided to the students of the field.** Academic support for Field students is provided throughout the academic year. Students receive information and guidance on a wide range of topics, including: the study system (study programmes, options for changing programs, study subjects, and ways of organizing studies); the study process (study timetables, class and examination schedules, reporting and evaluation of subjects, opportunities to improve learning outcomes, the procedure for submitting appeals, academic debts and their resolution, and crediting of learning outcomes); internships, including their requirements, performance, and payment; termination, resumption, and suspension of studies; payment for studies; procedures for awarding scholarships and grants; completion of studies; students' rights and obligations; student incentives and penalties; changes in study financing, reimbursement of the state budget, and refund of study costs.

Students receive advice from lecturers during designated consultation times, and student counseling is increasingly being offered through the electronic study environment. Library personnel regularly assist students in using the Aleph electronic catalog, databases, information retrieval systems, and proper citation of scientific articles for essays and other academic tasks.

Students intending to study part-time at a foreign higher education institution select their subjects/modules from the list of offerings at the host institution. These students receive guidance and support from the Erasmus Coordinator of the Faculty and the responsible Project Manager from the International Relations and Projects Office. The semester study plan is coordinated with the Head of the Department to ensure academic alignment. The crediting of learning outcomes achieved by students studying abroad is governed by the [\*Description of the Procedure for Crediting Partial Learning outcomes\*](#).

Under this procedure, a student's learning outcomes achieved at other Lithuanian and foreign higher education institutions may be credited. The recognition of competencies acquired through

formal education is conducted in accordance with the [\*Procedures for the Recognition of Competences Acquired through Formal Education\*](#).

The recognition of competencies gained through non-formal and informal education, work, volunteering, self-learning, or non-formal education programmes is carried out in accordance with the Procedures for the Assessment and Recognition of Learning Achievements Acquired through [\*Non-Formal Education and Informal Learning at Kolegija\*](#).

The Career Centre provides one-on-one career counseling, offering guidance on preparing CVs, preparing for job interviews, finding job or internship placements, and presenting oneself to employers. To support the successful adaptation of first-year students to the academic and social environment at Kolegija, mentors are assigned to all first-year students in each faculty. Additionally, information seminars are organized for first-year students covering topics such as their study programme, applied research activities, participation in the *Student Scientific Society*, international mobility opportunities, and opportunities for self-expression.

Students at Kolegija receive various forms of financial support, including incentive, social, and study grants, one-off social benefits, bonuses, targeted benefits for students with disabilities, scholarships, social benefits for Lithuanians of foreign origin, state-supported loans for living expenses and tuition fees, as well as tuition fee reductions and installment options. Social support also includes the provision of dormitory accommodation for all students who request it and the reimbursement of tuition fees for top-performing students who are not state-funded.

According to [\*Kolegija's description of the procedure for setting and paying student fees\*](#) (approved by Academic Council Resolution No. ATN-8 on May 18, 2022), students experiencing financial difficulties can request to pay tuition fees in installments by submitting a request at the beginning of each semester.

In the autumn and spring semesters of the academic year 2023-2024, four (4) requests for semester installment payments were received and granted. Additionally, students who are unable to cover tuition fees or living costs are increasingly taking advantage of state-supported loans. These loans are provided by banks and backed by state guarantees (National Study Fund: [\*State Supported Loans - National Study Fund \(lr.v.lt\)\*](#)).

Scholarships, one-off social allowances, and bonuses are awarded in accordance with Kolegija's Scholarship and Benefits Regulations: [\*Scholarship, Benefit and Bonus Regulations \(viko.lt\)\*](#). Incentive scholarships for students at Kolegija are available in two amounts: an enhanced scholarship (3 BSI) and a basic scholarship (1 BSI until February 1, 2024, and 1.5 BSI from February 1, 2024). Incentive scholarships are awarded on a semester-by-semester basis, based on the results of the previous semester. The enhanced scholarships are distributed first, and the remaining funds are allocated to the basic scholarships. These basic scholarships are distributed based on a summary of the semester's results for students in the same course and study field, proportional to the number of students enrolled at the beginning of the semester. Incentive grants were awarded by the Dean's orders as follows:

Autumn semester 2021-2022: 1 enhanced and 3 basic scholarships;  
Spring semester 2021-2022: 2 enhanced and 3 basic scholarships;  
Autumn semester 2022-2023: 6 enhanced and 11 basic scholarships;  
Spring semester 2022-2023: 1 enhanced and 13 basic scholarships;  
Autumn semester 2023-2024: 1 enhanced and 8 basic scholarships;  
Spring semester 2023-2024: 3 enhanced and 7 basic scholarships.

In the event of the death of family members (parents, children), severe financial hardship, or to partially compensate for material losses due to long-term illness/injury, theft, or natural disaster (up to once per semester), students may receive a one-off social allowance. This allowance is granted by order of the Dean, based on the student's application and the documents submitted. During the period under review, no applications for the allowance were received on the grounds of hardship.



Expatriate Lithuanians (children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of Lithuanian emigrants) are eligible for State support. The scholarship amounts to 3.25 BSI and is paid monthly, while the social allowance is paid once per semester, ranging from 203 EUR to 319 EUR.

Students are eligible for a social scholarship of 6.5 BSI if they meet at least one of the specified criteria and submit an [application](#) through the National Study Fund website by the specified deadline.

As part of the project “Enhancing the Accessibility of Studies” implemented by the National Fund for Higher Education, students with disabilities are provided with a targeted allowance of 4 BSI, which is paid monthly and can be used to cover the costs of goods, services, and other expenses necessary to improve the accessibility of studies. However, there were no students with disabilities in the faculty during the three years under review.

According to Resolution No. 1187 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, dated September 23, 2009, which amended Resolution No. 831 of August 29, 2006, titled “On the Approval of the Description of the Procedure of Providing Financial Assistance Measures to Disabled Persons Studying in Higher Education Institutions”, financial aid measures were granted to disabled students of Kolegija in 2022. These included allowances for special needs (50% of the basic social insurance pension monthly) and partial reimbursement of tuition expenses (3.2 BSI per semester), funded by the Department of Disability Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour.

Between 2023 and 2024, no students applied to the State Tuition Fund for state-supported loans to cover their tuition fees.

[Kolegija's Scholarship Regulations](#) govern the procedure for awarding and paying one-off scholarships for scientific and artistic achievements and targeted payments for students' scientific or artistic activities. These scholarships are designed to encourage students to engage in scientific pursuits at Kolegija.

All students have access to free psychological support. Students can receive counseling from Kolegija's psychologist, Nomeda Sindaravičienė, via email, phone, or face-to-face meetings. Information about psychological services is regularly published on the Faculty's website, shared via email reminders, and posted on the [Kolegija website](#).

Students can also develop their artistic and sporting skills free of charge at the Kolegija Physical Education and Sports Centre, through participation in the dance ensemble “Voruta” and the girls' choir “Vaidilutės”. Students' interests are represented by the student associations of Kolegija and the Faculty.

### **3.5. Evaluation of the sufficiency of study information and student counseling.**

To provide students with the most relevant and up-to-date information, the Study Department organizes introductory information weeks at the beginning of each academic year. The introductory week programme is hosted online and sent to first-year students via email. On the first day of studies, students are introduced to the Faculty administration and Department representatives, who present the Faculty and the study programme. The Study Department also provides students with information about the documents regulating studies at Kolegija, the application and support processes, the timetable preparation procedure, the virtual teaching/learning environment Moodle, and the use of the Academic Information System (AIS) ([Memo for First-Year Student](#)). Additionally, first-year students are introduced to Erasmus+ mobility opportunities and the activities of the *Student Scientific Society* (SSS).

In January 2024, the Study Department surveyed the adaptation of first-year students to assess the effectiveness of the information provided to them. Twelve (12) first-year students from the Programme participated in the survey. The results indicated that the students feel comfortable at the Faculty and are fully or partially satisfied with their academic progress. They reported efficiently

using their study time, and the survey highlighted that these students are highly motivated, having purposefully chosen this particular study Programme (survey results available [here](#)).

For the students in the Programme, the adaptation process was smooth, with no reported difficulties in adjusting to new people, study procedures (such as timetables and lecture schedules), or a lack of information. Only one student mentioned challenges related to concentration, motivation, time management, and completing tasks on time.

The survey also explored the adequacy of academic support provided by lecturers and administrators. The effectiveness of academic support was rated as very good or good by the students. The survey results were presented at a meeting of the Dean's Office and discussed at the Faculty Council. During these discussions, ways to further improve the adequacy and efficiency of student counseling were considered. Additionally, in each academic group, further conversations with students aimed to gather more information on their adaptation process and the specific needs of first-year students.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Student admission and support</i>			
<i>I.</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions taken</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	Removing the programme from the engineering study field could reduce the importance of the maths performance factor for admission to the study programme. This in turn could contribute to an increase in the number of students enrolled	The Study Field Committee (Protocol of meeting No. 12, September 30, 2022) reviewed the expert recommendation and decided to maintain the single programme within the <i>Environmental Engineering</i> study field due to its specificity and alignment with the concept and scope of <i>Environmental Engineering</i> (E03). Environmental Engineering is an interdisciplinary scientific and practical field of engineering focused on developing tools, instruments, and systems to meet human and societal needs through the efficient use of natural resources, the assessment and management of material and environmental risks. It applies the principles of science and engineering to the development, planning, and design of technological devices, tools, and systems aimed at improving quality of life from technological, technical, safety, environmental, economic, managerial, and other perspectives.	Engineering sciences are closely connected to technological sciences and information technologies, which facilitate the digital production of engineering, technological, and technical information, as well as the management of processes and data flows. These sciences also have strong links to mathematics, physics, chemistry, the environment, and business management. Given these connections, it would be inappropriate to lower the mathematics pass rate for the programme. The number of applicants has remained stable over the three years analyzed, and the programme continues to be popular with both graduates and postgraduates.

The main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Student admission and support</i>	
<b>Strengths</b>	
1. First-year students adapt well to the Faculty and highly value the academic support they receive from lecturers and administration. 2. Students benefit from a wide range of academic, social, and psychological support services. 3. The average competition score remains relatively high. 4. The majority of students are enrolled in state-funded positions.	
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	
Consistently increase students' international involvement in both academic studies and applied research activities.	

#### 4. Studying, student assessment, and graduate employment

**4.1. Evaluation of the teaching and learning process that enables to consider the needs of the students and enable them to achieve the intended learning outcomes.** The study process is

outlined in [\*Kolegija's Procedure of Studies\*](#). According to the Study Regulations, the Programme is offered in a full-time mode. Students may choose between a daily schedule, where direct contact with lecturers occurs on weekdays, or a sessional study schedule, where direct contact takes place during scheduled sessions. Between sessions, students study the course material and complete independent assignments remotely via the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) Moodle.

More than one-third of the total study time is dedicated to students' independent work. The study plan (ANNEX 2) specifies the number of hours allocated for independent work in each subject. Lecturers assign independent work tasks and select appropriate assessment methods. The criteria for assessing students' achievements are detailed in the [\*Description of the Procedure for the Assessment of Study Achievements\*](#).

Study methods are outlined in the course description for each subject. Classroom work typically includes lectures and exercises. The amount of independent work is regulated by the hours dedicated to it and the reporting formats specified for each subject, aligned with the total credit volume. These formats may include control works, practical assignments, tests, project defenses, practice reports, and the final thesis.

Lecturers use motivating teaching and learning methods such as case and situation analysis, project development, problem-based learning, discussions, teamwork, modeling, simulation of information activities, and creative tasks. All the study methods used are listed in ANNEX 3B.

In the first lecture of each course, the lecturer introduces students to the course structure, explaining the links between theoretical, practical, and independent work. They also provide deadlines for completing assignments, introduce the assessment criteria, announce the course topics, offer a recommended reading list, and present the expected outcomes of the course.

Students study the course material presented by the lecturer at a pace set according to the study plan. While studying methodological materials and completing tasks on the VLE Moodle platform, students can progress at their own pace, individualizing the study process to meet their needs. If necessary, they can seek personal consultation from the lecturer during designated consultation times. Contact work is conducted both in the classroom and using digital learning tools such as VLE Moodle and MS Teams, ensuring a personalized study process that enables each student to achieve the learning outcomes of the subject.

Each course concludes with a final assessment, either an exam or a project, which is marked with a grade. The final grade is calculated according to the formulas provided in the course description, which specify the percentages allocated to mid-term and final assessments.

Exams can be written or administered through VLE Moodle, while projects are defended with both the content and the presentation being assessed. Midterm examinations vary depending on the subject and can be either written or oral, depending on the specific requirements of the course.

Methodological materials for all subjects have been prepared and uploaded to VLE Moodle. These materials support students in both classroom learning and independent study, helping them complete assignments, self-check tests, and other additional e-activities to reinforce their knowledge and skills in the subject. Instructors also provide links to additional visual, audio, or written resources in English or Lithuanian from other sources.

The knowledge, abilities, and skills acquired during studies are applied and further developed during professional internships, which are regulated by the [\*Description of the Procedure for Organizing Internships for Students of Kolegija\*](#).

Graduates who have completed the programme and wish to continue their studies in Lithuania have the option of enrolling in complementary or equivalence study programmes at Lithuanian universities.

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

The procedure for the individualization of the study process for students with individual needs due to disabilities, impairments, or learning difficulties is outlined in the [\*Description of the Procedure for the Organisation of the Individualised Study Process Considering Students' Individual Needs\*](#).

During the three-year review period, no students applied to the Study Department or the Department for individualization of the study process due to special needs or disabilities.

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

Student progress is monitored at multiple levels: lecturer, student, department, programme, and faculty.

- **Lecturer level:** At the beginning of lectures, lecturers introduce students to the expected learning outcomes, assessment tools, methods, and criteria. The use of cumulative assessment ensures that students remain actively involved in the learning process throughout their studies. Lecturers provide feedback on each assessment or assignment within a maximum of 5 working days. Students can communicate with lecturers remotely via email, VLE Moodle, or MS Teams;
- **Student level:** Students can track their achievements through the Academic Information System (AIS). They understand that their performance impacts eligibility for incentive grants, participation in international exchange programmes or project activities, and the possibility of securing external placements. Learning outcomes also influence whether a student retains or loses a state-funded spot, or, for those without one, whether they can gain a state-funded position based on their results;
- **Department level:** The head of the Department collects and analyzes student feedback on course organization during the semester and holds roundtable discussions twice per academic year to gather information directly. Problem areas are addressed and discussed with lecturers, and feedback is provided to students;
- **Programme level:** The results of evaluations from professional practices, final projects, and exams are analyzed to identify areas for improvement. Student progress is periodically reviewed to systematize and analyze the number of students with academic debt and to investigate the reasons for underachievement. Extended meetings with lecturers are held to discuss elements necessary for delivering quality studies and to explore solutions to any issues encountered;
- **Faculty level:** Problem areas, such as student underachievement and dropout rates due to academic difficulties, are discussed during meetings organized by the Dean. The Study Department analyzes student progress twice per academic year, after the end of each semester, and presents the findings to the Dean, Vice-Dean, and Head of the Department. During these meetings, problem areas are identified, and strategies for improvement are discussed.

Starting from the autumn semester of the academic year 2023-2024, systematic monitoring of student attendance has been implemented to identify students who are absent from lectures and to understand the reasons for their non-attendance. Lecturers record the proportion of lectures attended by each student in the AIS course register twice per semester. The Study Department analyzes attendance by study programme and course, contacts students who miss lectures, investigates the reasons, identifies potential problems, and discusses strategies with the students to improve attendance.

In 2024, the Study Department conducted a study on the adaptation of first-year students to evaluate how effectively they manage their study time and their satisfaction with their academic performance after the autumn semester of 2023-2024. The students reported that they use their time effectively or almost effectively. All first-year students (N=12) who participated in the survey indicated that they were satisfied with their academic performance. The summarized results of the survey were published on the [Faculty website](#), presented at the Faculty Council meeting, and discussed at the Dean's meeting and within academic groups.

#### **4.4. Evaluation of the feedback provided to students in the course of the studies to promote self-assessment and subsequent planning of study progress.**

Course assessments are published in AIS or Moodle no later than 5 working days after the submission of reports, in compliance with personal data protection regulations. At the end of each

course, the responsible employee of the Study Unit reconciles the results, prepares summaries of learning achievements, and compiles lists of students with academic debts. Students are personally informed by email about their academic debts and the options available for eliminating them.

If a student fails to clear academic debts within the designated time, they are given the opportunity to attend lectures again (re-study the subject) and to re-sit mid-term assignments and examinations. The deadline for clearing academic debts is extended for up to 1 year. Notably, no students from the Programme repeated any subjects during the period 2021-2024.

Students can view their grades and academic debt information by logging into AIS. The Study Coordinator consistently monitors and manages the timely clearance of academic debts throughout the semester, sending reminders to students via email as needed.

#### **4.5. Evaluation of employability of graduates and graduate career tracking in the study field.**

Internal monitoring of graduate employment and career progression is conducted by the Department and the Kolegija Career Centre. The Career Centre provides individual and group career counseling, offers information about the labor market, and gives advice on internships and job searches.

Information about career opportunities, jobs, internships, and volunteering opportunities is regularly updated and shared on the Kolegija, Career Centre, and Faculty social media pages and websites. Faculty alumni also share their [success stories](#) on these platforms.

The graduate employment rate is calculated using the following definition: “The proportion of graduates employed in the main groups (0-3) of the Lithuanian Classification of Occupations (LCO) or those who are self-employed within 12 months of graduation, as a share of the total number of graduates who have completed their study field and are not continuing their studies.” The employment rates of the Faculty’s study field graduates for 2019-2021 are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5.** Employability rates of *Environmental Engineering* study field graduates, percent.

STUDY FIELD	Proportion (%) of graduates of a study field who are employed in 1-3 (professional bachelors, bachelors) in the main groups of the Lithuanian Classification of Occupations in the 12 months after graduation, as well as self-employed, out of the total number of graduates who have completed their study field and are not continuing their studies		
	2022*	2021*	2020*
E03 Environmental Engineering	64,29	46,15	50

\*SKVC, SKVC (Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education), indicators for monitoring study fields, percent.

According to the [Description of Kolegija's procedure for improving the quality of study feedback](#) (approved by Academic Council Resolution No. AT N-5 on April 11, 2024), an annual survey of graduates is conducted to gather feedback on the studied programme, acquired competencies, and their placement in the labor market. This survey is carried out at least 12 months after the completion of studies.

Through the survey, the Department seeks to determine whether graduates are employed and how quickly they found employment, any difficulties they encountered during their job search, whether the job is related to the qualification they obtained, and the applicability of the knowledge and skills acquired during their studies in the labor market. Graduates are also asked to provide suggestions for improving the quality of the Programme's content and the organization of studies.

The results of these surveys are published on the [Faculty](#) and [Kolegija](#) websites.



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

Kolegija's activities are grounded in the fundamental principles of academic ethics: honesty, trust, fairness, respect, responsibility, and equality. The [Code of Academic Ethics](#) defines the principles of ethical behavior for members of the academic community.

The maintenance of academic integrity in the assessment of study achievements is outlined in the [Statement of Procedures for the Assessment of Study Achievements](#).

Each student is required to read and sign the Declaration of Student Integrity, in which they freely and knowingly commit to adhering to the Code of Academic Conduct. Kolegija's study regulations also include provisions on tolerance and non-discrimination, ensuring that students have the right to express their thoughts and views freely, receive social and material support, and use alternative means of payment for work if they have a disability.

When preparing academic essays, students are guided by the principles of academic ethics. The General Requirements for Academic Essays include preventive measures to avoid plagiarism and outline procedures for checking and evaluating the consistency of academic work. Until January 1, 2024, the Ouriginal overlap checking tool was used at Kolegija; currently, the Turnitin overlap checker is applied to coursework.

During the period under review, there were no instances of overlap irregularities in academic essays.

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

The procedures for submitting and examining appeals and complaints regarding the study process at Kolegija are described in [The Appeal Regulations of Kolegija](#). These regulations outline the process for submitting appeals, the establishment of the Appeal Committee, and the procedures for examining appeals and making decisions at Kolegija.

Students may submit an appeal regarding The assessment and evaluation procedures of mid-term and/or final examinations; The evaluation of the final thesis; The crediting of study results obtained in another study programme at Kolegija; The recognition of study results attained at another higher education institution in Lithuania or abroad, concerning their preferred study programme; The evaluation and recognition of achievements in informal adult education.

During the period under review, one appeal was submitted by a student of the Programme on June 26, 2023, regarding the assessment of their thesis. According to the Appeal Regulations of Kolegija, appeals related to final theses, where results are evaluated collegially by an evaluation committee, can only be submitted in cases of procedural violations in the evaluation of learning outcomes.

In this case, no procedural violations were found that would have affected the final grade. The Appeal Committee reviewed the appeal upon the student's request for a case-by-case review but did not find any objective grounds that would indicate a breach of procedures. As a result, the committee upheld the final grade, as no significant procedural infringement was identified.

<b>Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to</b> <i>Studying, student performance, and graduate employment</i>			
<i>1.</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions taken</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	Lecturers should be encouraged to use innovative teaching methods, in particular by giving them the opportunity to share practical knowledge and good teaching practice with each other.	Lecturers continuously develop their competencies through internal seminars and trainings organized by colleagues, as well as events provided by external organizations.  When the Faculty administration and the Department plan staff development activities, they	

		focus on designing and implementing training sessions, assessing student achievement, and providing feedback training.	
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<b>The main results of the self-evaluation in the area of</b> <i>Studying, student performance, and graduate employment</i>	
<b>Strengths</b>	
1. Student progress is monitored at five levels: student, lecturer, Department, programme, and Faculty. 2. The organization of the study process allows students to choose between full-time or sessional study timetables based on their needs. 3. Facilities are available for socially disadvantaged groups and students with special needs. 4. The graduate employability rate is high, with 93% in 2023 and 95% in 2024, according to Employment Service data.	
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	
1. Encourage students to make greater use of the Erasmus+ mobility programme and other opportunities to study or intern at foreign higher education institutions, which will broaden their horizons and boost their motivation to study. 2. Decrease the student dropout rate by implementing preventive measures and providing qualitative support, such as attendance monitoring and academic consultations. 3. Improve student achievement by incorporating interactive learning methods.	

## 5. Lecturers

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

The need for academic staff in the Programme is determined by the Faculty management. The Academic Council sets the qualification requirements for the positions and determines the number of lecturers needed to implement the programme.

Recruitment for teaching positions at Kolegija is conducted through a public competition, considering the candidate's education, practical work experience, and the relevance of their expertise to the subject they intend to teach. The procedures for organizing these competitions and attestations, as well as the qualification requirements for teaching positions, are outlined in Kolegija's Procedure for Competitions for Teaching Positions and Attestation of Lecturers (approved by Academic Council Resolution ATN-2 on February 27, 2019).

Lecturers recruited from 2024 onwards must meet the requirements specified in Kolegija's Procedure for Competitions for Lecturers' Positions and for the Evaluation and Certification of Lecturers' Performance (approved by Academic Council Resolution No. ATN-2 on February 21, 2024), as well as the procedures for organizing and conducting competitions for professors' positions and evaluating and certifying lecturers' performance.

Lecturers are certified, and competitions for these positions are managed by the Faculty's Competition and Certification Commission and Kolegija's Competition and Certification Commission, both approved by Kolegija's Academic Council. The Commissions are established for a term of five years. At least one-third of the members must represent other institutions, and one member is delegated by the Student Association. Under their roles, the Dean and Vice-Dean are members of the Faculty Commission, while the Rector and Vice-Rector for Studies are part of Kolegija's Commission.

Lecturers who are successful in a competition are recruited for a period of five years. In-service lecturers undergo certification every five years. During the attestation process, lecturers submit an attestation file containing five years' worth of reports, student feedback, and documentation supporting their activities. The attestation procedure assesses the lecturers' suitability for their current position, qualifications, and their ability to help students achieve the objectives and outcomes of the study programme, as well as to align with Kolegija's strategic objectives. The process encourages lecturers to engage actively in improving the study process, enhancing didactic, subject-specific, and

general competencies, applying diverse teaching methods, participating in applied research and/or expert activities, and involving students in research.

The Programme lecturers, the subjects they teach, the proportion of their full-time posts, as well as their educational, pedagogical, and practical experience, are presented in ANNEX 8.

In this context, there were 7 students per lecturer during the 2021–2022 academic year (Table 6), and 5 students per lecturer in the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 academic years. While the number of lecturers increased by nearly a third (30%) between 2021 and 2023, the number of students in the field decreased by a tenth (10%) over the same period, resulting in a 29% decrease in the student-to-lecturer ratio from 2021 to 2023. This improvement in the student-to-lecturer ratio has positively impacted the quality of the study field, as indicated by student survey results on the quality of lecturers in their subjects or modules. Lecturer positions have been reallocated to ensure the sustainability of the study field, with an increasing number of lecturers working at 0.5 Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) or above each year.

**Table 6.** Ratio of students and lecturers in the *Environmental Engineering* study field.

Academic Year	Number of Students in the Field	Number of Lecturers in the Field	Student/Teacher Ratio
2023-2024	65	13	5
2022-2023	70	13	5,4
2021-2022	72	10	7,2

The composition of the lecturers complies with all applicable legal requirements (Table 7).

**Table 7.** Compliance of the composition of lecturers in the *Environmental Engineering* study field with the legal requirements.

<b>Requirement: at least 10% of the higher education institution courses must be taught by researchers</b>		
Of the thirteen (13) lecturers working in the study field, seven (7) lecturers (53.85%) hold a PhD degree. The total volume of study field subjects is 163 credits, with more than 70% (116 credits) of these subjects taught by researchers holding a PhD degree.		
<b>Requirement: more than half of the lecturers in the field of higher education institution studies must have at least 3 years of practical experience in the subject they teach</b>		
Study programme	Number of lecturers teaching subjects in the study field	Number of lecturers with at least 3 years of practical experience in the subject field
Landscape Design	13	11
<b>Requirement: Practical activities (practical work, exercises, student internships, etc.) for students at the Kolegija level may be supervised by a person holding a Bachelor's or Professional Bachelor's degree or higher</b>		
All lecturers who supervise students' practical activities (practical work, exercises, professional practices) have a Master's degree (only one person has a professional Bachelor's degree).		

The number of practitioner lecturers teaching study field subjects has increased year on year from 2021 to 2024 (Table 8), with the number of practitioner lecturers rising by a factor of 3.5 compared to the 2021–2022 academic year. Practitioner lecturers in engineering bring students up-to-date knowledge, share practical experience, introduce innovations in the field, and help develop skills that are crucial for the labor market.

**Table 8.** The number of practitioner lecturers teaching courses in the *Environmental Engineering* study field in 2021-2024.

Academic year	Number of practitioner lecturers	Number of lecturers in the study field
2021-2022	2	10
2022-2023	4	13
2023-2024	7	13



To achieve the goals and objectives of Kolegija's 2021–2025 Strategy, faculty members in the study field are actively involved in outsourced project activities through contracts with individual and corporate clients. These activities include applied research and the production of reports, the scope and quality of which are equivalent to scientific publications. Over the three years under review, the lecturers in the study field have completed more than 10 contracts for outsourced project work and submitted corresponding reports to customers. Reports are not made public.

Additionally, the Faculty is focused on developing partnerships with national and international strategic partners, Lithuanian higher education institutions, and research institutes. They participate in national and international projects, generating ideas for new outsourced project activities.

## **5.2. Evaluation of the conditions for ensuring teaching staff's academic mobility.**

Kolegija actively encourages staff academic mobility, ensuring equal opportunities for all members of the academic community to participate in mobility activities. Up-to-date information on staff mobility is published on the Kolegija website in both [Lithuanian](#) and [English](#).

Details about mobility competitions are shared on the Kolegija and Faculty websites, social media platforms, and through lecturers' work emails. Erasmus+ information and dissemination events are also organized. Lecturers receive regular guidance from the Erasmus+ coordinator within their faculty and the staff of the International Relations and Projects Office. Comprehensive information regarding the application process, selection criteria, grant amounts, and other relevant details is available on Kolegija's Facebook page, on the [Kolegija website](#), and sent directly to lecturers via email.

Kolegija encourages lecturers to participate in various Erasmus+ mobility activities, including teaching mobility, learning mobility, participation in Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP), project activities, and other international events such as conferences, seminars, and project meetings. Lecturers are provided with flexibility in their teaching schedules, and funding is available to cover the costs of these visits. Additionally, participation in teaching or learning activities abroad is positively recognized during the teacher certification process. These activities help facilitate the transfer of innovation to students and contribute to the continuous updating of curricula.

Academic mobility of lecturers is coordinated by Kolegija's International Relations and Projects Office, which oversees the establishment of inter-institutional cooperation agreements, financial management, and the prioritization of trips. Lecturers teaching in the study field have ample opportunities to participate in mobility programmes, with annual opportunities to apply for teaching visits or internships. Information about Erasmus+ academic mobility opportunities for teaching and staff training, as well as oral and written competitions, is regularly provided by the International Relations and Projects Office and the Faculty Erasmus Coordinator.

The call for applications for teaching mobility is open from September 1 to 30 each academic year, while the call for staff mobility for study visits is available throughout the academic year. Bilateral agreements are established with higher education institutions in Erasmus+ programme countries and partner countries abroad to facilitate mobility visits. Lecturers are encouraged to plan the development of their competencies through internships abroad according to a pre-arranged and agreed-upon programme. A list of agreements for lecturer mobility in programme countries is available [here](#).

Between 2021 and 2024, a total of sixteen (16) lecturers from the study field visited foreign partner universities to teach, enhance their professional competencies, and participate in project activities (Table 9). In 2021–2022, lecturers completed an internship at the German Institute of Agricultural Engineering, DEULA Nienburg GmbH. In 2022–2023, two lecturers from the study field taught students at the German University of Applied Sciences Anhalt and the Polish University of Opole. Seven (7) lecturers participated in study visits, upgrading their subject competencies and generating ideas for joint project activities at DEULA Nienburg GmbH in Germany. They also attended training courses such as “Vocational Training in Sustainability and Digital Farming,”

“Sustainable Water Management in Agriculture,” and “The World of Organic Agriculture - Latest Statistics and Trends,” hosted by the German company Nurnberg Messe GmbH. Additionally, three (3) lecturers took part in the theoretical-practical training course “Environmental Conception, Nature, and Landscape Planning and Design” at the Faculty of Horticulture and Forestry at the Romanian University of Life Sciences ‘King Mihai I’ in Timisoara. This university, a strategic partner of the Programme, collaborates on joint projects, implements Blended Intensive Programmes (BIP) for students, facilitates student internships, and organizes faculty exchanges for teaching and training.

In the 2023–2024 academic year, two Erasmus+ teaching visits were conducted: one at the University of Life Sciences in Warsaw (Poland), where Prof. Marina Valentukevičienė visited from May 5 to 24, 2024, and another at the Faculty of Life Sciences, University of Albstadt-Sigmaringen (Germany), where Assoc. Prof. Dr. Inga Jančauskienė lectured from June 6 to 7, 2024. These visits provide valuable opportunities to exchange experiences with representatives of foreign higher education institutions, explore new cultures, and expand the network of international partners for collaboration in research and project activities.

Since December 2022, Kolegija has been an associate member of PRIME (Professional Inter-university Management for Educational Networking), a network aimed at promoting the involvement of young people in scientific activities within international teams. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gražina Palaitytė participated in PRIME's “Euroweek 2024” activities, which took place from April 22 to 26, 2024, at Mälardalen University, School of Business, Society, and Engineering (Sweden).

Kolegija implements a unique training programme, “Food Educators”, in Lithuania as part of the EIT Food (European Institute of Innovation and Technology) initiative, aimed at developing future experts in the agri-food sector. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gražina Palaitytė participated in the FoodEducators HUBs Kick-off Meeting in Warsaw, Poland, from April 9 to 11, 2024.

Lecturer mobility under the Erasmus+ exchange programme provides opportunities to share international academic experience, establish new contacts, initiate project activities, enhance competencies, learn from the experiences of foreign partners, and incorporate international insights into course content. These activities strengthen international partnerships and contribute to the implementation of Kolegija’s strategy.

**Table 9.** The number of outgoing and incoming lecturers of the study field and their proportion relative to all study field lecturers over the past three years.

Academic year	Number of lecturers in the study field	Number of outgoing lecturers	Percentage of outgoing lecturers, %	Number of incoming lecturers	Percentage of incoming lecturers, %
2023-2024	13	4	30,8	9	69,2
2022-2023	13	9	69,2	2	15,4
2021-2022	10	3	30,0	1	10,0

### 5.3. Evaluation of the conditions to improve the competences of the teaching staff.

The aims, objectives, principles, methods, forms, and types of competency development for Kolegija staff (lecturers and employees), as well as the procedures for planning, organizing, and crediting competency development, are outlined in [Kolegija's Staff Competency Development Procedure](#).

The goal of competency development is to deepen and broaden the skills of Kolegija’s staff to ensure the quality of studies and activities, strengthen professional motivation, promote the social, cultural, emotional, and intellectual growth of staff, and encourage continuous professional development. The document emphasizes that all teaching staff have an equal right to develop their competencies, and that this process is continuous and ongoing.

The Description of the Qualification Requirements for Teaching Staff (published by Rector's Order No. V-96 on January 3, 2019) and the Teaching Staff Career Descriptions (approved by Academic Council Resolution No. AT N-1 on January 23, 2024) outline the lecturer's duty to improve their competencies and their right to participate in competitions for internships both in Lithuania and abroad.

The Faculty administration provides full academic support to lecturers in developing their competencies. Each year, the 'Memo for Teachers,' containing relevant information on study and activity planning, is updated. Didactic training is organized for newly recruited lecturers, and lecturers are encouraged to participate in teaching visits, internships, and conferences. They are also motivated to develop their competencies through projects funded by EU Structural Funds.

Annually, the Faculty administration conducts surveys to assess lecturers' needs for competency development and opportunities for individualization. During the review period, faculty members in the field improved their teaching, subject-specific, research, and general competencies, including digital skills, leadership, and intercultural awareness (ANNEX 9). The extent of development for each competency group was chosen individually by each lecturer in the Field, based on institutional and personal development priorities and needs.

Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to <i>Lecturers</i>			
<i>1.</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Actions taken</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	The choice should be whether to raise the level of curriculum content with engineering-trained lecturers or to focus on horticulture, which is also a desirable and relevant field for students and graduates of the programme.	<p>The Department of Landscape Management and Agribusiness Technologies, responsible for overseeing the study field programme, has added three engineering-trained lecturers to its staff.</p> <p>In the 2024–2025 academic year, the workload for these engineering-trained lecturers has increased significantly due to changes in the programme description. Currently, three lecturers are working at 0.6 FTE, and one is working at 0.25 FTE.</p> <p>The competence of the lecturers in this study field meets the requirements outlined in the <a href="#">description of the Engineering Sciences study field group</a>.</p>	<p>Lecturers: 1) Apply the latest research findings, incorporating concepts such as sustainability, the circular economy, artificial intelligence, and the digitalization of production.</p> <p>2) Possess knowledge of the connections between the subject they teach and fields such as physical and/or technological sciences, life sciences, mathematics, and informatics. They take an interdisciplinary approach to problem-solving, continuously improve the content of teaching, and select effective, student-centered learning methods and assessment techniques. They also contribute to the development of study methods and are capable of making recommendations to programme organizers for further programme development.</p>

The main results of the self-evaluation in the area of <i>Lecturers</i>	
<b>Strengths</b>	
<p>1. Systematic and Planned Development of Lecturers' Competencies: each spring semester, the Department conducts a survey to assess the faculty's competency needs. The results are then incorporated into the Faculty's Staff Competence Development Plan for the following academic year. Kolegija supports competency development by providing funding and allowing lecturers the freedom to choose their preferred methods for enhancing their skills.</p> <p>2. Practitioner Lecturers in the Study Field: practitioner lecturers offer students up-to-date information and practical experience, while also providing insights into current labor market demands.</p> <p>3. Practical Work Experience: all lecturers have over three years of practical work experience, ensuring the smooth delivery of Kolegija's mission to provide practical, skills-oriented studies.</p>	

4. Academic Qualifications: more than half of the lecturers in the study field hold PhDs, and researchers teach the majority of the subjects within the study field.

#### Areas for improvement

1. Strengthening Internationalization: encourage more active participation of Lifelong Learning lecturers in Erasmus+ mobility activities.
2. Research Participation and Dissemination: promote involvement in research activities and the dissemination of results, engaging and motivating students in the process.

## 6. Study material resources.

**6.1. Evaluation of the suitability and adequacy of the physical, informational and financial resources of the field studies to ensure an effective learning process.** Effective use of Kolegija's material resources, which are directly focused on ensuring the quality of studies, creates favorable conditions for both students and lecturers. Lecture rooms at the Faculty are utilized as needed, with room sizes ranging from 10 to 120 workstations. The rooms are selected based on the size of the student group and the number of workstations required, optimizing the study process.

General subjects of college studies and part of the study field subjects are conducted in the central Faculty building at Studentų Street 39A, Vilnius, which has a total area of 1,978 m<sup>2</sup>. Lecturers have access to fully equipped offices with eight workstations. Some theoretical and practical classes for study field subjects are held at the Faculty's teaching building located at Dvaro Street 1, Buivydiškės, Vilnius district (Outdoor Laboratory). This facility has a total area of 518.68 m<sup>2</sup> and includes three classrooms and a plant research laboratory.

Starting in September 2024, practical training in the *Fundamentals of natural sciences* takes place in the Faculty's newly equipped chemistry laboratories. The total area of the laboratories and ancillary rooms is 245.5 m<sup>2</sup>, housing four laboratories: Chemical Analysis, Chromatographic Analysis, Spectral Analysis, and Biochemical Analysis.

All lecture halls at the Faculty are equipped with projectors, internet access, and sound systems. Additionally, three classrooms feature interactive screens.

The Department's staff is conducting research in the *Ornamental Plant Educational Nursery*, focusing on the use of different materials for green roofs and investigating the potential of long-term biodegradable waste as a drainage layer for green vegetative roof coverings. A rain garden has also been installed to return rainwater to the ground and protect the surrounding fertile soil from erosion. To attract public interest and prospective students, a new educational-recreational area is planned for the Ornamental Plant Educational Nursery. In 2023, D. Jocienė, a student from the ZDI19 group, successfully defended her final thesis, titled "Landscape Design Project of Adapting VikoFlora Ornamental Plants and Planting Centre Spaces for Educational Purposes". The project envisions four terraces, purposefully divided into distinct zones.

The *Ornamental Plant Educational Nursery* holds a collection of 18 different hedge plant species and aims to introduce Programme students to plants suitable for hedges. Students have excellent opportunities to learn about ornamental plants and assess their potential for planting in various settings, individually and through practical work. The climbing plants exhibit features of 12 different species.

Perennial flower gardens with a naturalistic planting style are becoming increasingly popular in urban public spaces abroad. As part of the practical sessions for the subject *Herbaceous Ornamental Plants*, students gain hands-on experience in a naturalistic flower garden (~400 m<sup>2</sup>), which features over 120 different plant species and is divided into five segments. The assortment of herbaceous perennial ornamental plants is organized into three main layers: structural, thematic-seasonal, and cover. One of the key aims of this naturalistic flower garden is to introduce students to the potential of using native flora species or varieties derived from them. Such plants require less maintenance and adapt more easily to their environment, creating an ecologically sustainable landscape that feels natural and reduces upkeep costs. In early summer, this garden is further enriched with annual herbaceous plants.

The *Ornamental Plant Educational Nursery* is continuously updated with new perennial flower beds and propagation areas, currently showcasing around 230 different herbaceous ornamental plant species. Additionally, more than 100 different ornamental woody plant species are on display. One of the most important exhibits is the collection of rare and protected Lithuanian flora species, featuring around 30 plants listed in the Lithuanian Red Book.

Educational events for students, schoolchildren, and the residents and visitors of Vilnius are organized here in collaboration with the Department of Environment and Energy of Vilnius City Municipality.

The *Ornamental Plant Educational Nursery* is used for practical training in the subjects of *Applied Dendrology*, *Applied Herbaceous Plants*, and *Landscape Maintenance and Management*. The nursery is equipped with two greenhouses for sowing and propagating annual flowers and woody plants. A variety of equipment is utilized in the nursery's activities (ANNEX 10), and lecturers conduct educational activities, counseling, seminars, and workshops for students and community members.

Students have access to advanced tools for practical work, professional practice, and applied research, including the portable handheld nitrogen meter N-Pen N 110, the chlorophyll meter PlantPen NDVI 310, and the plant productivity and stress meter PlantPen PRI 210. Additionally, practical activities often use the Universal Parameter Meter, the Memmert climate chamber with day/night cycle, temperature and humidity control, and rooftop modules (4 pcs).

The Faculty operates the *Ornamental Plants and Planting Centre*, “VikoFlora”, which closely aligns its activities with the Programme’s needs. Students can participate in various activities organized by VikoFlora, including landscaping, plant maintenance, and ornamental plant cultivation. VikoFlora also oversees the activities of the *Ornamental Plant Educational Nursery*, where the plant range is continuously expanded, field experiments are conducted, observations are made, and the growth processes and characteristics of ornamental plants are studied.

“VikoFlora” organizes spring and autumn plant fairs, attracting gardeners and growers from across Lithuania. These fairs, held at the Faculty, offer both ornamental and horticultural plants, providing students with an excellent opportunity to learn about new plant varieties and the nuances of plant cultivation. Four fairs are held each year: two in the spring (May and June) and two in the autumn (September and October).

## **6.2. Evaluation of the planning and upgrading of resources needed to carry out the field studies.**

The Department submits annual proposals to the Dean for renewing the material resources of the Programme it supervises. The necessary tools for the study process, such as for practical and laboratory work, are included in the lists of planned purchases. For the Ornamental Plant and Planting Centre “VikoFlora”, EUR 5,500.00 was allocated in 2021, EUR 15,470.00 - in 2022, EUR 5,000.00 - in 2023, and EUR 6,000.00 - in 2024.

Upgrades to the training facilities are closely tied to applied research. In 2024, EUR 37,000.00 will be allocated for the renovation of greenhouse equipment, including upgrades to the irrigation, fertilization, and ventilation systems, by integrating air and humidity sensors with remote control. Additionally, a rainwater harvesting system for irrigation will be installed. Funds allocated for AR&D operations in 2024 have been used to purchase essential equipment for working with the climate-controlled chamber, totaling EUR 3,918.00. An additional EUR 1,580.00 is earmarked for purchasing plants for research purposes.

During the 2020–2021 academic year, the existing computer equipment was upgraded by replacing the hard drives with more advanced SSD-based drives and expanding the RAM on 37 units, at a cost of EUR 2,775.00. In 2021–2022, 32 desktop computers with monitors were purchased for EUR 20,134.40, along with 11 laptops for EUR 6,145.59. To support a modern and innovative study



process, three interactive monitors (smart boards) were acquired for EUR 13,140.60, along with 14 modern projectors for EUR 14,036.00, four units of conference remote video streaming and recording equipment for EUR 3,073.48, four 4K high-definition computer cameras for EUR 622.76, 15 external speakers for EUR 444.75, and additional technical equipment necessary for studies valued at EUR 450.23.

In 2023, EUR 38,493.94 was allocated for renewing IT hardware and software at the Faculty. During the 2022–2023 period, 34 desktop computers with monitors were purchased for EUR 37,818.76, and the existing computer equipment was further upgraded by replacing the hard drives of 30 units with SSDs, at a cost of EUR 675.18.

Funds are continuously allocated for the purchase of software licenses to support the use of computer applications, including AutoCAD 2022 and 2023 (educational licenses), ArchiCAD (educational license), Relux Desktop, SketchUp Pro 2021, and Lumion (educational license). Students can complete independent assignments in the computer labs in the afternoon or during other scheduled times, or access the Faculty's computers remotely via a virtual private network (VPN).

A cooperation agreement with Vilnius TECH (Vilnius Gediminas Technical University) facilitates practical work in the subjects of *Environmental Engineering* and *Environmental Construction*. Practical work is conducted in the *Building Materials Research Laboratory*, where research in materials science, building materials, products, and mixtures is carried out. Students also participate in practical activities in the environmental chemistry, hydraulics, and water management laboratories within the Environmental Protection and Water Engineering Department.

For practical work in the subject of *Measurement Technology for Engineering*, a contract was established with Vilnius College of Technology and Design (VTDK, Antakalnio Street 54, Vilnius), allowing the use of the Geodesy Laboratory with all necessary equipment during the review period. After VTDK merged with Kolegija by a resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, in September 2024, Kolegija's material base was expanded to include new laboratories: *Geodesy* and *Materials Science and Standardization* (ANNEX 10).

The Programme's social partners play a key role in helping students to develop practical skills. For more than 15 years, companies affiliated with the Lithuanian Association of Arboriculturists and Ornamental Plant Growers have provided students with internships and opportunities to acquire practical experience in various areas of environmental management. Each year, employees from [ESodo.lt](#) and [Laistymas.lt](#) conduct practical seminars for students on the installation of specialized irrigation systems, outdoor lighting, and pond equipment. Lecturers in the field are invited to present the environmental solutions offered by these companies. Notably, on April 20, 2024, a representative from 'Bipa' delivered a lecture on solutions for children's playgrounds with small architectural elements and sports facilities, focusing on creating comfortable, innovative, and sustainable environments that are energy-efficient.

From October 2024, a modern library with a total area of 1,026.86 m<sup>2</sup> is opened in the Faculty building at Studentų Street 39A. The library features 70 student workstations, 6 individual work areas, 2 group work areas, and rest and study spaces. It provides a supportive environment for study and research, offering access to essential information resources.

The library's collection consists of 274.2 thousand items, including 44 thousand titles of publications and other documents. The average annual allocation for library resources between 2021 and 2023 was EUR 179,000 (EUR 25.4 per student). The library acquires approximately 2,200 new publications every year, of which about 60% are from foreign publishers. On average, 61% of the library's collection comes from foreign sources. Additionally, the library subscribes to about 95 periodical titles, with 53% in foreign languages, and about 20% of these periodicals are available electronically.

The Faculty Library holds a collection of publications relevant to the Faculty's study programmes, totaling 24,282 items across 9,193 titles, with 15% dedicated to the Study Field and

General Subjects of College Studies. The library's collection is updated annually with relevant publications, and between 2021 and 2024, it acquired 77 new books (46% in foreign languages) for the Study Field and General Subjects of College Studies, and subscribed to six professional periodicals (two of which are in foreign language).

When planning updates to study resources, lecturers submit lists of relevant publications to the designated library staff member. Additionally, the library staff conducts academic publishing analyses and recommends purchases.

Textbooks and educational materials are issued to students on a semester basis, while other books are loaned on a weekly, monthly, or renewable basis. Students can access electronic resources, place orders for required titles, and extend loan periods by logging in to the Kolegija Virtual Library.

The library offers a wide range of electronic resources, including books, periodicals, and international databases. The Kolegija Library subscribes to 22 databases (20 international and 2 Lithuanian), with 11 databases specifically relevant to the Study Field and general subjects of College studies. In total, Kolegija users have access to 490,000 book titles, 28,000 journal titles (13,600 in WoS and 16,000 in Scopus), and 71,300 other resources available in the subscribed databases.

Key international databases such as Springer Journals, Wiley Online Library, Academic Search Ultimate (EBSCO), Business Source Ultimate (EBSCO), GreenFILE (EBSCO), Taylor & Francis, and Emerald provide access to over 500 full-text scholarly and professional journals relevant to the study field, and over 4,000 journals applicable to general college subjects.

The Artstor Digital Library provides access to a vast digital image database, allowing users to search and use images (for non-commercial scholarly and academic purposes) from nearly 300 collections containing over 2.5 million images sourced from museums, archives, libraries, and personal collections worldwide.

The subscription eBook collections—Academic Complete (ProQuest), eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost), VGTU, and KTU—offer more than 7,000 eBooks relevant to study field subjects and over 36,000 eBooks for general college subjects. The library also provides various open-access resources, including a database of Lithuanian standards (57,000 standards), accessible through Kolegija's Virtual Library.

Additionally, the library offers training and individual consultations on its services, resources, information retrieval, citation practices, and bibliographic management tools.

Faculty staff, lecturers, and students actively use the cloud-based Office 365 service, which includes all the latest Office applications. Students can install the latest Microsoft Office applications on their computers for free and can also install or upgrade the Microsoft Windows operating system.

<b>Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to</b> <i>Study material resources</i>			
<i>I.</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action taken</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	As landscape design is part of the built environment (keywords: sustainable urban drainage systems (SuDS), heat island effect), there is a need to raise the level of teaching of hydraulics and environmental physics, and to acquire appropriate study stands.	The ornamental plant training area includes modules for rooftop planting and features a rain garden.	.

<b>The main results of the self-evaluation in the area of</b> <i>Study material resources</i>	
<b>Strengths</b>	
1. Classrooms are periodically upgraded, and the number of workstations available for computer applications has increased.	

2. Each year, an assessment of the material resources needed for the study field is conducted, and the teaching/learning resources are reviewed to evaluate their condition and suitability for the study process.
3. Lecturers and students use the MOODLE virtual learning environment to create and update methodological materials, lecture notes, homework assignments, and more.
4. The new Turnitin electronic tool is used to detect and prevent plagiarism.
5. The study programme's social partners, the Association of Ornamental Plant Breeders and Arborists, provide internship opportunities for students.

#### **Areas for improvement**

Training and learning aids wear out over time and need to be periodically replenished or updated.

## **7. Study quality management and publicity**

### **7.1. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the internal quality assurance system of the studies.**

Kolegija's internal documents, strategic development plans, and reports outline the decision-making and approval procedures for the internal quality assurance system for studies and identify the responsible entities.

The [\*Kolegija Quality Manual\*](#) is the main document governing the institution's internal quality management system. Its purpose is to summarize the processes and procedures for internal quality assurance. The Quality Manual ensures transparency of activities, fosters community awareness, and promotes both individual and collective responsibility for quality assurance and improvement in studies, applied research, experimental development, professional art activities, and other Kolegija activities. It also clarifies the allocation of duties and responsibilities in the quality assurance processes, building trust among internal and external stakeholders.

The procedures for monitoring and self-assessment of Kolegija's performance are outlined in the [\*Internal Quality Assessment Procedure\*](#), which defines the processes for monitoring and self-assessment as well as the roles of the responsible entities. The purpose of performance monitoring is to ensure the effective implementation of the objectives outlined in the Kolegija Strategy for 2021–2025, and to respond promptly to any identified shortcomings and the evolving context of higher education. The purpose of self-evaluation is to analyze and critically assess the progress of the Kolegija Strategy for 2021–2025, while providing insights for its improvement.

The Description of the Procedure for [\*Internal Quality Assurance of Study Fields\*](#) outlines the processes for ensuring quality in the preparation, execution, evaluation, and development of study programmes in accordance with the requirements of the respective study field. This procedure applies to Kolegija's internal quality assurance for the development of new study programmes, the ongoing internal quality assurance of study fields, the external evaluation and accreditation of study fields, post-evaluation follow-up, and the submission of appeals following external evaluations and accreditations.

The legislation defines the responsibilities of the entities involved in the internal quality assurance of study fields. The Rector is responsible for overseeing the quality of studies and the level of higher education provided at Kolegija. The Academic Council approves the internal quality assurance system and monitors its implementation. The Vice-Rector for Studies organizes quality assurance efforts across study fields, while the Study Service monitors the quality of studies. The Study Quality Unit coordinates quality assurance processes for all study fields at Kolegija.

Internal quality assurance of the Faculty's study field is overseen by the Dean, who aligns the Faculty's strategy with Kolegija's strategic objectives. The Dean organizes the internal quality assurance of the Faculty's studies, applied research, and experimental development activities. Additionally, the Dean manages the operations of the Faculty's units, fosters cooperation with other Lithuanian and international institutions, formulates personnel policies, and creates opportunities for the professional development of lecturers and staff.

The Vice-Dean administers the academic activities of the Faculty, implements its aims and objectives as outlined in the Faculty Regulations, and coordinates applied research and experimental development activities. The Vice-Dean also oversees cooperation with Lithuanian and international



institutions, ensures the implementation of the internal quality assurance system for the Faculty's study fields, coordinates the preparation and development of study programmes, and monitors the management of these programmes.

The Department is the primary organizer and executor of study, applied research, and experimental development (AR&D) activities at the Faculty. In line with the Model Regulations of the Department (approved by AC Resolution AT N-3 on March 24, 2021), and to effectively manage and improve the study field Programme, the Department coordinates and oversees the development of academic staff competencies, the creation of methodological teaching tools, and ensures the quality of course (module) descriptions. It also implements the measures outlined by the Study Field Committee (SFC) to improve the study field Programme and address any weaknesses identified during external evaluations. Additionally, the Department prepares progress reports on the implementation of recommendations from external evaluations, compiles an annual report on the quality monitoring of the study field Programme for submission to the SFC, and provides proposals to the Dean for upgrading material resources.

The Department conducts various surveys, including those on the quality of teaching (subject/module), evaluations of external internships, student preparedness for professional activities, final-year student feedback on their chosen program, study outcomes, program content, graduate feedback on competencies acquired and labor market placement, and employer feedback on program relevance. These surveys are governed by [\*Kolegija's Description of the Feedback Procedure for the improvement of Studies' Quality\*](#) (approved by AC Resolution No. AT N-5 on April 11, 2024), with summarized reports published on the [Faculty website](#). The Department may also submit proposals to the SFC for improving the Programme content in the study field.

The aim of the Study Field Committee (SFC) is to ensure the quality, sustainability, and development of studies within the study field, in alignment with Kolegija's strategic goals. The SFC evaluates the study Programme's compliance with Kolegija's strategic objectives and the general and specific requirements for the study programmes. In case of any deficiencies in the programme description, the SFC addresses them. The committee also reviews and approves the summarized conclusions from the annual quality monitoring of the study Programme and provides recommendations for improvement.

The SFC is responsible for ensuring that the aims, outcomes, and content of the study field program meet the needs of society and the labor market. It conducts internal evaluations of study quality and offers recommendations for updating and improving the study field Programme. The procedures for the establishment, aims, tasks, and functions of study field and programme committees at Kolegija are regulated by the [\*Regulations of the Study Committees\*](#) (amendments approved by AC Resolution AT N-11 on December 6, 2023, and AC Resolution AT N-7 on June 5, 2024).

To achieve its primary goal, the Study Field Committee (SFC) has the following objectives:

Ensure alignment between the Programme's objectives, learning outcomes, and the study and assessment methods; cooperate with the Department overseeing the Programme and the lecturers implementing it.

In fulfilling its objectives, the SFC performs the following functions: make proposals to the Department for improving the Programme; at least once a year, discuss the Programme with the lecturers involved, and provide recommendations for the development and enhancement of course descriptions. The elements of the course description are outlined in the [\*Study Programme Guide of Kolegija\*](#) (amendments approved by AC Resolution No. AT N-7 on June 5, 2024).

The quality of the study field at Kolegija is ensured through internal quality monitoring, which involves continuous evaluation of the studies to ensure compliance with quality requirements and prompt responses to identified shortcomings and relevant contexts. Internal quality monitoring is conducted annually following the Methodology for [\*External Evaluation of Study Fields\*](#), which defines the areas to be assessed, the objectives, and the indicators used to measure the quality of the

study field. The procedures and responsible entities for quality assurance are regulated by [\*Kolegija's internal quality assurance procedures for study fields\*](#).

At the end of each academic year, the Study Field Committee (SFC), based on the annual Quality Monitoring Report, as well as feedback from students, lecturers, and social partners, discusses and approves the summarized conclusions and recommendations for improving the study field. These conclusions and recommendations are then presented to the Faculty Council. At the beginning of the academic year, the SFC also outlines actions to improve the quality of the Programme in the Field.

## **7.2. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the involvement of social stakeholders (students and other interested parties) in internal quality assurance.**

In accordance with Kolegija's quality management and study quality assurance documents ([Quality Manual](#), [Internal Quality Assurance Procedures for Study Fields](#), and Study Programmes Manual, published under Rector's Order No. V-352 on December 14, 2021), students, social partners, alumni, and staff actively participate in the process of improving programme content. They submit proposals to the Study Field Committee (SFC) and take part in discussions and meetings to review survey results, material resources, opportunities for project and research activities, internship programmes, and more.

Particular attention is given to enhancing the quality and management of studies, with a special focus on students' perceptions of their education. Students are represented on the SFC, the Faculty Council, and are invited to Dean's Office meetings. They also participate in Faculty teaching competitions and attestation committees. Feedback is provided verbally during roundtable discussions with SFC representatives, and summarized data is made available on [Kolegija and Faculty websites](#).

Lecturers are responsible for ensuring that the learning outcomes, content, and teaching methods of the courses they teach are aligned. Lecturers in the field contribute to improving the quality of studies by continuously updating their course content and making it available in the Moodle virtual learning environment. They also participate in AR&D activities, encourage student participation in young scientists' conferences, organize lectures with social partners for students, attend extended SFC meetings, contribute to the preparation of the Kolegija Self-Assessment Report, and take part in the group responsible for preparing the summary of the Self-Assessment Report for the study field.

Every two years, Kolegija conducts a Lecturers' Job Satisfaction Survey, where lecturers evaluate their recognition, professional development, work organization, social networking, overall job satisfaction, and their perception of students' motivation and preparation for studies. Summarized information from the survey is published on [Kolegija website](#). The results of this and other feedback surveys are presented to lecturers at meetings of the Academic Affairs Committee, the Directorate, the Dean's Office, the Department, the SFC, and faculty community meetings. Observations relevant to improving the quality of studies are discussed in SFC meetings.

The field's social partners—such as the Lithuanian Association of Plant Breeders and Ornamental Plant Producers, UAB Herbela, UAB Maidina, UAB HORTUSETDOMUS, VšĮ Lietuvos Arboristikos Centras, UAB Augalų Ūkis, UAB Floralita Dizainas, UAB Stebulė, VšĮ Vilniaus Miesto Parkai, UAB Soltra, the Botanical Garden of Vilnius University, Sigita Kairienė's flower farm Žiedų Spalvos, Ligita Poškutė's flower farm Mažieji Sodai, UAB Želmita, VšĮ Bonsai 71 Studija, Papiškės Arboretum, Virblė Arboretum, UAB Mano Būstas, UAB Bona Tera, and ŽŪB DAMSAL gėlės apželdinimui—are involved in key internal quality assurance processes for studies. This includes participation in the Study Field Committee (SFC) and the Faculty's Competition and Attestation Commission. They contribute by making proposals, participating in decision-making regarding study evaluation, staff selection, and other quality assurance matters. They are also involved in the Self-Assessment Summary Group.

Social partners actively supervise student internships and final theses, review final thesis work, participate in the evaluation of final theses/projects, and engage in joint applied research. Additionally, they help organize conferences, public lectures, competence development courses, educational and cultural events, project activities, and provide support for various events and active students. They also contribute to solving common social issues. Feedback is provided to social partners during extended SFC meetings, as well as through other meetings and discussions.

### **7.3. Evaluation of the collection, use and dissemination of information on studies, their evaluation and improvement processes and results.**

The Description of [Kolegija procedure for public information on quality issues](#) is prepared in accordance with Article 46 of the Science and Studies Law of the Republic of Lithuania, titled 'Ensuring the Quality of Science and Studies,' along with other relevant legal acts. This document establishes the procedure for mandatory public dissemination of information regarding Kolegija's activities.

The Programme's objectives, learning outcomes, scope, subjects, and career opportunities are published in detail on [Kolegija](#) and [Faculty](#) websites. Additionally, information about the Programme is accessible on other websites frequently visited by students, pupils, and social stakeholders, such as the Lithuanian Association of Higher Education Institutions for Joint Admissions ([LAMA BPO](#)) and [SKVC](#). Documents regulating studies, assessments, and other related procedures are also available on [Kolegija website](#).

The "VikoFlora" Ornamental Plant and Planting Centre plays an important role in publicizing the Programme. Tomas Čižokas, the head of the Ornamental Plant and Planting Centre, regularly prepares and publishes articles in various media outlets, including the newspapers "Gimtasis Rokiškis", "Ūkininko patarėjas", and on online portals such as [www.lnk.lt](#), [www.manonamai.lt](#), [www.delfi.lt](#), [www.temainfo.lt](#), [www.rokiskiosirena.lt](#), [www.15min.lt](#), [www.tv3.lt](#). His articles also appear in magazines such as "Rasos", "Savaitė", "Savaitė. Sode ir darže". In addition, T. Čižokas serves as an expert, offering advice to the public on TV programmes like "Vartotojų kontrolė", "Laba diena, Lietuva".

Kolegija's internal Academic Information System (AIS) contains all study-related information, including Programme objectives and outcomes, course descriptions, student assessments, and more. The faculty administration and academic staff utilize this system, which consists of several subsystems. One subsystem is dedicated to managing study programmes. Lecturers are responsible for ensuring that course descriptions are updated annually in the AIS, while departments ensure that the system contains accurate study plans and Programme results. The Study Department is responsible for maintaining accurate student information, such as enrollment dates, study breaks, and completion details.

Another subsystem manages student data, including admissions information, mid-term and final grades, registration for elective courses, and more. The AIS streamlines the study implementation and information management process, making information easily accessible to all participants, including administration, lecturers, and students. Additionally, students receive information about the study programme and process during meetings with members of the SFC, tutors, and Study Department staff.

The conclusions of the external evaluation of study fields and progress reports on the implementation of external evaluation recommendations are published on [Kolegija website](#). Kolegija uses a document management system called KONTORA, which collects orders and other legal acts from the Rector and Dean. Lecturers have access to all documents in KONTORA, while students can access personal information (orders related specifically to them) through the AIS system.

Representatives of the study field participate in national and international events to promote studies at [Kolegija](#). Feedback from graduates and employers about the Programme is also published on [Kolegija website](#). Social media platforms share views from social partners about the Programme,

[career opportunities](#) (e.g., career suggestions at <https://atf.viko.lt/studentams/darbo-pasiulymai/>), and [individual success stories](#).

Suggestions for improving the quality of studies can be made by the following:

- The Department collects information through surveys, meetings with social partners, and roundtable discussions with students on the quality, content, and organization of studies;
- Lecturers may propose changes to course content in response to legislative changes, external factors, or adjustments in the course scope or placement within the curriculum;
- SFC members identify newly emerging circumstances, assess the need for improvements, and address weaknesses in the study programme;
- The Dean or Vice-Dean may suggest changes if they notice deficiencies in the content or organization of studies;
- The Student Association can submit suggestions for improvement.

Proposals are submitted to the Chair of the SFC, who prepares a proposal for the Dean to update the programme. Depending on the scope and nature of the proposed changes, amendments to the programme are approved by an order of the Dean, the Rector, or a resolution of the Academic Council.

#### **7.4. Evaluation of the opinion of the field students (collected in the ways and by the means chosen by the Centre or the HEI) about the quality of the studies at the HEI.**

The internal study quality system is maintained by gathering feedback from students, lecturers, graduates, employers, and other participants in the study process. This data is used to organize the study process and improve the quality of study programs, academic staff, infrastructure, and Kolegija's administration.

Student surveys (on Subject Teaching Quality, Evaluation Survey of External Practice, of Final Year Students on the Chosen Study Programme, of Graduates on the Programme, Acquired Competences, and Labor Market Integration, on the Adaptation of First-Year Students, on Student Satisfaction with Studies) are conducted after each semester for every subject. Based on the results, changes may be made to enhance the subject content and improve teaching quality. The survey results are shared with the Programme's lecturers, who are encouraged to update course content and improve study quality annually. Feedback from the student surveys is also published on the [Kolegija website](#) and [Faculty website](#).

<b>Expert recommendations provided during the last external evaluation related to</b> <i>Study quality management and publicity</i>			
<i>1.</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Action taken</i>	<i>Comments</i>
	The process of selecting students to participate in the surveys needs to be clarified and the opportunities for feedback need to be expanded more generally. Relying only on surveys and questionnaires to provide feedback does not ensure a sufficiently broad involvement.	Surveys are administered to Kolegija students via the Electronic Survey Information System, paper questionnaires, or through situation-specific feedback collection methods such as interviews, roundtable discussions, and focus groups. Surveys are sent to Kolegija graduates using the email addresses provided in the Academic Information System (AIS). The Description of the <a href="#">Kolegija Feedback Procedure for Improving the Quality of Studies</a> has been updated to include both periodic feedback methods (such as surveys and questionnaires) and non-periodic methods (such as interviews and roundtable discussions).	

<b>The main results of the self-evaluation in the area of</b> <i>Study quality management and publicity</i>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<p>The quality management and promotion of the study field involve Kolegija's administrative and academic staff, students and graduates, employers, and social partners.</p> <p>The opinions and suggestions of all stakeholders are considered in quality assurance and decision-making processes. Feedback aimed at improving the quality of studies is formalized and leads to the continuous, systematic enhancement of the Programme, improvements in the organization of the study process, and the development of academic staff competencies.</p>
<b>Areas for improvement</b>	<p>Find more engaging ways for students to participate in organized surveys to receive timely feedback.</p>