

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN FOR IMPROVING THE PERFORMANCE OF KAUNAS UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES AND MEASURES FOR RESOLVING THE SHORTCOMINGS IDENTIFIED DURING THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION

Aim: To improve the performance on the basis of the recommendations made by the Expert Group of the Institutional Review for 2008-2013.

Recommendations provided by experts	Measures and actions for improvement	Results	Comments
1. STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT			
1.1. Realities identified, such as demographic decline and financial stability, may require KUAS leadership to be prepared to choose between priorities in the future, and to make hard decisions in the context of the 2020 Strategic Plan. KUAS management will need to demonstrate a capability and willingness to do this.	1.1.1. Improve the strategic management process and submit it for approval.	A draft description of the strategic management process was prepared in 2015. Approved Flow chart and description of the strategy management process. (Order No. 1-6 by KUAS Director of 7 January 2020). Interim results of the implementation of the strategic measures are discussed at the meetings of the Directorate and Deans' offices. Strengths, areas for improvement, risk assessment are carried out during annual performance evaluation. Amendments to the Strategic Activity Plan have been made during the period of implementation of KUAS Strategy 2020 (Minutes of KUAS Council No. (2.1)-2-1 of 9 January 2014, KUAS Council Minutes No. (2.1)-2-4 of 14 December 2016, KUAS Council Minutes No. (2.1)-2-1 of 8 February 2019). KUAS Strategy until 2025 was developed in December 2020 (Minutes of KUAS Council No. (2.1)-2-23 of 3 December 2020).	Implemented.
	1.1.2. Develop the procedure for monitoring the preparation and implementation of KUAS Strategy and Annual Plans.	The activity reports and action plans of KUAS and its Divisions are prepared in accordance with the Procedure for KUAS Self-assessment and Activity planning (approved by Order of KUAS Director No. 1-380 of 18 October 2018, revised by Order of KUAS Director No. 1-450 of 25 November 2020), for lecturers – in accordance with the Procedure for Planning and (self-) assessment of Lecturers' Activities (Order of KUAS Director No.1-172 of 30 April 2019, amended by Order No. 1-142 of 20 April 2020).	
1.2. In taking forward KUAS strategic planning and quality management systems, the institutional information system will need to be robust and effective; early progress with improvements in this is required.	1.2.1. Since 2015 onwards, publish the activity plans of KUAS and its divisions and on the intranet.	Since 2015, the activity plans of KUAS and its Divisions have been made publicly available and are freely accessible on the intranet – in the document catalogue.	Implemented.
	1.2.2. Publish quantitative and qualitative information on KUAS performance on KUAS intranet.	Quantitative and qualitative information on KUAS performance is regularly updated and published on KUAS intranet, in the Document catalogue, and email system.	Implemented.
	1.2.3. Implement and improve information systems for community awareness and KUAS management.	Since 2014, significant activities related to the development of KUAS information system have been carried out. The following has been implemented and developed: KUAS intranet; the information system for planning and (self-)evaluation of lecturers' activities; the information system for personnel activities, the staff self-service, and the sub-system for document archive management; the electronic centralized system for students' feedback after the completion of the course / module; the information systems for public procurement and project management, etc.	Implemented.
1.3. KUAS Quality Manual, and the principles upon which it is based, needs to integrate the	1.3.1. Improve KUAS activity processes.	In 2015, the descriptions of 15 activity processes were approved (by Order of KUAS Director No. 1-246 of 2 July 2015 and Order of KUAS Director No. 1-424 of 11 December 2015). The approved descriptions of activity processes have been published on KUAS intranet.	Implemented.

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key aspects of the annexes to the main body of the text so that the procedures and steps to be followed by users of the quality system are set out clearly and are more readily accessible.		The changes in KUAS organizational structure that took place in 2018 resulted in a reallocation of responsibilities and certain changes in activity processes. In 2019, the descriptions of the activity processes of 18 procedures (PR_01 - PR_18) were reviewed and adjusted. Audits of activity processes are carried out annually. For example, in 2020, the Flow charts and descriptions of 5 activity process were revised. (Order of KUAS Director No. 1-476 of 11 December 2020, Order of KUAS Director No. 1-475 of 11 December 2020, Order of KUAS Director No. 1-450 of 25 November 2020, Order of KUAS Director No1-443 of 21 April 2020).	
	1.3.2. Add process descriptions to the Quality Manual.	The approved activity process descriptions were published on the intranet in the Document Catalogue until 2019. In 2019, the draft of the revised Quality Manual was approved by the Academic Council (Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-48 of 23 December 2019). Descriptions of activity processes have been included in the Quality Manual. The provisions of the Quality Manual have been updated in relation to ESG 2015.	Implemented.
1.4. The quality Manual should also include a section describing appropriate procedures and regulatory requirements for the development of Joint Study Programmes.	1.4.1. Establish procedures for the development, organization and implementation of Joint Study Programmes.	<i>The Procedure for the Organisation of Joint and Double Degree Studies at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences</i> has been approved (Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-13 of 22 September 2015, Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-41 of 15 November 2021). In 2021, 3 Double Degree Study Programmes were implemented at KUAS.	Implemented.
	1.4.2. Add a sub-process PR_06 on Joint Study Programmes to the Management Procedure of Study Programmes.	According to the Quality Manual, the management of study programmes (including joint programmes) is regulated by procedure PR_06 <i>Management of Study Programmes</i> . The requirements for joint study programmes are set out in <i>the Procedure for the Preparation, Evaluation and Approval of Study Programmes to be Implemented at Kaunas at KUAS</i> (Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-34 of 30 October 2019, Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-59 of 29 December 2021).	Implemented.
1.5. Improvement is needed in ensuring that the response to issues raised in student surveys should be more systematic and that mechanisms should be put in place to ensure that actions taken at various levels are made clear to students and are well publicized.	1.5.1. Provide formalized feedback to stakeholders on implemented changes for performance improvement.	The <i>Procedure for the organizing stakeholders' feedback</i> (Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-11 of 4 September 2015, Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-22 of 4 May 2021) has established the organization of the surveys of KUAS stakeholders (students, graduates, employers, and KUAS staff), as well as the procedure for the analysis, use and dissemination of obtained data at KUAS. The feedback is provided to stakeholders on how their views and suggestions for improving the quality of KUAS activities are addressed, in order to enhance the systematic approach in which KUAS activities are carried out: KUAS website continuously publishes information on this issue at faculty and institutional level: https://www.kaunokolegija.lt/apie-mus/kokybe/#1617099213616-0183456c-0f9a ; https://www.kaunokolegija.lt/en/feedback/	Implemented.

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2. ACADEMIC STUDIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING			
2.1. Steps should be taken to ensure that all relevant staff groups are included in opportunities to enhance language capabilities provided by KUAS Competence Development Centre, e.g., research active staff must develop their skills in languages such as English.	2.1.1. Carry out foreign language assessments for newly employed staff (document analysis, testing).	The assessment of the foreign language knowledge and skills of newly employed teaching staff is carried out during the public competition procedure (analysis of the documents submitted by applicants and interview). If necessary, the Language Centre assesses the level of foreign language proficiency of staff using the standardized <i>Cambridge English Placement Test</i> .	Implemented.
	2.1.2. Provide continuous English language training for staff according to target groups and levels of language proficiency.	Since 2015, the members of KUAS staff have been annually and systematically provided with the English language courses at different levels. Groups of different language levels are formed so that employees can improve their English language skills. Upon completion of the course and passing the test, employees are issued certificates registered at KUAS.	Implemented.
	2.1.3. Provide continuous courses of other EU languages (according to the needs of departments or staff when implementing programmes of international cooperation).	Language courses of other foreign languages, such as German, Russian and Spanish, have been organized on request.	Implemented.
2.2. To assist the process of developing student-centred learning and a new learning and teaching paradigm, the role and functions of the Competence Development Centre should be extended to include the enhancement of learning and teaching and to broaden the institutional understanding of the various dimensions of student-centred learning.	2.2.1. Develop and implement adaptation programme for KUAS lecturers (including the competences of didactics, organization and implementation of student-centred studies, IT, communication psychology).	In 2015, the Competence Development Centre developed a 1.5 cr./40 hrs. <i>Adaptation Programme for KUAS Lecturers</i> , which is improved annually. Currently, the training within the framework of the non-formal training programme “Introductory training for new KUAS lecturers” is being organized. KUAS provides continuous training programmes to improve the didactic, research, subject specific and general competences of KUAS lecturers.	Implemented.
	2.2.2. Organize training for lecturers on how to use the new IT equipment installed at the Study Centre.	KUAS provides continuous training programmes on how to work with information technology. For example, training for the use of interactive whiteboards, <i>Learning in a Virtual Environment. Adobe Connect system, Data analysis using MS Excel, Learning in a virtual environment. Adobe Connect, Vidyo, Hangouts, Practical use of MS Excel spreadsheet, Plagiarism prevention and checking, Creating tests in the MOODLE virtual learning environment, Introduction to Adobe Illustrator, Introduction to Adobe Photoshop</i> , etc. Since 2020, with the increased importance of information technology, online seminars (webinars) have been extensively organized.	Implemented.
2.3. Considerations should be given to the establishment one central student support services centre which has responsibility,	2.3.1. Analyze the possibility of implementing the provision of student support on a ‘one stop shop’ basis.	Between 2015 and 2020, student support was decentralized within academic divisions. Some types of support were provided in a centralized manner (e.g., psychological counselling, training organized by the Library and the Centre for Self-study, career planning services provided by the Career Centre, etc.).	Implemented.

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on a 'one stop shop' basis, for all aspects of central student support, including both learning skills and student academic development, and personal welfare and pastoral support and guidance.	2.3.2. Improve student support system on the basis of the analysis of the possibility of implementing the provision of student support on a 'one stop shop' basis.	In order to implement the 'one stop shop' principle, a new position has been established in KUAS Unit for studies - Student Support Coordinator . KUAS student support and student mentoring system will be further elaborated and developed.	Implemented.
2.4. Additional initiatives to address student-drop out should be considered. They may include the introduction of a year-long approach to student induction in the first year of study; forming closer links with local schools to assist them in assessing these matters; providing prospective students with more information at pre-entry level on the academic standards that are required for the successful completion of each study programme.	2.4.1. Carry out continuous diagnostic testing of first-year students and adjust departmental student counselling strategy and plans on the basis of their results.	On 29 May 2015 the results of the comparative analysis of the first-year student's learning achievements in general education, diagnostic tests and study achievements at KUAS were presented at the Directorate meeting No. (1.10)-4-10. The results showed that there were no reliable differences between the learning achievements obtained in general education, demonstrated at the beginning of studies (diagnostic test) and at the end of the first session among the courses of general education. Diagnostic testing generally confirms the results of the general education knowledge and skills acquired at school and that it is more of a supplementary tool for a teacher when working with students of different levels of preparation in the same group. It was decided to discontinue this correlational research in the academic year 2015-2016.	No longer relevant.
	2.4.2. Carry out correlational research of students' achievements, comparing the results of diagnostic tests with their achievements in general education schools and their learning achievements at KUAS.		
	2.4.3. Organize integrated lessons in schools of general education.	KUAS faculties annually organize integrated lessons in schools of general education. For example, <i>GIS and Cartography</i> , <i>Day with Management 2015</i> , <i>How and Why is a Map Made?</i> , <i>Young Scientist: the DNA of the tomato</i> , <i>Opportunities and perspectives of computer graphics</i> , <i>Construct your idea</i> . <i>Robotics, smart systems, and what's next....</i> , <i>Creating 3D visualizations with Sketchup</i> , <i>Health-enhancing juice smoothies</i> , etc. In 2020 the integrated lessons for school learners were delivered remotely.	Implemented.
	2.4.4. Organize open lectures on speciality courses.	Faculties actively organize open lectures on speciality courses. Departments organize open door days and take part in various events (<i>Researchers' Night</i> , science festival <i>Spaceship Earth</i> , etc.).	Implemented.
	2.4.5. Organize seminars and training sessions for teachers responsible for career counselling in schools.	Each year, the Career Centre delivers dedicated lectures in schools.	Implemented.
	2.4.6. Provide individual and group career counselling for school learners / prospective students.	Each year, the Career Centre delivers specific lectures (about 15 per year) to the groups of school learners of all ages.	Implemented.

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2.5. The Study Area Committees may advise on the potential opportunities for some rationalization of the number and types of study programmes in order to have less but more generalized study programmes.	2.5.1. Establish the Study Field Committees in connection with the list of newly developed fields of study in higher education institutions.	KUAS has established Study Field Committees . Currently, there are 34 Study Field Committees at KUAS, which are responsible for determining the number and types of programmes. It should be noted that the number of study programmes in KUAS is decreasing.	Implemented.
2.6. The review team encourages KUAS to continue to make further progress with both staff and student inward and outward mobility in the European context.	2.6.1. Develop/revise the procedures regulating inward and outward mobility of KUAS staff and students.	The procedures regulating KUAS staff and student mobility are regularly reviewed and revised. The procedures have been revised in 2015, 2019 and 2020.	Implemented.
	2.6.2. Establish and implement measures to promote outward mobility of staff and students.	The following measures have been developed and implemented to promote student mobility: presentations of exchange programmes during meetings with students; information about exchange opportunities on Facebook, Moodle and notice boards, Organisation of the Induction Week; Erasmus Info Days; Mobility Windows; higher scholarships for outgoing students; study courses in English; international projects; intensive programmes; etc. The following measures have been developed and implemented to promote teaching staff mobility: tenure qualification requirements; attestation of teachers; international events (e.g., international week, etc.); international projects; training; English language courses; financial incentives (bonuses); etc.	Implemented.
	2.6.2. Expand the range of study programmes taught in English.	In 2016, the number of study programmes available in a foreign language increased to 6. There are currently 3 study programmes implemented in English.	Implemented.
	2.6.3. Provide a wide range of courses taught in foreign languages	KUAS academic divisions offer study courses in English. For example, in 2020: 177 study courses or part of the course in a foreign language were attended by 132 students in a physical environment / 149 students in a virtual environment. The majority of students took the courses in both physical and virtual environments.	Implemented.
	2.6.4. Develop professional foreign language teaching.	Study programmes are taught in a professional foreign language. In 2019 the project “Student satisfaction with studies from a foreign language teaching/learning perspective: experience of Lithuanian and foreign higher education institutions” was implemented.	Implemented.
	2.6.5. Develop intercultural competences of teaching staff and students.	Intercultural competences of lecturers and students were developed through the organization of various international events - conferences, symposia, creative camps, competitions, as well as participation in similar events. KUAS lecturers and students participate in international projects (mainly under the ERASMUS+ and Nordplus programmes) and international research.	Implemented.

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2.7. In reviewing KUAS aspirations and plans to develop Joint Study Programmes, the team advises that procedures should be put in place to ensure that risk assessment and due diligence analyses are undertaken at an early stage for all international agreements.	2.7.1. Develop the procedure for developing and implementing Joint Study Programmes.	<i>The Procedure for the Organisation of Joint and Double Degree Studies at Kaunas University of Applied Sciences</i> has been approved (Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-13 of 22 September 2015, Resolution by the Academic Council No. (2.2)-3-41 of 15 November 2021). In 2021, 3 Double Degree Study Programmes were implemented at KUAS.	Implemented.
	2.7.2. Identify partners for the development of Joint Study Programmes and discuss with them the possibilities of developing Joint Study Programmes.	In 2019, the agreement on awarding Double Degree Diploma to students of the Tourism and Hotel Management study programme was signed with <i>Saimaa University of Applied Sciences</i> (now <i>LAB UAS</i> , Finland). Negotiations with <i>Thomas More UAS</i> (Belgium) on the award of Double Degree Diploma for International Business and Logistics students were held in 2020-2021. Negotiations are also underway with <i>Savonia University of Applied Sciences</i> (Finland) for a degree study programme.	Implemented.
	2.7.3. Develop Joint Study Programmes with foreign partners and assess and, if necessary, adjust procedures when implementing them.	Double Degree programmes were implemented with <i>Mikkeli UAS</i> (now South-Eastern Finland UAS, Finland) - Computer Network Administration, General Practice Nursing.	Implemented.
2.8. When constructing Diploma Supplements the opportunity should be taken by KUAS to include information on the recognition of qualification in the respective jurisdiction.		On 17 December 2013 KUAS was awarded the European Commission Diploma Supplement label for 2013-2016.	Implemented.
3. RESEARCH AND ART ACTIVITIES			
3.1. A stricter definition of 'applied research' should be applied making a clear distinction between what is applied research on the one hand, and what is lifelong learning or Continuous Professional Development (CPD) activity on the other hand.	3.1.1. Clarify the definition of applied research activity according to the Frascati Manual.	The Programme of Applied Science / Art Activities of KUAS (approved by Resolution of Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-49 of 23 December 2019) defines applied research activities by providing definitions of the terms.	Implemented.
3.2. As KUAS seeks to develop capacity in applied research, consultancy, and knowledge transfer activity, for income generation purposes, the review team advises KUAS that it will also need to underpin this by	3.2.1. Strengthen KUAS relationships with researchers of universities and research institutes through joint research projects.	KUAS faculties carry out joint research and prepare scientific publications in cooperation with international strategic partners. Visiting foreign lecturers-researchers are invited and employed at KUAS.	Implemented.
	3.2.2. Strengthen cooperation with businesses, making the	KUAS applied for and participated in <i>MITA</i> activities and its administered <i>InnoVouchers</i> Programme, which started in 2014 and continued until 2017.	Implemented.

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drawing upon external fundamental research ensuring that teaching is informed by research and advanced scholarship in line with the NQF level 6, Bachelor's degree descriptor.	most of the MITA Innovation Programme, and expanding the range of services provided to companies/organizations.		
3.3. Balance also needs to be achieved between teaching and applied research and KUAS should not lose sight of its strengths as a teaching institution.	3.3.1. Consider this recommendation at the Directorate, Dean's Office and / or Academic Council meetings.	The <i>Description of the procedure for planning and (self)-assessing of the activities of the academic staff</i> (approved by Order of the Director No. 1-142 of 30 April 2019) provides for mandatory and recommended volume of lecturer's working time for applied research, experimental and artistic activities, contact work and other activities.	Implemented.
3.4. A dedicated research policy is required for KUAS, which will set clear priorities both for external contract work and business engagement purposes and also for the development of the applied research capacity of KUAS.	3.4.1. Develop research policy that is consistent with KUAS vision, mission and the goals and objectives of Strategy 2020.	<i>KUAS Policy on Studies and Applied Science and Art Activities</i> was approved by the Resolution of the Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-25 of 22 December 2017. The <i>Programme of Applied Science / Art Activities at KUAS</i> was approved by Resolution of the Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-49 of 23 December 2019 and revised by Resolution of the Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-67 of 21 December 2020.	Implemented.
3.5. As resources allow, the College might wish to consider the merits of creating a 'seed fund' to stimulate growth and sustainability in selected areas of strength in applied research.	3.5.1. If possible, increase KUAS fund for promoting research and development.	<i>The Procedure for Allocation and Use of State Budget Funds Allocated for Scientific Research, Experimental Development and Development of Art Activities to Academic Divisions of Kaunas University of Applied Sciences</i> (Order of KUAS Director No. 1-188 of 2 June, 2020, Order of KUAS Director No. 1-382 of 13 October, 2021) was prepared. This procedure (description) ensures the basic funding for the implementation of ASAA (<i>Applied Science and Art Activities</i>) in all fields of study implemented at KUAS, using the resources of the mentioned fund. It also ensures funding for ASAA activities planned for the years 2021-2024 in accordance with ASAA programme at KUAS (Resolution of the Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-49 of 23 December 2019, Resolution of the Academic Council No. (2.2.)-3-67 of 21 December 2020), as well as the incentives for the achievement of high results. The procedure for incentives for high performance in ASAA is regulated by Order the Director of KUAS No. 1-182 of 28 May 2021.	Implemented.
3.6. There is a need for more international partnerships in the context of the ERA, but if such aspirations are to be realized there is a need for language training for researchers.	3.6.1. Carry out and/or develop an effective search for international stakeholders and training institutions relevant to the fields of study as the partners	KUAS is a permanent member of the European Association of Institutions in Higher Education (EURASHE) (as part of the Conference of Directors of Lithuanian Universities of Applied Sciences), and a participant in the joint initiative UAS4EUROPE, which has the opportunity to 'feel the pulse' of the European Innovation Area (EIA). Since 2020 KUAS has joined the international Researchers' Excellence Network – RENET (as a member), which allows KUAS	Implemented.

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	for commissioned activities and/or research.	<p>researchers to develop their research competences internationally free of charge, and to broaden collaborative research relationships.</p> <p>KUAS researchers joined international cooperation networks of researchers from 3 European countries - COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) activities - <i>“Profiling the atmospheric Boundary layer at European scale (PROBE)”</i> (Nr. CA18235), <i>“Advancing Social Inclusion through Technology and Empowerment”</i> (No. CA19104), <i>Ultrafast opto-magneto-electronics for non-dissipative information technology</i> (No. CA17123).</p> <p>Since 2015, the number of international collaborative projects with international partners integrating applied research / art activities has been increasing.</p>	
4. IMPACT ON REGIONAL AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT			
4.1. The College should make early progress in implementing the recommendations of the 2005 institutional review regarding the distribution and analysis of centrally administered graduate and employer surveys.	4.1.1. Carry out a centralized alumni survey.	Since 2015, KUAS has been conducting centralized graduates’ surveys on their readiness for professional activity and integration into the labour market. The alumni survey is carried out 12 months after graduation. The results of the surveys are published on KUAS website. From 2022 onwards, additional alumni surveys will be carried out 36 months after graduation.	Implemented.
	4.1.2. Carry out a centralized employer survey every two years.	According to the Procedure for organizing feedback from stakeholders at KUAS, a centralized employer survey is carried out every 2 years. It was carried out in 2015-2016, 2017-2018 and 2021-2022.	Implemented.