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INTERNATIONALISATION OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN LITHUANIA



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VYTAUTAS
MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
MCMXXII



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Lietuva: Higher Education

Binary HE system: *universities and non-university (colleges) higher education institutions*

18 Universities (21 – in 2018) - 11 state, 7 private
and

22 Colleges - 12 state, 10 private
plus

17 research institutes - 11 state, 6 non-state
plus

7 scientific and technological valleys –
integrated research, studies and business centers

- Academic roots reach XVI century
- 1579 VILNIUS UNIVERSITY

- 86% of graduates continue their education in universities and colleges

- Part of European Bologna process
- ECTS as a national credit accumulation and transfer system since 2011

- Various mobility and scholarship programmes: EU Erasmus+, NordPlus, bilateral, national...

LT Higher Education: current challenges

Demografical

- 2,794 million citizens by January 2020
- 18 % youth of age 14-29
- 28,3 thousand secondary school graduates in 2020 (51,7 thousand in 2004 – 31,6 in 2018)
- 104,3 thousand students at HEIs in 2020 (148,4 – in 2013)

Financial

- At present, all Lithuanian higher education funding is equivalent to about two medium-sized Western European universities funding.
- Dependence on ESF funding
- Limited No state funded places

Institutional

- *Too much duplication of study programs*
- *Competition with each other for local students*
- *Competition with regional/European universities for international students*

- About 9 % of Lithuanian students on degree studies abroad
- Only 7 % of foreign students study fulltime at LT HEIs in 2020



Previous Governmental Program on HE 2017-2020

Priorities for HE set by the Government (March 2017): quality of HE, access to the HE, high level and internationally competitive research and innovations, reform of HE network, financing and quality assurance system

No 1 step: Reorganisation and optimisation of the network of HEIs in Lithuania (8 out of 14 universities in 2019)

No 2 step: financial agreements between Government and HEIs (2019)

No 3: New student enrollment procedures

No 4: State funded Bachelor degree and new students' social support system (by mid 2018)

No 5: New system of attraction and retaining of talents (by the end of 2018)

...



- 6 % of foreign students enrolled at LT HEIs by 2020
- 2 universities among best 500 HEIs ranked by QS ranking by 2020
- New Strategy of Internationalisation of HE

LT Higher Education: after “reform”

- *Merging of state universities (11 out of 14 in 2017)*
- *Higher funding for salaries for academic staff and grants for PhD students,*
- *Higher funding for social grants for students*
- *State funding only for study programs with minimum No of students enrolled (15 – for humanities and social sciences, 10 – natural and technological, 4 – arts), Higher “enrollment” score*
- *State funding for institutions based on research production and no of students*
- *New teacher training program (3 national centers, one – at VMU)*
- *NO national Internationalisation Strategy*

New Governmental Program 2021-25: Plan of Measures for the Implementation of the PROGRAM of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania in the area of HE

- Preparational stage /under discussions
- Priority: Equal starting positions for all Lithuanian people
- 3 main goals for HE:
 - World-class science,
 - Top quality, international and accessible studies,
 - Modern, efficient and mission-oriented management of the study and science system



Top quality, international and accessible studies

- At least 80 % the employees will work in a job corresponding to the qualification level and field (currently - 65.1% correspond to the qualification level and the same part - to the field).
- Admission to bachelor's and master's studies is organised in one system.
- The share of foreign graduates who stay in Lithuania after studies has increased from 7 to 10 percent.



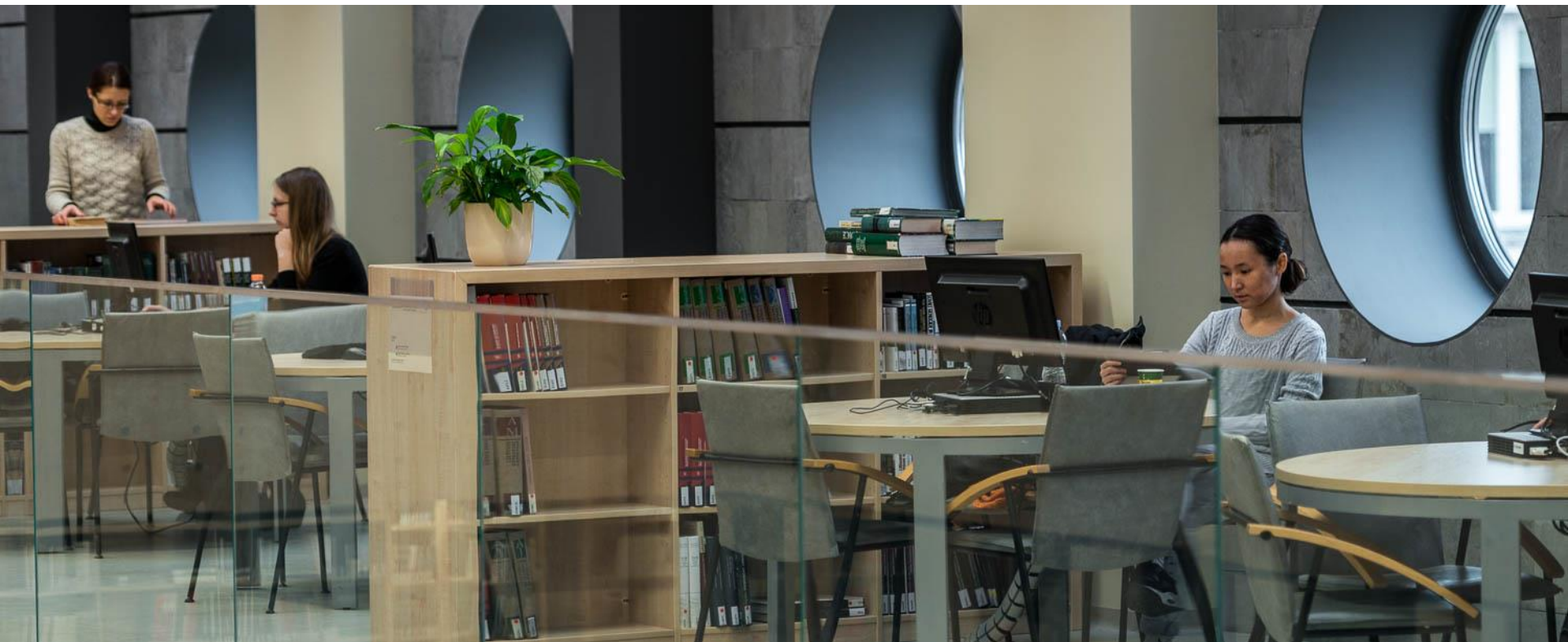
Top quality, international and accessible studies

- Establishment of one centralized system providing assistance to foreigners and foreign Lithuanians and development and implementation of an integration strategy for attracting foreigners and foreign Lithuanians
- Renewal of study programs by reviewing the duration of studies and promoting the development of distance learning, digitization and studies in English
- Improvement of infrastructure and study programs for persons with special needs

Proposals of the Lithuanian Rectors' Conference:

- Public funding must be open to citizens of all countries in order to attract the best graduates and respond to the needs of the country's market
- inter-institutional cooperation with other ministries and state institutions (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs, etc.) in addressing issues of employability, migration restrictions, social assistance and health care, accessibility

VMU: Vytautas Magnus University



VMU Internationalisation strategy, goals 2012–2020:

“RELIABLE INTERNATIONAL PARTNER”:

- developing strategic partnerships with leading universities and research centers worldwide;
- increasing the internationalisation of studies by developing international (joint and double degree qualification) study programmes, international doctoral and post-doctoral studies, enhancing mobility in studies;
- developing the internationalisation of scientific activities by ensuring active participation in recognised international research networks and international research programmes and encouraging mobility in scientific activities.
- Activate the internationalisation of the University community
- Foster the idea of the “World Lithuanian University”

ECHE:Erasmus Charter for Higher Education 2021-2027

- The focus on the more extensive and in-depth internationalisation of our campus life, studies and research is the key priority among other strategic aims of VMU.
- In line to those aims, VMU has set 3 main areas of action for internationalization until 2027:
 - **Strategic partnerships and global networks for the higher international visibility and reputation**
 - **Modern, interdisciplinary, high-quality studies and research initiatives with national, regional and global impact**
 - **Global Campus with environmentally friendly infrastructure for inclusiveness, diversity, and openness**

1. Strategic partnerships and global networks for the higher international visibility and reputation

- Neighbors in Baltic Sea region (Latvia, Estonia, Poland, Germany and Scandinavian countries) will be of importance due to the long history of cooperation and the emergence of new activities;
- European partners (European University – **T4E Alliance**) and others;
- Eastern Partnership and Central Asia countries: Azerbaijan, Ukraine, Georgia, Belarus and Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, etc. for student and staff exchange, capacity-building projects;
- South-East Asia (Japan, China, The Republic of Korea) for studies and research projects;
- Close cooperation with international organizations (UNESCO, UN, OECD, etc.);
- Close cooperation with foreign cultural institutions through VMU's centres and institutes, including but not limited to the Centre for Asian Studies, The Centre of Francophone Countries, etc.;
- Close cooperation with the national and foreign embassies, Lithuanian diaspora abroad

2. Modern, interdisciplinary, high-quality studies and research initiatives with national, regional and global impact

The main focal pillars for the studies will include:

- **Development of joint, double degree and on-line international programs and courses**
- **Quality assurance and recognition**
- **Mobility as a norm**

The main pillars of the focus for the research will include:

- Excellence in research (especially in the areas of humanities and arts, social science, natural science, and agriculture);
- Significant impact (social, technological, cultural, and political impact on both the national and global levels);
- Intensified collaboration with diverse sectors (especially business and industry, but also schools, NGOs, cultural institutions for better understanding of their issues and reflecting by sharing tangible solutions)

3. Global Campus with environmentally friendly infrastructure for inclusiveness, diversity, openness

VMU strives to create a campus that would be open, inclusive, convenient to use and live in, cultivate talents in sports and culture, and designed to develop a variety of our community's skills and competences. We want our community to become more interculturally, environmentally and socially aware, which would help everyone feel at home wherever they are.

The main actions to implement this aim include the development of:

- Multicultural spirit of life
- Development of collaborative international community (attraction and integration of international students, lectures, researchers, and other staff)
- Fostering inclusiveness, diversity, and openness
- Attractive and comfortable living conditions
- Cultural and sport infrastructure

NEW VMU STRATEGY FOR 2021–2027:



1. COMMUNITY IN HARMONY AND CONSOLIDATION

- To cherish **diversity, multilingualism and multiculturalism** of the community by ensuring equal opportunities to every member;
- To ensure the inclusion of community members with special needs, **the needs of international community**;
- To improve communication, e.g. **more bilingual English-medium content in the university** (*at least 40% of the information*)
- To improve the community's psychological well-being, from surveys to positive interventions (*special attention to international community by establishing an additional psychologist position for counseling foreign students and staff*)
- Competitive remuneration, flexibility physical virtual presence.
- To develop **the alumni network (including international alumni)** and meaningful reciprocity

NEW VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR 2021–2027:



2. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

- To establish research institutes to boost interdisciplinary high-quality research and publication
 - ✓ *Encourage teachers and researchers to take an active part in mobility programs in order to make new international contacts.*
 - ✓ *Conduct international competitions for scientific and pedagogical positions (aim for 50% at least one top-level foreign scientist-leader, artist).*
 - ✓ *At least 1 top-level foreign researcher in doctoral committees.*
- To raise more funds for research and arts and to ensure good financial motivation for scientists and artists
- **European alliance „Transform4Europe”** – the project of European Commission.

NEW VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR 2021–2027:



- **European alliance „Transform4Europe”** — use alliance partnerships to:
 - *Develop common mobility services and harmonized mobility and recognition procedures*
 - *Ensure that by 2025, 50 % of 4E Partner Alliance students will participate in different mobility activities.*
 - *Development of 3 joint master and 3 joint doctoral programs; innovative and interdisciplinary approach in teaching; e-learning platform; common teacher training academy*
 - *Participate in national and international clusters with business and other public institutions/NGOs(1 per year)*

NEW VYTAUTAS MAGNUS UNIVERSITY STRATEGY FOR 2021–2027:



3. “STUDIES 360”

- Strengthening the principles of *Artes liberales* in our study system allowing more flexibility for students to create their unique study paths
- More diverse approach to students with different capacity: more assistance to those who need and more challenging studies to disclose talents
- **Increase innovation, flexibility and availability of studies, in response to society needs and developing society of the future**
 - *Internationalisation of studies by developing interdisciplinary international study programs and increasing number of international students and student/staff mobilities*
- **To ascertain leadership in teacher education**
 - *„Mobility windows“ with integrated pedagogical traineeships abroad in teacher training programs and DD programs with foreign partner institutions*

Internationalisation of studies:

- To create a system for recognizing and promoting the mobility of teachers and non-academic staff.
- To prepare and implement joint, double diploma and / or certificate study programs, to install “mobility windows”.
- To create a system that promotes virtual and mixed mobility of students and teachers.
- To prepare and implement subjects taught in English in all academic departments, in all fields of study.
- To prepare and implement a program of preparatory courses for foreign students.
- Improvement of local and foreign student admission procedures in accordance with Principles of Artes Liberales, including motivation assessment and preparation for studies;
- To improve the marketing strategy for international studies in accordance to the University's Integrated Communication Strategy.
- To expand the offer of intensive language, culture and other courses for foreigners.
- To review bilateral cooperation agreements with foreign partners, assess the intensity of cooperation, identify priority regions and expand partnerships with internationally recognized universities and organizations.
- To prepare and implement a “Certificate of international credits” for students (including credits gained during mobility, foreign language learning and subjects taught in English).

- Number of outgoing lecturers - 25% per year
- • Number of incoming foreign teachers for teaching and training - at least 200 per year
- • Number of outgoing students - 8 % per year.
- • Number of incoming foreign students - 1000 per year
- Share of admitted full-time foreign students - not less than 10 percent.
- Number of student and teacher exchanges carried out in a virtual way - 10 % of all mobilities
- Number of double diploma programs – 35 % of all English taught programs
- • The number of subjects taught in English in each study program not less than 10% of all courses
- • Number of students who have obtained a certificate - 20 percent of graduates (until 2025).

Audit of the State Audit Office 2021

Criteria for assessing the internationalisation of studies:

- INSTITUTIONAL INTERNATIONALIZATION STRATEGY AND TARGETS
- INTERNATIONAL MOBILITY: student and staff mobility (focus on teacher mobility), „mobility windows“, mobility in teacher training programs, general mobility challenges and measures to solve them
- ADMISSION OF FOREIGN STUDENTS: recognition of foreign qualifications
- STUDY PROGRAMS TAUGHT IN ENGLISH/ JOINT STUDY PROGRAMS: number of study programs and courses taught in foreign languages, number of teachers teaching in foreign language and level of language proficiency, quality assurance

Institutional review of Higher Education Institutions in Lithuania

*New Institutional review
in 2022*

- ✓ HEIs can be accredited for 7 or 3 years (before was 6 or 3)
- ✓ Institutional self-assessment report with data for the last 5 years:

4 evaluation areas: *management; quality assurance, study and science (art) activities; impact on regional and national development*

Evaluation of Internationalisation of Studies and Research:

- 1. The higher education institution has a strategy for the internationalization of science (art) and study activities (including internationality indicators), its implementation is subject to established measures and the effectiveness of these activities is measured.**
 - 2. The higher education institution integrates aspects of internationalisation into the content of studies and scientific (artistic) activities**
- ✓ CENTRE FOR QUALITY ASSESSMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION (SKVC) organizes an external evaluation with the assistance of experts
 - ✓ Institutional Review Report and final decision on accreditation
 - ✓ Anticipation and implementation of performance measures (Progress Report)

VMU: Internationalisation goals and challenges

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- International/national politics and academic cooperation with certain regions/countries
 - National policy, competition with Kaunas /LT universities (for students; position in Rankings);
 - After the merger of VMU, ASU and LEU: different work cultures, refinement of priorities and partnerships, centralised and decentralised administration and responsibilities between the different academic and non-academic units
 - Data collection, reliability, criteria and responsibilities
 - Allocation of funds and resources (centralised/decentralised)
 - Maximum use of available potential (human, financial and infrastructural resources)
 - Quality assurance (especially of study programmes and courses taught in English);
 - Increasing the mobility numbers (both outgoing and incoming);
 - Increasing the quality of service/ ICD work and new marketing strategy.



THANK YOU!