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Intellectual Output 4:

Qualitative and Quantitative Analyses of Interactions of the Created Network

EVALUATION REPORT

Programmes under the evaluation within the project are evaluated by selected project partners based on review of their self-evaluation studies against the EAPAA accreditation criteria. Site visits were not included into the project activities; therefore the evaluation statements are limited to the available written information provided by the programme under evaluation and individual desk research conducted by the evaluators.

Name of the programme: Public Administration

Level: Master

Name of the Institution: Mykolas Romeris University (former Lithuanian University of Law),
Faculty of Public Governance and Business, Institute of Public Administration

Address: Ateities g. 20, Vilnius

Language of the programme: Lithuanian and/or English

Country: Lithuania

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Note: The report expresses an opinion of the authors. The EC doesn't have responsibility for any utilization of included information.

Part 1: Accreditation Criteria

1. Preamble	
1.1 National educational system	<p>Lithuania has an educational system compatible with the systems of the member states of the European Union and there are no national constraints to the programme to fulfill EAPAA criteria. Higher education comprises two types of institutions: universities („universitetas“) and colleges („kolegija“). Learners can begin their higher education after gaining an upper secondary education.</p> <p>The degree structure follows a three-cycle structure: Bachelor’s, Master’s and Doctoral-level studies. The first cycle of studies (Bachelor’s) usually lasts for four academic years, the second cycle (Master’s) two years and the third cycle (Doctoral) four years. Starting in 2018, short-cycle studies were introduced into the higher education system. Short-cycle studies are intended for the acquisition of the Lithuanian qualification framework’s Level V qualification (ISCED 5). VET schools together with colleges can provide joint short-cycle studies after coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. Legal acts implementing short-cycle studies are being prepared.</p> <p>The Law on Higher Education and Research states that only accredited study programmes can be provided at higher education institutions (HEIs). Lithuanian or international expert teams are recruited to evaluate new study programmes and study fields.</p>
1.2 National evaluation system	<p>In Lithuania, a national system of internal and external quality assurance in higher education is in place, in line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG). Periodically, at least every 7 years, an external studies and higher education institutions’ evaluation is performed. Higher education institutions may carry out only accredited study programmes.</p> <p>External quality assurance in Lithuania is performed by an independent national quality assurance agency – the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC), which is registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education (EQAR). Higher education institutions may apply for evaluation of a study programme to any quality assurance agency registered in EQAR register, in such case, SKVC issues a decision of accreditation on basis of an evaluation performed by another agency registered in EQAR. An accredited study programme is entered in the Register of Study and Training Programmes and Qualifications for a fixed period of time.</p>

<p>1.3 Formal exams for entrance to civil service</p>	<p>Formal and centralized exams for entrance to the civil service are specified by the Lithuanian legislation system. Civil service is regulated in Lithuania under the Law on Civil Service XIII-13709. To be admitted as a Civil servant it is necessary to have Lithuanian citizenship, know the language, be at least 18 years old and not older than 65 years old and to have a higher university or college education (Article 9(1)).</p> <p>Since 2019, the recruitment of civil servant is centralized by the Civil Service Department under the Ministry of Interior. When a position is available, it is published and the Civil Service Department conducts a comprehensive evaluation of the candidates after verification that they meet the requirements. This evaluation can consist of: (1) Interview: structured or semi-structured, individual or group interview; (2) Practical task: written or oral; (3) Essay; (4) Test; (5) Homework assignments and presentation (5 working days). The position is given to the candidate who obtained the highest score, but it cannot be lower than 6 points</p>
<p>2. Applicability/Eligibility</p>	
<p>2.1 Domain</p>	<p>The Public Administration master level programme is a management sciences oriented multidisciplinary programme. As public administration studies are classified between the studies of political science and management in Lithuania, some universities assign and organize public administration studies in the field of political sciences, while Mykolas Romeris University - in the field of business and public governance.</p> <p>In MRU public administration study programmes 48% of Bachelor and 75% of Master study subjects are related to management aspects of public administration. The programme has been accredited in Lithuanian Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences for a period of 6 years until 31/08/2020 in accordance with the legislation in force at the time.</p> <p>From 2020 it was moved from the evaluation of particular study programmes to study fields when new procedures for external evaluation and accreditation of studies, evaluation areas and indicators were approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania in 2019. Accordingly, the national accreditation of all study programmes has been extended until the evaluation of the study field. All Public administration programmes belong to Management study field, and programmes will be evaluated in 2022.</p> <p>In conclusion, the program is multidisciplinary, the self-evaluation report (SER) offers sufficient information in this respect. Analysing the list of courses and core courses (p. 17 and 20-24), it is clear that the programs cover all important topics of public administration education – aiming at the acquisition and the application of scientific knowledge of governance.</p>
<p>2.2 Geography</p>	<p>The program is organized by the Institute of Public Administration, Faculty of Public Governance and Business, Mykolas Romeris University (former Lithuanian University of Law), in Vilnius, Lithuania.</p> <p>Being a member state of EU and of the Council of Europe, the program</p>

	falls within the jurisdiction of EAPAA.
2.3 Programme longevity	<p>Bachelor and Master studies in Public Administration at Mykolas Romeris University (former Lithuanian University of Law) began in the academic year of 1999-2000, so public administration studies have a 20-year-old tradition. Several reforms of the organizational structure of the faculty were made along time, strengthening the position of public administration studies. The programme can be accredited.</p> <p>In 2001 a Department of Public Administration was established at the recently formed Faculty of State Governance and Business and has maintained continued existence ever since, although it has undergone multiple institutional reforms.</p> <p>Programme policies and placement of graduates can be evaluated, the SER provides with information about successfulness of programme graduates to find a job (detailed completion and employability rates information are given, p. 43), but there are no statistics to show how many are employed in the field of study.</p> <p>The SER offers information on a double-degree program, but the connection to the program that is subject of evaluation is unclear. Further clarifications should be made in that respect.</p>
2.4 Programme variants and locations	<p>Vilnius is the only location where the Master program in Public Administration is provided, at the Mykolas Romeris University.</p> <p>The program is offered both on a full-time and part-time version.</p>
4 Category of accreditation	
4 Category of accreditation	The Master level programme in Public Administration applies for external voluntary evaluation within the PAQUALITY project. The character of the program is in line with the application.
5. Standards	
5.1 Domain of public administration	<p>The program seems to be strong in Public Governance/management and the public administration elements in the program are predominant in the curricula.</p> <p>The program is multidisciplinary, the SER offers sufficient information in this respect. Analysing the list of courses, and core courses (p. 18 and 24-25) it is clear that the programs cover all important topics of public administration education (including courses as – Introduction to Research Methodology)– aiming at the acquisition and the application of scientific knowledge of governance.</p> <p>In general, the structure of elective blocks of courses strengthens the PA approach, but more emphasis can be added on electives which could strengthen its interdisciplinary nature.</p>

	<p>The Public Administration Master's Degree Programme and specializations curriculum is in compliance with provisions of the LSS, Approval of Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies approved by Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on December 30, 2016, Order No. V-1168, the Study Regulations and other legal acts.</p> <p>The programme under review is without any doubt included in the domain of Public Administration.</p>
<p>5.2 Mission of the programme</p>	<p>The mission is explicitly and clearly presented in the SER. The stated mission of PA studies Mykolas Romeris University is „to empower public sector employees with capabilities of spreading the ideas of modern public administration and applying practically the competencies gained at the University in central and municipal government, other public and non-profit organizations and, thus, contribute to the development of a modern Lithuanian state based on the principles of democracy and civil society”.</p> <p>The mission is in line with the mission of Mykolas Romeris University, with that of the Faculty of Public Governance and Business and with national accreditation guidelines. The mission is clear and in accordance with the mission statements of other international PA programmes.</p> <p>However, we believe that university or programme level decision makers could refine and nuance this mission (or at least the phrasing) as it appears to be a rather generic one, or at least one which could be (at least partially) applied to any other PA master or even undergraduate programme.</p> <p>Furthermore, it would be advisable to differentiate between the mission of the Master and Bachelor programmes, as no such differentiation can be currently observed in the SE report submitted.</p> <p>A set of credible programme objectives based on the mission are formulated (as aims in the SER). The applicant might also consider different specific set of objectives for each of the programs (if seen as appropriate).</p> <p>Learning outcomes are explicit, and a clear connection is made between general competences and programme learning outcomes (p. 9-10).</p>
<p>5.3 Level</p>	<p>The Master study programme of MRU follows the description of the Public Administration study field which is approved by the Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education under the Lithuanian Ministry of Education, and the competencies set out therein and the Civil Servants Competence Model prepared by the Civil Service Department under the Ministry of the Interior.</p> <p>According to the Description of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework, level VII qualifications is acquired with Master studies, requiring 90 credits for completion. The qualification provides for complex activities consisting of different interrelated tasks which may cover several related areas of</p>

	<p>professional activities.</p> <p>The program is aligned with the Bologna system (the European Credit Transfer System was introduced since 2006 in Lithuania). The average number of credits in recommended syllabuses is 30 credits per term and 60 credits per academic year (for full time students), with around 27 hours of work required for one credit point.</p> <p>The intended learning outcomes of the programme correspond to general, internationally accepted descriptions of the qualifications of an academic master degree -the learning outcomes of the programme are well linked to Dublin descriptors and the programme follows the internationally recognised standards equivalent to its level.</p>
<p>5.4 Practice and internships</p>	<p>The information provided in the report confirms that the development of practical skills is one of the main priorities of the program (see study methods p. 33- for Master, and assessment methods, p. 38-39). The SER also mentions the organization of seminars in public institutions, and lectures delivered by representatives of public institutions (p. 42).</p> <p>Student are required to pass the course Master thesis (30 ECTS, second year of studies), in which they have to prove their ability to apply the acquired methods and procedures in practice in solving a research task within the final thesis.</p> <p>The development of practical skills also seems to be included in other courses of the study programme, mainly in the form of seminar works that solve the specific problems assigned by the local and regional self-governments, state administration offices, etc.</p> <p>Unfortunately, the Master programme in Public Administration does not have an internship (professional practice) activity included in the curricula. We believe that the practical skills of master students could be greatly improved by the introduction of such a course in the Curricula.</p> <p>Overall, The Public Administration programme provides adequate training of practical skills in correspondence with the mission and the programme objectives</p>
<p>5.5.1 Curriculum Content</p>	
<p>5.5.1.1 Core Components</p>	<p>The curriculum of the Master program is adequate. Master study programmes in Public Administration follow the description of the Public Administration study field approved by the Center for Quality Assessment in Higher Education under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania and the competencies set out therein and the Civil Servants Competence Model prepared by the Civil Service Department under the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Lithuania. Public administration studies are constantly improved taking into consideration the needs and development trends of public sector organizations in</p>

cooperation with the Parliament, the Government, the Ministry of the Interior, other ministries and municipal administrations, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders.

Master study programme is structured in a way that helps to achieve the programme aims and acquire the competences. Master studies are taught in modules: after completing one course, another is started. At the beginning of the semester, much attention is given to the formation of a systematic approach in the field of Public Administration (Comparative Analysis of Public Administration is taught) and research activities (Research Methodology is taught).

The Master programme focuses on training highly qualified public sector employees and managers. Interdisciplinarity is manifested in the provision and improvement of qualifications and competencies in the areas of management, public governance and public policy. It should be added that when writing a Master Thesis students inevitably apply the research methods at the intersection of public management and political sciences because modern research of social sciences is interdisciplinary in itself. Given that the Master Thesis is the first scientific work, the same is true of public governance research. Public administration as a scientific subject consists of components of different social sciences (management, political science, economics, law, etc.).

Master studies in public administration analyze and evaluate the experience gained in organizing the activities of business organizations. For example, the study subject Human Resource Management analyses the principles of human resource management in both public and private sectors and how innovations of private organisations are adapted in the public sector. It is impossible to compare the models of civil service and the civil services of different countries and the legal basis of their activities without the knowledge of public law. By comparing theories and concepts of public administration, Master students strengthen their knowledge of philosophy, etc.

Two-thirds of the programme consist of Public governance and related subjects. The programme provides studies in Project Management Theory, Comparative Analysis of Public Administration, Public Sector Reform Policy, Human Resource Management, Comparative Analysis of Civil Service, Public Sector Strategic Marketing, Public Service Management, Comparative Public Policy. Optional courses that are relevant to the current realities of the Lithuanian public sector including Ethics in Public Administration, Rhetoric and Image Management, Strategic Decision Making, Theoretical and Practical Aspects of Educational Leadership (Coaching) are also taught. One third of the programme is devoted to research and Master theses. In order to provide Master degree students with knowledge and skills on how to write Master thesis, the course Research Methodology (6 ECTS) is taught, mid-term reporting of the Master thesis was introduced, and the study programme is completed with a prepared Master thesis (30 ECTS).

	<p>The core curriculum provides a thorough teaching of the basic concepts, theories, methods and history (classics) of Public Administration on the level of the programme.</p> <p>The SER emphasizes on the connection between courses and general and competencies provided (p. 24-25). Also, the relation between the learning outcomes, subjects taught and study methods are clearly presented.</p>
<p>5.5.1.2 Other Components</p>	<p>The SER mentions multiple specializations on page one (Crisis Management, Education and Science Policy and Management, Environmental Protection Administration, Non-Governmental Organisations and Local Communities Policy and Management, Policy and Management of Energy, Project Management in the Public Sector) but decision makers deliberately included no further information on these specializations or on how they relate to the 'Major Public Administration programme'. Are these different programs or tracks within the main PA programme? If so, this information should be disclosed and proper treated in the entire SER.</p> <p>Special competences are provided by different courses, as for instance, Theories of Project Management, Master students analyse and evaluate project managerial as well as political and legal aspects.</p>
<p>5.5.1.3 Structure and didactics of the programme</p>	<p>The SER offers sufficient information on the structure and didactics of the programme (p. 33-37). There is a proper combination of lectures that enhance knowledge and seminar activities (focused on collaborative learning techniques, case-studies, practice training and projects prepared by students), and actively involve students in courses.</p> <p>The study plan of the Master of Public Administration programme consists of 90 ECTS. The study programme includes 17.3 % of contact work hours (420) and 82.7 % of independent work hours (2010). In the Master study courses approximately 42 hours of contact hours are devoted to the course of Public Administration, 120 hours for independent work, 50 hours for the course of research methodology and 34 hours for alternative electives. 30 ECTS is provided for the preparation of the final work.</p> <p>More than 50% of the subjects are oriented to public governance (Public Service Management; Strategic Marketing in Public Sector etc.), civil service (Comparative Civil Service) and other areas related to public governance (Comparative Public Policy; Politics of Reforms). Much attention is given to subjects that are relevant to the current issues of Lithuanian public governance (Human Resource Management, Theory of Project Management, Coaching Practice and Theory, Ethics in Public Administration, etc.). Over 30 % of study time is allocated to the preparation of the Master Thesis.</p> <p>The modern educational process is based on didactic concepts such as: critical thinking and creative education, collaborative and reflexive learning, technology based and assisted learning, and problem-based learning.</p>

	<p>Students are being provided feedback on their evaluation from their professors and they can also receive consultations. Institutional feedback is also provided to students from the head of the study programme on a case to case (need) basis.</p> <p>The programme is coherent in its contents and the general didactic concept is in line with the aims and objectives of the programme. The teaching methods correspond to the didactic philosophy of the programme. The programme is feasible to complete in the formal time foreseen for the programme in the respective years.</p>
5.5.1.4 Intake	<p>The Senate of Mykolas Romeris University approves admission rules to the Public Administration studies every year. When approving the rules for admission to master studies MRU Senate follows the Law on Science and Studies and the Order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sports (the rules for admission in 2020 were approved in accordance with Order No. V-1407 of 29 November 2019 “Approval of the description of the procedure for the formation of the competitive order of first cycle and integrated study places and state-funded study places and applicants for study scholarships in 2020”). The entrance requirements are carefully checked before students start the programme are ensured at institutional level.</p> <p>Minimum level of education required for MRU Public Administration Master`s Degree Programme is higher education from a university level institution. Applicants to the Public Administration Master Level studies must have the following pre-requisites set by the order of Mykolas Romeris University Senate:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Completed university studies and during studies and / or practice, acquired competences which ensure readiness to study in Master's study programmes in the field public administration; 2) Completed college level and additional studies. The aim of additional studies is to provide the basic necessary competencies that graduates who have already completed their undergraduate studies. The volume of additional studies is 30 ECTS. <p>The structure, contents and the didactic of the programme are in line with the qualifications of the students that enter into the programme.</p>
5.5.2 Length	<p>The bachelor level typically takes one and a half years for full-time studies and 2 years for part-time studies. The curriculum length is in line with the objectives of the programme.</p>
5.5.3 Results	<p>The master programme shows rather consistent completion rates (page 43), around 70% graduating within a year of their initial normal duration for studies.</p> <p>High rates of graduates’ employability shows that the majority of students (over 80% - page 45 of the SER) find work already during their studies, or no</p>

	<p>later than within 1 year after graduation. Therefore, it shows that during study process students acquire necessary competences, and graduates are of high demand in public sector labour market. The graduates of this program will acquire knowledge needed to know and analyze the local and regional economy, use information systems, plan the social, economic and environmental development of territorial units in accordance with the principles of ethics and legal standards. The graduates have the necessary knowledge to apply the latest managerial approaches and tools in public administration institutions, to manage organizations of the private and non-profit sector participating in the development of the territory and public administration.</p> <p>Students are able to demonstrate actual public policy formulation and its implementation knowledge, current administrative capabilities and an aim to develop them, also knowledge about basic public administration theories, paradigms, and current public administration modernization tendencies. Students can integrate knowledge, implement innovations, initiate change, carry out new ideas, practically solve concrete problem, analyze public policy formalization and implementation processes, apply current state and municipality level institution management and administration methods. Students are able to identify potential of public sector activities, lead them and their departments, encourage structural, functional, content related changes, compare civil service models EU wide and analyze their change tendencies. They can work in organizations involved in the development of the territory, in scientific and research institutions, development and advisory agencies, but also as consultants in specific areas.</p> <p>From the report it is very clear about BA and MA thesis that are written and defended. There is a special emphasis on the value of the Master thesis' importance – preparation (over 30 % of study time is allocated to the preparation) and defence. The procedure sets the standard in this respect: Study Programme Committees, together with social partners approve and provide students with a choice of topics of the final thesis that are reviewed and updated every year, objectivity of the thesis evaluation and compliance with the requirements are ensured through the participation of external members (from academia and from public sector institutions) in the defence commissions.</p> <p>The final qualifications that have been achieved by the graduates of the programme meet the intended learning outcomes of the programme. Graduates are able to operate adequately in the public sector or public administration academic environment.</p>
5.6 Quality Improvement and Innovation	
5.6.1 Programme accomplishment	University structural divisions are responsible for study programme management. Besides the Centre of Academic Affairs of the University (responsible for methodical assistance in assessment and accreditation),

	<p>the responsibilities set at the level of the Faculty ensure accomplishment of programs and quality assurance.</p> <p>Besides the individual responsibility of professors on teaching quality and learning outcomes, a formal body, the Study Programme's Committee (comprising of professors, student's representatives and representatives of social partners), along with the Faculty ensures that the programme meet the needs of labour market and students.</p> <p>The department of the Faculty of Governance and Business has a system of quality control in place. The content of study courses is reviewed every academic year, the structure of courses is changed and replenished according to the requirements of the public administration practice.</p> <p>The programme assesses the accomplishment of its objectives; it uses information about its performance in directing and revising programme objectives, strategies, and operations regularly</p>
5.6.2 Curriculum Development	<p>The Public Administration Master's Degree Programme and specializations curriculum is in compliance with provisions of the LSS, Approval of Description of General Requirements for the Provision of Studies approved by Minister of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania on December 30, 2016, Order No. V-1168.</p> <p>The content of study programmes is constantly reviewed and updated with regard to the development trends of public administration an provided in the SER. Study and assessment methods of different courses are constantly updated according to the new tendencies of educational sciences. The program has evolved over time in line with the changes that took place in the surrounding environment related to PA teaching.</p> <p>Recommendation: involvement of external bodies representatives in future development of curriculum - make use of the strong connections created (through the assistance offered by the Baltic-American fund) and Kaunas University partnership (or explicit mention of existing involvement in the eventuality of its existence).</p> <p>The Study Programme Committee with the Head of the programme are the main bodies responsible for general programme policy and planning. Annually, the Study Programme Committee improves the content and structure of the programme, reviews and updates the Programme and submits it to the Faculty Council for consideration in accordance with the procedure for preparation and renewal of study programmes</p>
5.6.3 External Reviews	<p>The programme has not undergone EAPAA evaluation until now.</p> <p>The Master studies programme in Public Administration was accredited by the Accreditation Agency in Health and Social Sciences for a period of 6 years until 31/08/2020 in accordance with the legislation in force at the time.</p>

	<p>From 2020 it was moved from the evaluation of particular study programmes to study fields when new procedures for external evaluation and accreditation of studies, evaluation areas and indicators were approved by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania in 2019. Accordingly, the accreditation of all study programmes has been extended until the evaluation of the study field. All Public administration programmes belong to Management study field, and programmes will be evaluated in 2022.</p>
<p>5.7 Student Assessment</p>	<p>The SER offers sufficient and detailed information in this respect (p. 39).</p> <p>The Procedure for the Assessment of Mykolas Romeris University Learning Outcomes establish principles and criteria for the assessment of the learning outcomes of study subjects and study programmes (Description of the System of the Assessment of Learning Outcomes). It contains: principals and criteria of assessment procedure, implementation of examinations, other academic credits of students' written works, final examinations and theses at the University.</p> <p>In order to ensure active involvement of students and their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, objective assessment of learning outcomes, avoidance of cases of plagiarism, cumulative assessment is used in University (the final grades are made of the grades of interim credits and grades of the examination). Usually, the assessment of the examination makes 40-50 per cent of the grade of the final assessment (the number and weight of interim credits in the grade are established by the Study Programme Committee). The programme provides adequate and timely feedback for the students. The feedbacks are implemented at two levels: individual and institutional (see p. 37).</p> <p>Assessments methods include: oral examination, written tests and colloquia, case studies, presentations, essays, and so on. The assessment method presented is clear, with discernable performance criteria and is a tool for eliminating subjectivity in evaluation. Quality of evaluation is monitored through questionnaires at the end of each semester, and at the time of final exam.</p>
<p>5.8 Programme Jurisdiction</p>	<p>The Faculty of Public Governance and its component Institute of Public Administration can be regarded as the self-governing educational body which is fully formally and informally responsible for the programme provisions, the whole programme "Public Administration" being fully within its jurisdiction.</p> <p>The Institute of Public Administration is responsible for the administration, organization and provision of the programme. This department creates, evaluates and guarantees the programme, its curricula, individual courses, their organization, time schedule and creates partnerships with other major and supportive departments for courses within their competence. The Faculty's Study Programme Committee and the Head of the master</p>

	<p>programme with responsibility for the programme has substantial influence with respect to: general programme policy and planning, improves the content and structure of the programme (new courses and curriculum changes), reviews and updates the programme;</p> <p>The following organizational structures are responsible for the clarity and preciseness of the intended learning outcomes of the study programmes while improving and renewing the study programmes: Study Programme Committees, Faculty Councils, Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs, Rectorate, Senate's Study Commission, the Senate.</p>
5.9.1 Faculty nucleus	<p>Core staff involved in Public Administration master Program includes 14 people. There do not seem to be any gender issues regarding the teaching staff.</p> <p>There is an identifiable faculty nucleus that accepts primary responsibility for the programme; this responsibility is recognized at the next higher level of the organization. This regular faculty consists of a sufficient number of faculty significantly involved with the programme to support the teaching responsibilities.</p>
5.9.2 Faculty qualifications	<p>The qualifications of the core faculty are adequate for the program. 85.71% of the staff holds a doctorate, while an additional 7.14% is pursuing doctoral studies. Teachers are involved in other projects/organizations in connection with PA environment. All courses of the master programmes are taught by lecturers with relevant qualifications and representative research activity or/and with practical experience in the field.</p> <p>The faculty seems to be present in the international scientific arena, attending international conferences and participating in multiple international projects and consortia (EU HORIZON 2020, COST, ERASMUS+) as well as national ones. The core faculty also has a consistent academic research output, with multiple publications included in top tier journals.</p> <p>However, as dutifully presented in the SE report there is a partial mismatch between the research and teaching activities of the staff (as the two areas of expertise are not always overlapped).</p>
5.9.3 Diversity: gender and minorities	<p>In 2019 in the Master programme of Public Administration – 29% women and 71% men, but depending on what students choose as an alternative subjects, courses or thesis supervisors, this proportion may vary from case to case in the programme. The average age of all lecturers working at the Faculty of Public Administration is 45 years, the age of lecturers is distributed as follows: 15.56% are under the age of 35, and most of them are lecturing in undergraduate programmes; 2.22% are at retirement age, and the remaining 82.22% are of age from 36 to 62 years.</p> <p>The programme strives for a balanced percentage of men and women among their (professional) staff, which is in accordance with the principles of gender equality as specified by the higher education institution hosting</p>

	the programme.
5.10 Admission of Students	<p>Students are admitted based on a competitive process taking into account 4 criteria, as already discussed at - 5.5.1.4 Intake.</p> <p>According to admission numbers, the programme is most popular among female students and often account for more than 70% of students; these tendencies correspond to the general tendencies of Lithuania, because more women are studying than men in all Lithuanian higher education institutions and in 2019 58% of the first year students were women, and the percentage of women in social sciences and other related fields of study is even higher.</p> <p>Admission goals, admission policy and admission standards, including academic prerequisites, are in line with the mission and programme objectives. The programme has in place multiple strategies to increase the number and diversity of international student.</p>
5.11 Supportive Services and Facilities	<p>The material facilities are adequate to realize the programme in an effective and efficient way.</p> <p>The students benefit from library support. The library provides access to the Internet, electronic information resources and subscribed foreign databases which are inaccessible to other internet users. Central Building Library is open 6 days a week (from Monday to Friday it's open from 8a.m. till 1a.m.). Library users are able to use 10 reading rooms and a Lending department - there are 375 working places including 87 computerized working places (2 of them are for the people with special needs). Library's area is 2909 square meters. Users can use 2 wireless networks in the Library. Virtual library tour is available for the new users, in Lithuanian and English. MRU Library is an active user of social networks.</p> <p>Students and employees of the MRU use over 1,300 stationary and mobile computer workplaces. All stationary computers are connected to the University's local computer network, whereas laptop computers may be connected to wireless network in almost all premises of MRU. University's computer network is connected to Lithuanian education and studies institutions' computer network LITNET via 10 Gbps data speed channel. While at the premises of the University or Student Residence students may at any time use Internet information resources for their studies, research paper or general education. MRU has concluded software lease agreement ("School Agreement" licensing type) with Microsoft and has obtained and constantly updates software of ORACLE, VMware, IBM SPSS, ArcGIS MapleSoft and other companies. This ensures that University students and lecturers have access to all software that is needed during the study process and is likely to be used in their future career in modern organisations. University has widely popularised e-studies environment Moodle which allows flexible organisation of the study processes (and spread of academic information. It also provide tools for synchronous web</p>

	<p>conferencing that allows professors host live online presentations, seminars, office hours, or other meetings (BigBlueButton, Jitsi Meet, Microsoft Teams).</p> <p>All the auditoriums of the University have computerised professor work places, where professors may connect to University's computer system and use lecture material which is stored at University data storage and global computer network. The computerized professor's work place consists of computer, projector, audio equipment, data transfer and commutating equipment.</p> <p>The infrastructure is adequate to fulfill the mission of the programme.</p>
5.12 Student Services	<p>Student services such as programme advising, study progress appraisal and career guidance are provided at both university and faculty levels.</p> <p>Career Centre. It's a part of Academic Affair Centre, which provides career counselling to the students, assist them in their research for internship or work, and organize some meetings with companies. MRU is also a member of KVIS (Career Management Information system), which implements career management services for students. It provides students with automated personal career management tools and services including jobs and internship placements, career counselling, education and assessment.</p> <p>Psychological assistance. The Psychological Service is a structural unit of the Institute of Psychology at MRU, whose activities include individual and group psychological counseling, primary crisis support, psychological assessment, education and training. The purpose of the psychological service is to improve the mental health and well-being of the members of the university community, to promote productive cooperation and coherence of relations between the members of the community.</p> <p>The Library services. In addition to traditional services, training and consultations on various topics, could be done face-to-face or remotely using Skype. Faculty has a subject librarian who can help with information search strategy (this service is available for students and staff), using the searching systems, bibliographical list, etc...</p>
5.13 Public Relations	<p>PR activities are realized mainly through personal presentations at the partner institutions, participation in education fairs, and open days (spring, autumn) organized on the premises of the faculty.</p> <p>Up-to-date information on the study programmes is provided on the faculty website. It includes general information on the admission procedure (electronic application form, important dates, fees, admission requirements, content of entrance examination and recommended literature, information for applicants with specific needs) and on individual study programmes (objectives, target groups, educational philosophy, main topics of education, possibilities for further study and employment after</p>

	graduation).
6 Additional Criteria	NA

Part 2: Conclusions and recommendations

From the information included in the SE report, the program quality is good and the programme has a clear academic stature. Most accreditation standards are reflected at least on the adequate level.

The Master's study programme combines 20-year long tradition, based on continuous scientific, research, publishing and teaching activity, and several innovations to reach the present form, which is designed to cover the needs of practice and experience from cooperation within an international academic environment. Nowadays, the study programme uses modern teaching methods, multidisciplinary curriculum associated with the IT and communication technologies, as well as is oriented to solving the problems from practice. The curriculum enables students to focus on skills, values and abilities relevant to management of the public sector. This report contains proofs that the programme creates a connection between theory and practice, which enables the students to gain knowledge, skills and experience necessary for successful employment in the labour market.

However, a few recommendations can be formulated (some of these are issues which were unclear for the evaluators and could be improved for a future version of the SE report, while some might be regarded as potential weakness which might be addressed by programme decision makers and university stakeholders):

- The first page of the SER specifies that the language of the programme is Lithuanian or English, yet no further details are provided. Is it one programme which is held alternatively in 2 languages or are these two separate programs? Some hints regarding the two programmes are provided on page 55 (There are no international students in the Bachelor's study programme in Public Administration, but students from Georgia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Spain, France have studied in the Master's study programme held in English), but this information remains unclear.
- The table included on page 43 (Master completion rates) makes references to three different groups: Vilnius, Utena and Klaipeda. This partially relates to the previous point, as we do not know what is the data referring to: multiple locations/variants of MRU master program, or is the data a comparison of graduates completion rates of three different master programs of different institutions?
- The report should provide more detailed data regarding the Master's study programme (for example in section 2.1, 5.2, 5.4, 5.7, 5.12, 5.13). Some additional information could be found on the university website by following the link of Course description (p. 79) but the details are not well explained in the report.
- We believe that university or programme level decision makers / stakeholders could refine and nuance the mission of the programme (or at least its phrasing) as it appears to be a rather generic one, or at least one which could be (at least partially) applied to any other PA programme.
- The mission of the MASTER programme should be different from the mission of the BACHELOR studies programme, although both of them could be in-line with the general mission of the

Faculty/Institute. Having two different missions (for the BA and MA programmes) would also help better clarify the rationality behind their curricula and how one level builds upon the previous one.

- When a programme is offered in different variants (like fulltime and part-time, or distance learning), the programme has to demonstrate that all criteria are fulfilled for all variants. In the Self-evaluation Report attention must be paid to the differences between the variants. Since you have included no less than 4 programmes in the same report, it is very complicated to adequately identify all relevant information, especially regarding the differences between full-time and part-time alternatives.
- An External Supervisory Board / Committee formed by practitioners and professors from abroad is a useful tool used by other universities to ensure a high level of quality of educational programmes and it could be used in this case as well.
- More information should be provided regarding supportive services and facilities, especially on educational infrastructure (classrooms) and accommodation or other living facilities (cafeteria, recreational spaces, etc.).
- More information should be provided regarding the student services provided to ensure continuous education and reduced attrition rates.
- More information should be provided regarding Public relations and promotion activities conducted in order to ensure a consistent student intake.
- More emphasis should be made in the SE report on the way in which the programme actually assesses the accomplishment of its objectives and how decision makers use information about its performance in directing and revising programme objectives, strategies, and operations regularly;
- Programme decision makers can emphasize and encourage more the academic research activities conducted by students (especially at the MA level) and focus on involving them in research activities which can result in national or international publications.
- The SE reports includes only a limited list with the most important publication (articles) published by the academic staff, while also including all the conferences attended by the staff. We would recommend also including a full list of publications (book, articles, reports, etc.) to provide a more accurate image of the research capacity.
- Although this is not explicitly requested in the guidelines, we believe that it would be in your favor to address how you can minimize the weaknesses and threats in the future (if there are any plans) and how will you maximize the strengths and opportunities as competitive advantages.
- We suggest improving the SWOT analysis included on pages 73-74 of the SE report. We believe that more elements can be added both in favor (Strengths and Opportunities) of the programme or not (Weakness and Threats) – showing that you know your worth and advantages, your honesty and objectivity will be appreciated by any international evaluation committee.

- We believe that more elective courses should be provided to students in order to offer them alternatives from which they can actually choose what to study. The table on page 24-25 includes only 4 electives, or one elective course per semester. Since the departments seems to have teaching staff with rather diverse research interests, you could consider developing new elective courses in order to ensure a true interdisciplinary approach of Public Administration.
- Unfortunately, the Master programme in Public Administration does not have an internship (professional practice) activity included in the curricula. We believe that the practical skills of master students could be greatly improved by the introduction of such a course in the Curricula. The course could be included in the last semester and could be useful to students who work on their Master Thesis to collect data. We also suggest transferring some of the credits from the MA Thesis (30 ECTS) to the practice/internship class.