



**Lithuanian University of Health Sciences  
Veterinary Academy  
Faculty of Veterinary Medicine**



**QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT 2018**

**Based on the Uppsala Standard Operating Procedure, 2016**

**European Association of Establishments  
for Veterinary Education**

4–7 March 2019

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## ABBREVIATIONS

<b>BIC</b>	Library and Information Centre
<b>CA WOS</b>	Clarivate Analytics Web of Science
<b>DTEC</b>	Department for Teachers' Educational Competence
<b>EAEVE</b>	European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education
<b>EBM</b>	Evidence-based medicine
<b>ECDL</b>	European Computer Driving License
<b>ECTS</b>	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
<b>eLABa</b>	Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library
<b>EPS</b>	Economic and Planning Service
<b>ESEVT</b>	European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FVM</b>	Faculty of Veterinary Medicine
<b>ICDL</b>	International Conference Diplomats for Life
<b>IRSC</b>	International Relations and Study Centre
<b>IS</b>	Information Systems
<b>IT</b>	Information Technologies
<b>ITC</b>	Information Technology Centre
<b>IVSA</b>	International Veterinary Students Association
<b>KMU</b>	Kaunas University of Medicine
<b>LAMA BPO</b>	Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for General Admissions
<b>LHER RL</b>	Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania
<b>LIBIS</b>	Lithuanian Integral Information System of Libraries
<b>LMT</b>	Research Council of Lithuania
<b>LSE RL</b>	Law on Science and Education of the Republic of Lithuania
<b>LSMU</b>	Lithuanian University of Health Sciences
<b>LSMU SIS</b>	LSMU Study Information System
<b>LT</b>	Lithuania
<b>LVA</b>	Lithuanian Veterinary Academy
<b>LVGA</b>	Lithuanian Association of Veterinary Surgeons
<b>MA</b>	Medical Academy

<b>MES RL</b>	Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania
<b>MOSTA</b>	Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre
<b>MTEP</b>	Scientific Research and Experimental Development
<b>OIE</b>	World Organization for Animal Health
<b>OSCE</b>	Objective Structured Clinical Examination
<b>OSHS</b>	Occupational Safety and Health Service
<b>PERT</b>	Building Maintenance and Repair Service
<b>PGSC</b>	Postgraduate Studies Centre
<b>PTTC</b>	Practical Training and Testing Centre
<b>PTP</b>	Income generated by offered services
<b>RL</b>	Republic of Lithuania
<b>SER</b>	Self Evaluation Report
<b>SFVS</b>	State Food and Veterinary Service of Lithuania
<b>SKVC</b>	Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education
<b>SOP</b>	Standard Operating Procedures
<b>SPC</b>	Study Programme Committee
<b>SQMIC</b>	Study Quality Monitoring and Improvement Commission
<b>SSF</b>	State Studies Foundation
<b>SSS</b>	Students' Scientific Society
<b>SU</b>	Student Union
<b>SWOT</b>	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
<b>TAIEX</b>	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange
<b>UAB</b>	Private Limited Liability Company
<b>VA</b>	Veterinary Academy
<b>VASA</b>	Veterinary Academy Students Association
<b>VM</b>	Veterinary Medicine
<b>VMSC</b>	Centre of Veterinary Medicine Simulation
<b>VPN</b>	Virtual Private Network

## INTRODUCTION

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**Head of Dr. L. Kriaučeliūnas Small Animal Clinic Assoc. prof. dr. Birutė Karvelienė (Veterinary);**

**Head of Large Animal Clinic dr. Arūnas Rutkauskas (Veterinary 02A)**

Two higher education schools with a common historical heritage – Kaunas University of Medicine (KMU) and Lithuanian Veterinary Academy (LVA) actively participated in the transformation of the higher education and research institutions' network in 2009-2010. In 2010, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania reorganized KMU and LVA by merging them in to Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (hereinafter LSMU, the University). LSMU is the largest institution of higher education and research of health specialist's education in Lithuania. LSMU follows the principles of the unity of studies, science, human and animal health, academic freedom and autonomy of the University.

The University is comprised of seven faculties and four institutes, which of 111 structural units functioning to ensure integrity of studies, research and clinical practice and to meet social and cultural needs of the community. The community of the University includes 24615 people. The University itself has 2645 employees. The University offers 23 study programmes and there are 6744 students at LSMU.

The Faculty of Veterinary Medicine (hereinafter FVM, Faculty) has more than 80 years of traditions in teaching Veterinary Medicine (VM) and is a member of European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) since 2002. FVM is the only entity in Lithuania preparing Veterinary Surgeons and specialists of Veterinary Food Safety. Since 2013 a new Food Science study programme has been started at the FVM. In total, 1254 students are studying at the FVM, 883 of them are studying Veterinary Medicine.

The structure and content of the study programme is being improved consistently considering EU Directive 2005/36/EC as amended by Directive 2013/55/EU, national qualification requirements and recommendations of the EAEVE.

International experts from TAIEX 2002, National Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) 2011 (accredited), EAEVE 2012 (not approved), EAEVE 2015 (conditionally approved), visited FVM and evaluated the programme of VM. Taking into account the recommendations of experts, many organizational, functional, structural and quality assurance changes have been made.

Below are the main changes implemented after the recommendations of the expert group during the last visitation in April of 2015:

1. The organizational structure of the Faculty has been changed;
2. Objectives and outcomes of the programme of VM have been updated;
3. Curriculum has been improved by reinforcing interdisciplinary integration;
4. The ratio of theoretical to practical training has been changed in favour of practical training;
5. For achievement of Day One Competences, clinical training has been continuously adjusted and improved;
6. The Centre of Veterinary Medicine Simulation (VMSC) has been established and integrated in the Curriculum;
7. A new methodology for assessing the acquired Day One Competences has been implemented (updated Logbook);
8. Processes of monitoring and management of academic progression and professional fitness to practice have been implemented;
9. Programme is completed with the Qualification Exam (since 2016) (the Master Thesis since 2008);
10. Committee for Biosecurity and Biosafety of FVM has been established;
11. Biosecurity and biosafety measures improved through implementation of Biosecurity and Biosafety Standard Operating Procedures at the FVM;
12. New clinical facilities and equipment for biosafety and clinical practice have been introduced.

## I. OBJECTIVES AND ORGANIZATION

Description of how and by who the strategic plan and the organisation of the Establishment are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised

### 1.1. Strategic plan. Suitability of the strategic plan, assurance of it's implementation and publicity

The Mission of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine is the development of healthy and sustainable environment for animals and humans through educated specialists in veterinary medicine, food science and food safety fields, orientated to research, practice, and innovations. It is in line with the Mission of the University – to create, accumulate, systematise and spread scientific knowledge and the newest achievements in studies and science, educate and develop a creative, honest, initiative-showing, educated, independent and enterprising personality, foster democracy and welfare, and develop a healthy and educated society. The essential role of LSMU in this process of education is the pursuit of a healthy society, which guarantees social and economic progress of the country, its civilizational identity as well as creation, support and development of national and global cultural traditions. Health and welfare of the animal world is an integral part of this goal.

The Strategic Development Guidelines (thereafter Guidelines) of FVM and their Implementation Plan (thereafter Plan) [http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/16466/vf\\_strategija\\_20171208.pdf](http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/16466/vf_strategija_20171208.pdf) were drafted in line with the LSMU strategic guidelines, directions and necessary conditions for 2017–2021 <http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/12334/strateginesgairenen002.pdf> by Dean's formed working group. Farther it was discussed with the VA Chancellor and the FVM units, and student community at the FVM. Following obtained recommendations Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT), the Guidelines and their Plan were prepared and approved by Council of the FVM. The plan of development, implementation, monitoring and revision of FVM Strategy is shown in Fig. 1.

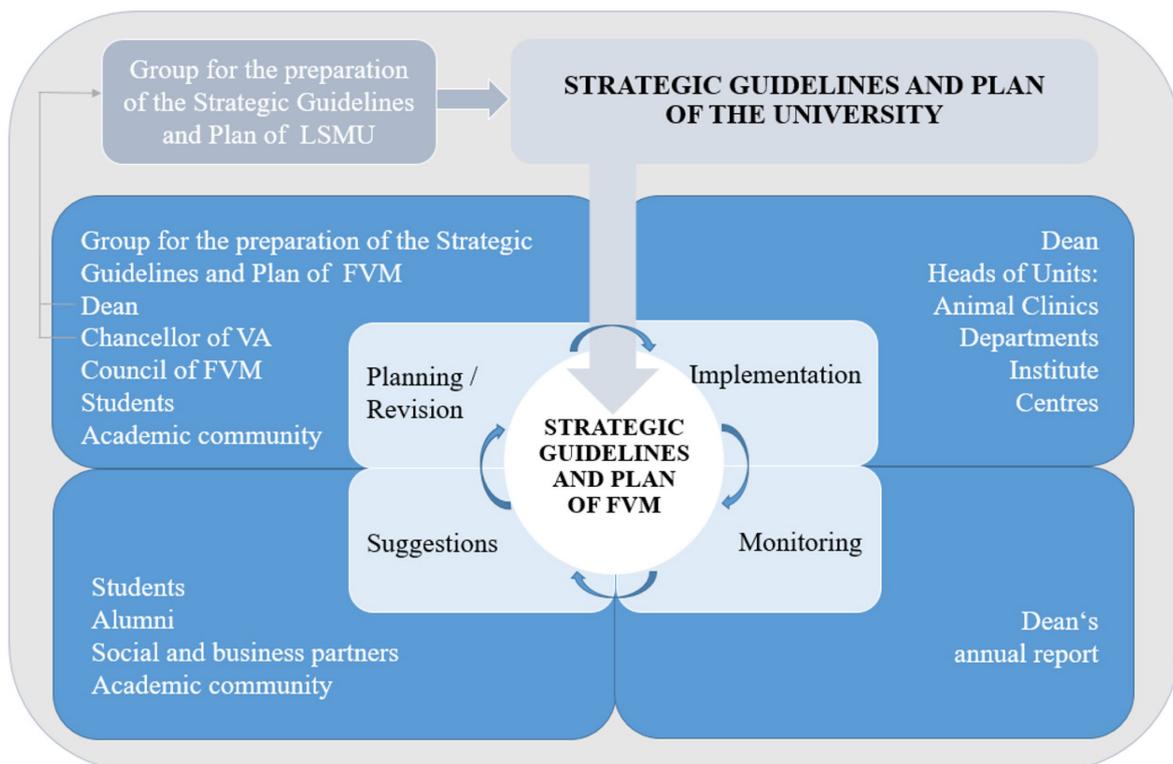


Fig. 1. Development, implementation, monitoring and revision of the Strategic Development Guidelines and Plan of Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

## 1.2. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats analysis

<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competitive and marketable study programmes</li> <li>• The only Establishment in Lithuania preparing veterinary surgeons;</li> <li>• The VM study programme complies with the requirements of EU Directives 2005/36/EU and 2013/55/EU;</li> <li>• Multidisciplinary cooperation between academic staff and units;</li> <li>• High rates of post-graduates (Lithuanian and international) placement twelve months after graduation;</li> <li>• The research laboratories of the Faculty are equipped with modern and up-to-date research equipment and renovated infrastructure;</li> <li>• Substantial national leadership within research activities approved as strategic research priorities of the Faculty;</li> <li>• International visibility of research in fields of veterinary microbiology, virology, parasitology, food safety and quality;</li> <li>• Excellent access to learning and scientific publications via the Library and Information resources of the University;</li> <li>• The Large Animal Clinic is the only clinic in Lithuania providing full-scale large animal health care services and assuring opportunities for development of practical competences of students;</li> <li>• The Centre of Animal Welfare is a member of the Baltic Animal Welfare Network and has an expert membership in the EU Animal Welfare Platform, generating a scientific approach to animal welfare and related activities in Lithuania;</li> <li>• Close collaboration with Lithuanian State Food and Veterinary Service, economic entities, and other social partners;</li> <li>• Integration of research, teaching and practical activities involves students as well.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identification and attraction of the best and most motivated students graduating the University;</li> <li>• Use of available network to increase and strengthen internal, national and international collaboration;</li> <li>• Increasing strategic partnerships with the leading Veterinary Medicine and Agricultural universities abroad;</li> <li>• Maximize the potential of the EU generated - Nemunas valley funds as an excellent studies and scientific environment;</li> <li>• Development of cooperation with industry for joint projects oriented to food sciences, animal health and productivity and students practice;</li> <li>• The high importance of emergence and re-emergence of zoonotic diseases requires a new knowledge's in veterinary research;</li> <li>• Strategic development of infrastructure corresponding to the strategic priorities in studies, research and practice in the Faculty.</li> </ul>
<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Low salaries of veterinary surgeons inducing the young and prospective high competence veterinary surgeons to leave the Faculty;</li> <li>• High dependency on studies funding to hire teaching staff;</li> <li>• The lack of European internationally recognised diplomates of Veterinary Medicine;</li> <li>• Low internationality among teaching staff.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No government allocations and tender-based financing to implement building of the new Small Animal Clinic facilities;</li> <li>• Renovation of the Large Animal Clinic infrastructure is overdue;</li> <li>• Insufficient attraction of the motivated talented young people to seek academic, research and practical career at University;</li> <li>• Small and decreasing national population due to emigration and low birth rate;</li> <li>• Lack of partners from business with financial capability to support basic and applied research.</li> </ul>

### 1.3. Strategic directions and goals of strategic development of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

<p><b>I. STRATEGIC DIRECTION: INTERNATIONALLY COMPETITIVE GRADUATES</b></p> <p><b>1. Strategic goal:</b> To prepare veterinary surgeons, food science and food safety internationally competitive specialists with high level of general and disciplinary competences, ready for lifelong learning, working for the good of society and retaining bonds with the Faculty.</p> <p><b>TASKS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to ensure further attraction of gifted, talented and motivated graduates to the Faculty;</li><li>• to keep improving the quality of studies on a regular basis; provide the students with general competences and specialist skills of the highest level;</li><li>• to ensure that education competences and specialist skills of the academic staff meet the needs of the students;</li><li>• to develop the system of lifelong learning.</li></ul>
<p><b>II. STRATEGIC DIRECTION: ANIMAL HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES AND INNOVATIONS BASED ON SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE</b></p> <p><b>2. Strategic goal:</b> To develop and apply in practice health technologies and innovations through fundamental and applied biomedical and agricultural research at highest levels of excellence.</p> <p><b>TASKS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to improve the management of research; enhance resource-use efficiency;</li><li>• to encourage inter-institutional, inter-sectorial and international cooperation through high quality research in the priority areas of smart specialization;</li><li>• to nurture young talents and create the conditions for their scientific careers;</li><li>• to consolidate and enhance the human potential for research and development and guarantee high qualifications in the area of smart specialization;</li><li>• to promote commercialization of scientific innovations.</li></ul>
<p><b>III. STRATEGIC DIRECTION: INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED AND VALUED FACULTY</b></p> <p><b>3. Strategic goal:</b> To develop and expand international relations and collaboration with foreign partners and FVM alumni in the areas of studies, science and practice.</p> <p><b>TASKS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to enhance the internationality of the Faculty community;</li><li>• to develop strategic partnerships in education and research with international partners;</li><li>• to promote and expand relationship with FVM alumni in Lithuania and over the world.</li></ul>
<p><b>IV. STRATEGIC DIRECTION: HEALTHY HUMAN AND HEALTHY ANIMAL</b></p> <p><b>4. Strategic goal:</b> to exploit the potential of Veterinary Clinics to ensure enhancement of animal health and care and implementation of high quality VM studies. To target the FVM potential of research and practice to ensure enhancement of human health through production of high quality and safe food.</p> <p><b>TASKS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to develop healthy Faculty community;</li><li>• to participate in policy making on animal health and welfare;</li><li>• to ensure a wide range of top-quality services of veterinary diagnostics, treatment and disease prevention.</li></ul>
<p><b>V. STRATEGIC DIRECTION: CONSOLIDATED, CREATIVE AND SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITY OF THE FACULTY</b></p> <p><b>5. Strategic goal:</b> To foster a professional, motivated, creative and socially responsible community of the Faculty which contributes to achieve the goals and tasks of the FVM which are integrated into strategic goals of the University.</p> <p><b>TASKS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• to consolidate the Faculty community, to enhance the relationships of community members;</li><li>• to develop a creative and initiative-showing Faculty community;</li><li>• to develop a socially responsible and open Faculty community.</li></ul>

**NECESSARY CONDITIONS TO REACH THE GOALS OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT:****1. Highly qualified employees**

**Goal:** To enlist highest competence staff for realization of strategic goals of the Faculty through creation of attractive working environment and increase of general and professional competences.

**Task**

- to improve working skills and general competences of the staff.

**2. Infrastructure and information technology (IT) systems meeting the needs of the staff and students**

**Goal:** To develop the infrastructure and IT systems meeting the needs of the staff, students and administration.

**Tasks**

- to develop an up-to-date infrastructure facilitating scientific research, studies and practical work;
- to develop IT skills in the community.

**3. Efficiency and quality of decisions and processes**

**Goal:** To increase the efficiency and quality of decisions and processes.

**Task**

- to increase the efficiency of Faculty management and administrative processes.

**4. Economic (financial) sustainability**

**Goal:** To ensure continuity of FVM activities under unfavourable conditions.

**Task**

- to ensure economic sustainability of the Faculty using the internal and external resources for implementation of the main Faculty activities and to create conditions for implementation of complementary activities and for maintenance and development of infrastructure.

**5. Effective marketing and communication**

**Goal:** To increase the recognition of the Faculty and to create it's image in Lithuania using modern marketing and communication means.

**Tasks**

- to increase recognition of the Faculty and to create the image of the Faculty as one of the highest level of excellence in Lithuania and abroad;
- to analyse the demand for specialists meeting the employers' expectations and to make a long-term prognosis;
- to popularize the existing study programmes, scientific research and animal health care services in Lithuania and abroad.

**1.4. Validity and consistency of the Strategic plan components**

The Guidelines assessed by the SWOT reveal not only the distinctiveness of the Faculty, but also the challenges encountered in the implementation of the strategic goals of the FVM in the complex structure of the University. The Faculty, in updating the Guidelines and the Plan, consider to assess and to remove the isolated threats and weaknesses, trying to assess properly, to manage and to reduce them.

The strategic directions provide the strategic goals that reflect in detail all areas of activity of the FVM: education, research, animal health care, internationality, and formation of the unified and socially responsible community. The Plan provides the specific tasks and their implementation measures, assessment indicators (qualitative and quantitative), expected outcomes, implementation terms, responsible persons and implementers. Priorities in education, research, animal health care are clearly defined in the Faculty strategic goals. Tasks and means formulated to achieve the strategic goals are consistent with each other. All the provided assessment criteria are clear and specific, the plan provides qualitative indicators to assess whether things that have been achieved and done, were achieved or done correctly. The plan contains clearly indicated expected outcomes.

**Table 1. Example of the description of strategic development guidelines and monitoring of their implementation plan (quantitative and qualitative indices)**

Title	Code
<b>Strategic goal:</b> To exploit the potential of Veterinary Clinics to ensure enhancement of animal health and care and implementation of high quality VM studies. To target the FVM potential of research and practice to ensure enhancement of human health through production of high quality and safe food.	4.

<b>Task:</b> Guarantee a wide range of top-quality services of veterinary diagnostics, treatment and disease prevention.		4.3.
<b>Measure:</b>		
<b>Assessment criterion:</b> product		P-4.3-2
1.	Definition	Modern equipment and instruments for diagnosis and treatment of animal infectious and non-infectious diseases (number of factually procured equipment and instruments)
2.	It is a new assessment criterion	Yes
3.	Reasoning of the choices	To ensure efficient and highest quality diagnostics, treatment and prevention of animal diseases is possible only using the adequate up-to-date equipment and instruments
4.	Calculation method	This index is calculated by summing up the number of factually procured pieces of equipment and instruments during the assessment period
5.	Source of data	VA FVM Dr. L. Kriaučeliūnas Small Animal Clinic VA FVM Large Animal Clinic
6.	Audit of data	Not conducted
7.	Periodicity of calculations	Yearly
8.	Contact person (persons) responsible for the assessment criterion	Head of Dr. L. Kriaučeliūnas Small Animal Clinic Assoc. prof. dr. Birutė Karvelienė; birute.karveliене@lsmuni.lt; tel. +370 37 362303 Head of Large Animal Clinic dr. Arūnas Rutkauskas; arunas.rutkauskas@lsmuni.lt; tel. +370 37 363404
9.	Other information about the effectiveness of assessment criterion	-

### 1.5. Suitability of monitoring procedures for the implementation of the Strategic action plan

The monitoring procedures of the implementation of the Guidelines are governed by the Statute of the University (Annex 1), working regulations of the University's Senate and the Council, and the Regulation's of the FVM. The Dean is responsible for the implementation of the Plan. The solutions of the tasks of the Plan are discussed in the units of the Faculty. The information about the situation with the implementation of the Plan and the achieved results by assessment criteria is provided to the Dean by the responsible persons indicated in the Plan (heads of the Study Programme Committee (SPC), Faculty units, Vice-deans, etc.) in accordance with the information accumulated in the Units on the implementation and achievement of results of the indicators provided in the Plan. According to the documents drawn up by responsible persons, the Dean prepares and submits the annual report on the activities of the Faculty to the Council of FVM for consideration and for approval. The Council of FVM confirms the annual report on the activities of the Faculty in an open meeting of the Council with the participation of the Chancellor of VA, Vice-Rector for Studies, community and students of the Faculty and reviews the extent to which the Faculty's activities are in line with the Guidelines and the Plan, the results achieved and their impact on the quality of the University's activities. In case of emerging unscheduled strategic priorities, the Dean and the Council of FVM continue analysis of goals set up in the Guidelines, evaluate new demands and, depending on the priority, communicate the information to the responsible person: VA Chancellor, Director for Administration and Finances or Vice-Rector for Studies. The annual report on the activities of the Faculty is made public on the First Class system of LSMU.

### 1.6. Sufficiency of information provided to the participants of a legal body, the academic community and the public about the implementation of the Strategic plan

Dissemination of information is increased in various external target audience groups with the emphasis on the key Faculty's strategic goals, objectives, and their implementation. To ensure the dissemination of the Faculty's public communication, much attention is paid to co-operation with public and economic partners and educational activities.

There is ongoing and constantly promoted co-operation of the Faculty researchers and students in academic projects: through courses, exchange programmes, internships, and academic events with the activities reflecting the relevant news about the strategic plan objectives and their implementation.

Ongoing is the dissemination of research output (articles, presentations and conferences, research projects) that is important research performance indicators of the Faculty reflecting the implementation of the strategic plan.

The results of implementation of Guidelines and the Plan of the Faculty are submitted for Rector's annual report, which is considered by the Rectorate and Senate and approved by the LSMU Council. The Rector and the Council of LSMU continue analysis of objectives set up in the Guidelines, control implementation of projects, evaluate new demands and make a list of renewed project recommendations. Priority projects are selected and included into the Guidelines for the Strategic Development of the University.

The Guidelines and the Plan, annual activity reports of the University, are published on the University website. Summaries of the University activity reports are published in the weekly newspaper of the University Ave Vita. Annual report on the activities of the University is issued in a special publication and is submitted to the Education and Science Committee of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES RL) and all University Departments.

## **1.7. Organizational and management chart of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences**

The LSMU consists of the two main divisions: the Medical Academy (MA), with five faculties: Medicine, Odontology, Pharmacy, Public Health and Nursing and three research institutes: Endocrinology, Cardiology and Neuroscience and the Veterinary Academy (VA) with two faculties: Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Faculty of Animal Sciences and one research Institute of Animal Science. The University has additional structural and functional units required for the needs of studies, research, and clinical practice, social, cultural and other units. The University is the founder of three public establishments: The Hospital of LSMU; The Gymnasium of LSMU and the Practical Training and Testing Centre (PTTC) (Annex 2).

The State, University, Academy and the Faculty regulate the policy of assuring the quality of studies, research and practice.

### **National level**

The Ministry of Education and Science, which establishes the required quality standards, monitors, analyses and evaluates the study and science outcomes, implements the State regulation of the quality of studies. The Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC) is a full member of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education registered in the European Quality Assurance Register for Higher Education. SKVC is responsible for external study quality assessment (of establishments and study programmes), consults teaching staff and representatives of administration on the issues of study quality assurance. The Research Council of Lithuania (LMT) implements expert activities, assessment of scientific activities and funding of competitive scientific programmes. The Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA) carries out monitoring, evaluation and other related activities in the areas of science, studies and innovation. The State Studies Foundation (SSF) is a state budgetary institution, which administers financial support for students. As a partner, the University participates in the SSF project designed for accessibility of education and improvement of study conditions and quality for students with special needs.

The Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (thereafter Ministry of Agriculture) coordinates scientific progress in the area of agriculture and funds the applied scientific investigations. The State Food and Veterinary Service of Lithuania (SFVS) takes part in the activities ensuring study quality at the Faculty through appointing its representatives to standing and temporary committees. It consults and advises the Faculty in the areas of implementation of clinical studies, veterinary food safety and biosecurity activities.

MES RL and Ministry of Agriculture take part through the implementation of the orders of these Ministries. The SKVC and SFVS are involved through the implementation of the orders of the Directors taking into consideration suggestions and recommendations of MOSTA and SFVS. Participation of LMT manifests through implementation of decisions of LMT Chairman and SSF participation manifests through implementation of Director's orders.

### **University level**

LSMU has collegial management bodies (Annex3) – the Council, the Senate, and the sole governing body – the Rector, who is elected and appointed by the Council. Rector is assisted by chancellors and vice-rectors. Rector's orders are mandatory to all LSMU employees and students. The governing bodies are formed in accordance with the principles of parity and representation of all the key areas of the University's activities – studies, research, and human and animal health care. This ensures the unity of studies, science,

human and animal health care as well as the uniqueness within the region and at the level of the whole country. The collegial deliberative body Rectorate headed by Rector deliberates upon organizational and academic issues and activities of University units. It gives recommendations and assists Rector in implementation of resolutions of the Council and Senate.

It also deliberates the reports on study outcomes and annual activity of faculties and the University as well as the outcomes of study quality monitoring, admission of students and scientific activities.

The Council of LSMU consists of 11 members: one member is appointed by the Students' Representation, five members (at least two from each of the University's academies) are elected by the representatives of the teaching staff and researchers employed at the University, five members are selected from the candidates outside the University staff.

The Senate consists of 49 members: 10 members are appointed by the Students' Representation. The Rector and the Chancellors are *ex officio* members of the Senate according to their duties. Elected members of the Senate (36) (10 of them are members of FVM) are elected in accordance with the principle of parity from the employees whose principal activity is teaching, employees whose main activity is research, and employees whose main activity is human or animal health care. The University Senate approves the regulations of all University's structural subdivisions. Standing committees for respective issues are operating within Senate. They discuss certain issues, make decisions and submit them to Senate for approval. The current LSMU management structure covers all stages of studies and research. There is a very straightforward decision making structure enabling to follow the quality of the studies.

The issues related with planning the University activities, administration of the University, distribution of resources, implementation and quality assurance of study programmes, and research activities are discussed collegially taking into account the complexity of the issues under consideration. These issues are deliberated upon during the sessions of units, Rectorate, Senate, and Council as provided for in the Statute of the University. Decisions are made following the principles of collegiality, personal responsibility, and cooperation between administration, Study Programme Committee (SPC), Committees for Doctoral and Residency studies, academic staff, researchers and students. Coordination of the system of study quality assurance is within the competence of Study Quality Monitoring and Improvement Commission (SQMIC), Dean's Office, Study Centre, Department of Research Affairs, Post-Graduate Study Centre (PGSC), and International Relations and Study Centre (IRSC). All units taking part in the study process are responsible for study quality assurance.

**Quality management procedures are reflected in the following main documents regulating educational and scientific activities (selection):**

1. Statute of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Resolution of the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, Official Gazette 2010, No 81-4231; 2012, No 81-4227.
2. LSMU Guidelines for the Strategic Development 2017–2021. Resolution of the Council of LSMU No UT1-7-2, 2016-12-23;
3. Regulations of the Study Quality Assurance at the LSMU. Resolution of the Senate No 17-0, 2012-01-20. <http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/14695/studyregulation2017.pdf>
4. Regulation of the Studies of LSMU. Resolution of the Senate No 47-05, 2014-06-20; No 92-05, 2017-06-23.
5. Provisions of Study Programme Committees at the LSMU. Resolution of the Senate No 25-08, 2012-12-14.
6. Procedure of Competition Organization and Assessment for Teachers and Researchers at LSMU. Resolution of the Senate No 105-05, the newest version dated 2018-09-21.
7. Procedure for Development, Improvement and Management of Study Programmes of LSMU. Resolution of the Senate No 21-12, 2012-05-30.
8. Procedure for Surveying the Opinions of Students, Teachers and Social Partners (Employers) of the LSMU. Resolution of the Senate No 19 – 04, 2012-03-29.
9. Procedure for Organising the Surveys of Graduates and Social Partners (Employers) of the LSMU. Order of the Rector No V-962, 2013-10-07.
10. Regulation on Residency Studies of LSMU. Resolution of Senate No 47-09, 2014–06-20; the newest version dated 2017-11-17; No 95-07.
11. Description of the Procedures for Implementation and Supervision of Residency Study Programme of VM. Resolution of the Government of the RL No 248, 2018-03-14.
12. Regulation on Doctoral Studies of LSMU. Resolution of Senate No 90-12, 2017-05-19.
13. Regulations of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of LSMU. Resolution of the Senate No 90-14, 2017-05-19.

Rectorate deliberates upon and Senate, which represent the University community and the students, approves the prepared regulatory documentation. Students also can initiate and prepare some procedures. The information about the approved documents is placed on the LSMU website and on University weekly newspaper Ave Vita.

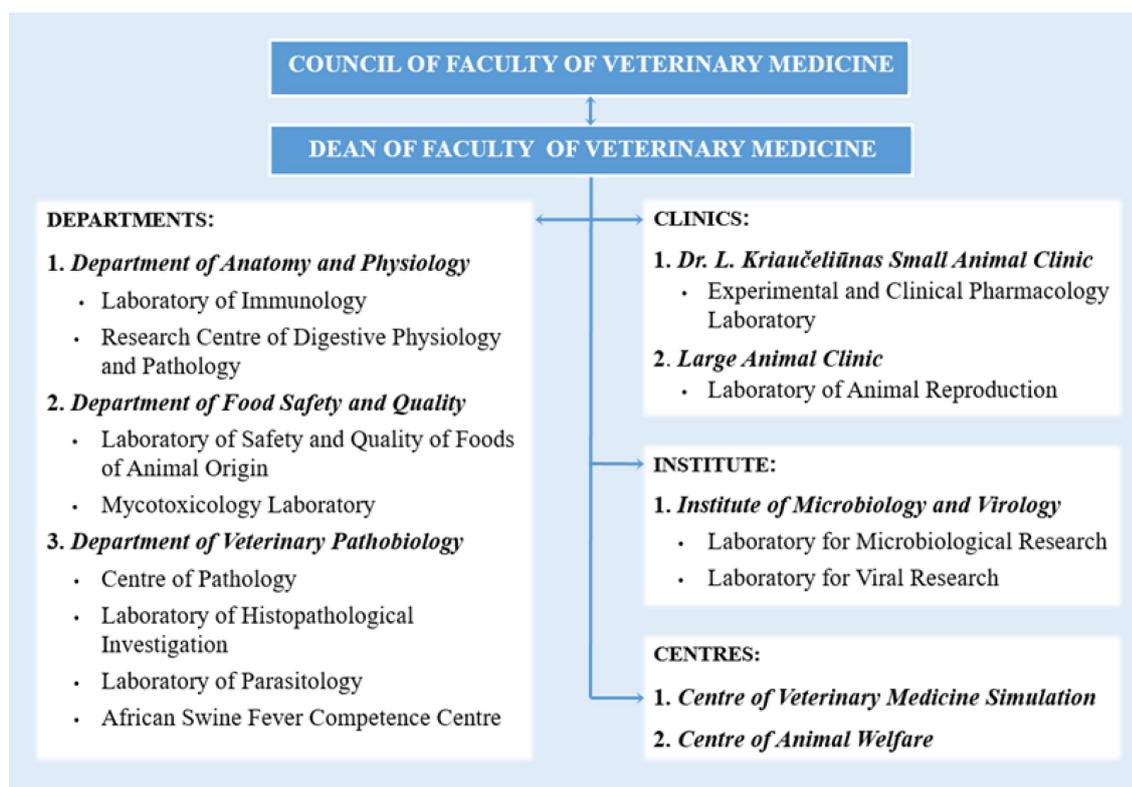
#### Academy level

The VA is an academic unit of LSMU promoting functional integrity of studies, research and practical work in the areas of veterinary and animal sciences. VA implements and controls the process of quality assurance of VA unit activities. Chancellor governs and represents the VA. Senate approves chancellor on Rector's advice. Chancellor makes suggestions to Rector on VA development and performs the umbrella function of University activities management. Responsible persons execute Chancellor's decisions during a set term.

#### Faculty level

The FVM has Department of Anatomy and Physiology with Laboratory of Immunology and Research Centre of Digestive Physiology and Pathology; Department of Food Safety and Quality with two Laboratories; Department of Veterinary Pathobiology with Centre of Pathology and two Laboratories; two Animal Clinics: Large Animal Clinic and Dr. L. Kriaučeliūnas Small Animal Clinic (thereafter Small Animal Clinic) and Institute of Microbiology and Virology (**Fig. 2**). Recently, in 2017 the Faculty's Centre of Animal Welfare and in 2018 the Centre of Veterinary Medicine Simulation were established.

The activities and policy of FVM are under supervision of the Faculty Council and all administrative and representing responsibilities according LSMU Statute are under the Dean management. The LSMU Senate on advice of Faculty Council elects the Dean. Vice-deans and administrators of Dean's Office assist to the Dean. Dean's orders are mandatory to all FVM employees and students.



**Fig 2. Organizational and management chart of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine**

The Council of FVM is elected for five-year period and consists of 15 members: 11 members are elected by the representatives of the academic staff and researchers employed at the Faculty, three members are appointed by the students' representation and one member is elected from the candidates outside the Faculty staff. The Dean is *ex officio* member of the Council according to his duties.

The Council of FVM acts following the Regulations of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of LSMU. The Council deliberates upon and approves the annual report on Faculty's activities, study plans and scientific research results, considers the candidates for dean's office and for heads of units and submits conclusions to Senate. The Council gives proposals and recommendations to Dean, Chancellor, and Senate on the strategic

priorities of FVM, improvement and reorganization of activities, considers the annual estimate of revenue and expenditures, sets up committees for important issues of Faculty activities within the competence, and deals with other important issues.

The FVM organizes and implements educational and scientific research activities in compliance with the national and international requirements. All units taking part in the study process are responsible for study quality assurance. Heads elected through open competition run the units (more details in Chapter IX). The FVM implements study programme of Veterinary Medicine (in Lithuanian and in English languages), PhD studies and 16 programmes of Veterinary Residency studies, Master and Bachelor full-time and part-time studies in the areas of Veterinary food safety and Food science and takes part in implementation of study programmes of other faculties (Animal Sciences, Medicine and Public Health).

The periodicity of internal self-evaluation is determined by the Statute of the LSMU. Not later than the second month of each year heads of FVM structural units prepare annual reports and submit it to the Dean and Faculty Council for assessment and approval.

All documents prepared by SPC for implementation and regulation of the study process in the FVM are evaluated and approved by the Faculty Council.

**The most important documents regulating the quality of Veterinary Medicine study programme approved by the Faculty Council are the following:**

1. Guidelines for the Strategic Development of FVM 2017-2021 and their Implementation Plan. Resolution of Council of FVM 2017-12-08, Minutes No 25.
2. Description of Organization and Evaluation of the Final Qualification Examination of the Study Programme of Veterinary Medicine. Resolution of Council of FVM 2015-06-01, Minutes No 09.
3. Procedure of Preparation, Defence and Evaluation of Master Theses of the Study Programme of Veterinary Medicine. Resolution of Council of FVM 2015-09-02, Minutes No 02.
4. Procedure of Formation of Practical Skills of the Student in the Study Programme of Veterinary Medicine. Resolution of Council of FVM 2014-08-28, Minutes No 13, Supplemented: 2018-06-29, Minutes No 45.
5. Procedure of Clinical Practice of the Student in the Study Programme of Veterinary Medicine. Resolution of Council of FVM 2017-04-28, Minutes No 13, Supplemented: 2018-05-29, Minutes No 42.
6. Biosecurity and Biosafety Standard Operating Procedures at the FVM. Resolution of Council of FVM 2017-09-25, Minutes No 22.
7. Code of Practice on Food Hygiene Placement Learning. Resolution of Council of FVM 2015-06-01, Minutes No 09, Supplemented: 2015-11-26, Minutes No 05 and 2018-03-21, Minutes No 36.
8. Procedure of Practice of the Students of the Study Programme of Veterinary Medicine of the VA of the LSMU in the Veterinary laboratories. Resolution of Council of FVM 2015-11-26, Minutes No05

#### **1.8. List of Commissions and Committees with a brief description of their composition, function and responsibilities (selection)**

The University has various committees and commissions, which participate in the preparation of various procedures in the process of implementation and control in the fields of studies, science and practice quality assurance and evaluation. All commissions and committees governing the quality of studies, science and practice are approved at the University Senate or by orders of the Rector.

**The Study Quality Monitoring and Improvement Commission (SQMIC)** of LSMU develops the University policy on study quality. The functions of the Commission are set forth in “Regulations of the study quality assurance at the LSMU”. Vice-Rector for Studies is the chairperson of the Commission. The Commission is composed of 19 members from different faculties, Study, Research and Career centres and three student representatives. Two members represent the FVM (more details in Chapter III).

**Study Programme Committee of Veterinary Medicine (SPC)** is responsible for development, management, assessment and improvement of VM study programme. It is one of the basic parts of study quality assurance system in the Faculty. The SPC operates following the “Provisions of Study Programme Committees at the LSMU” and legislation on VM studies (more details in Chapter III). SPC is composed of 10 members: chairperson, six academic staff members from different FVM units, two students’ representatives and a representative of social partners from SFVS. When necessary, SPC invites experts from other units or establishments. Rector approves and updates the SPC composition on Dean’s advice.

**Admission Committee of LSMU** composed of Vice-Rector for Studies, Executive Secretary of the Admission Committee, deans of the faculties, student representatives and other delegated persons and

approved annually by Rector's order. It discusses the issues related with admission and makes decisions. The Committee operates following the "Regulations on LSMU Admission to first and second cycle, continuing and additional (bridging) Study Programmes" approved by Rector's order No V-544; 2015 06 09; revised No V-366, 2018 05 03. The Committee approves the admission results and deals with the cases not framed in the Regulations. Admission Committees of Faculties are constituent parts of LSMU Admission Committee. They evaluate motivation of entrants to the second-cycle studies, implement the procedures of institutional admission and delegate their representatives to Admission Appeal Committee.

Admission Committee to studies in English promotes study programmes in other countries, consults the entrants, implements the admission procedures, prepares admission reports and submits them to the executive secretary.

**Doctoral Committee of Veterinary Research Field** approved by Senate implements supervision and organization of the quality of PhD studies. It is composed of 10 leading scientists working at the FVM. The Committee operates following the LSMU Regulations on Doctoral degree, evaluates submitted requests of PhD students arrangement, suggests proposal of applications for doctoral degree positions quantities according to the scientific research themes, nominates candidacies of supervisors, assesses PhD student progress annually, evaluates correspondence of PhD thesis to the requirements for the public defence and performs other activities related with administration of PhD studies (more details in Chapter X).

**University Doctoral Admission Commission** – is composed of Rector, Vice-Rector for Research, Vice-Rector for Studies, Vice-Rector for Clinical Medicine, Chancellor of the VA, Chairman's of the Doctoral Committees, Head of Research Centre and PhD student delegated by Doctoral Council (having the vote). This commission performs admission to PhD programme in different research fields (including admission to the PhD programme in Veterinary research field).

**Residency Committee** organizes admission to residency studies and resolves all issues framed in the regulations. The Residency Committee is composed of Chairman – Vice-Rector for Clinical Medicine, Vice-Chairman – Chancellor of the Veterinary Academy, secretary – Dean of the Centre for Postgraduate Studies, Deans of the Faculties of Medicine, Odontology and Veterinary Medicine and representatives of residents delegated by Residency Council (one is VM resident).

Assurance of the quality of residency studies and the renewal of residency study programme at the Faculty level is within the competence of **Commission of Residency** approved by the Rector and composed of head of Clinic (Department), residency coordinator(s), residency advisors and representative of residents delegated by Residency Council. The Commission operates following the "LSMU Regulations on Residency Studies" and "Description of the Procedures for Implementation and Supervision of Residency Study Programmes of VM" (more details in Chapter X).

The selection of candidates for professor's position is discussed at the **LSMU Committee for Recruitment and Assessment of Professors and Senior Researchers**. The Committee is composed of Rector as its chairperson and members: VA Chancellor, Vice-Rectors for Research and for Studies, professors from different University units, representatives of social partners from other Lithuanian and foreign educational establishments and representative of student delegated by Student Union (SU) (more details in Chapter IX).

The selection of candidates for associate professor's, lecturer's, assistant's and researcher's position is discussed at the **Committee for Recruitment and Assessment of Teachers and Researchers of Veterinary Academy** composed of a representative of FVM Council, professors, representatives of other branches of science, representatives of social partners from other Lithuanian Universities and a student delegated by the SU (more details in Chapter IX).

**Committee for Granting/revoking financial support to persons with disabilities studying at the LSMU** approved by Rectors order is entitled to take care of the students with social needs. The Committee is composed of one representative of the MA, one representative of the VA, representatives from the Study Centre, SU, and head of the Career Centre. The Committee communicates the information about financial and other kinds of support to persons with social needs, evaluates the special needs of students, gives advises to academic staff on the issues of application of achievements' evaluation methods considering the character of special needs, advises the students with disabilities on career possibilities, and publicizes the information about support activities.

**Arbitration Committee for resolving disputes between students and administration or other employees** manages the appeals of students disagreeing with decisions on punishments, and petitions and complaints against the decisions of the Appeal Committee (temporal), (more details in Chapter VIII). The Arbitration Committee is formed for two years by Rector's order. It is composed of three representatives of administration suggested by Rectorate and three representatives of SU.

**Committee for Biosecurity and Biosafety of FVM** is composed of five persons from the Department of Veterinary Pathobiology and Institute of Microbiology and Virology of FVM and a representative of the

LSMU Occupational Safety and Health Service (OSHS). The Committee supervise implementation of the Biosecurity and Biosafety Standard Operating Procedures at FVM. It analyses and evaluates assurance of biosafety and biosecurity by FVM and its units, recommends and controls organization of measures reducing biological risks of various activities. A representative appointed by SFVS Director implements the external audit once per year.

### **1.9. Students' participation in study quality management**

Participation of students at the process of studies and study quality improvement is framed in the Statute of the LSMU. Students participate in the study quality management with the voting right through representatives delegated by Students' Union to Council of LSMU, Senate and Rectorate, Faculty Council, SPC and all collegial University and Faculty bodies: committees, commissions and working groups. SU delegates student representatives in compliance with regulations of its activities. Students have a possibility to suggest measures for preparation, improvement and approval of study plans and documents regulating the study process and other activities. In this way, students take a direct part in decision-making and approval.

Students can express their opinion about the study process through participation in surveys following the procedures on students', academic staff and social partners' (employers) surveys implemented at least once per year. Students can initiate surveys and give recommendations to Dean by themselves.

### **1.10. Participation of external social partners in the study quality management**

External social partners and employers participate in the process of study quality management. Collaboration with social and business partners is important for achievement of FVM goals, quality of study process implementation and lifelong learning activities. Social partners participate in Faculty Council, SPC and practical training organization activities. They participate in Qualification exam and Master thesis defence committees and directly assess the knowledge and skills of students. Through participation in these activities, social partners are aware of Faculty's achievements and challenges and have an opportunity to give recommendations on improvement of the study programme. Involvement of social partners into the assessment process contributes to its validity and impartiality. The Career Centre, following the "Procedure for Organizing the Surveys of Graduates and Social Partners", implements surveys of external partners and analyses their opinion about the study quality. The data obtained by surveys are available for direct use by University, SPC and Faculty units.

### **1.11. The policy of complementary quality assurance processes**

The policy of complementary quality assurance processes is directly related to University's and its Faculties activities and goals for quality assurance of management, studies, research and practical training.

Administration and Finance Director, under jurisdiction of Rector, is responsible for the quality of complementary processes implemented by the following administrative units: Accommodation Service, Accounting and Reporting Service, Civil Protection Service, Occupational Safety and Health Service, Document Management Service, Economic and Planning Service, Information Technology Centre, Legal Service, Building Maintenance and Repair Service, Staff Service, Development Department, Construction and Investment Service, Property Management Service, and Public Procurement Office. The Internal Audit Service contributes to effectiveness of LSMU activities and implementation of strategic and other plans, programmes and procedures (more details in Chapter II).

### **Comments**

The Faculty has a strategic plan, which includes the SWOT analysis of its current activities, the list of strategic directions and goals and the operating plan with timeframe and indicators for its implementation. The Guidelines and the Plan are in line with the missions of the Faculty and the University. The components of the Guidelines and the Plan in the areas of studies, research and animal health care are in line with each other, are consistent with the University's core activities, and show the process of improvement of the FVM. The main monitoring procedures for the implementation of the Guidelines are regulated. The information about the implementation of the strategic plan to the FVM and University's academic community, social partners, and the public is provided in various forms, and is available in the public online domain.

The Faculty places great emphasis on the assurance of the internal quality of studies. All structural changes in the FVM during 2015-2018 were reasonable and were intended for the consolidation of human and material

resources, for the improvement of the quality of higher education, research, and animal health care, for increasing management efficiency, and were aimed at a successful implementation of the strategic development objectives.

Both international and national legislation have a significant impact on the management system and necessary changes at the FVM. The legislation affects the Faculty and University strategic documents, determining their review and related developments. The decision-making involves all stakeholders – the academic community, students, alumni, and social and business partners. The comments and suggestions of internal and external auditors and experts have a significant impact on the changes in the FVM and its management.

### **Suggestions for improvement**

Consistent improvement in successful implementation of all ESEVT standards.

## **II. FINANCES**

### **Description of how and by who expenditures, investments and revenues are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

#### **2.1. Planning**

The LSMU budget is regulated following the standards of public sector accounting and financial accountability standards, other legal documents of the Republic of Lithuania, University Statute and approved accounting rules.

The University budget is composed of the following:

1. Direct assignments from the national budget;
2. Income generated by offered services (tuition fees, income generated by economic and scientific activities and offered services);
3. Project budgets, financial support and other targeted allocations.

Direct assignments from the national budget are the main source of University financing. In 2017, they accounted for 49.10 %, income generated by offered services for 42.58 %, project budgets and other targeted allocations for 8.32 % of the University budget

<http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/14608/lsmuveiklosataskaitaknygafinaluz2017m.pdf>. The state budget allocations for studies have been increasing yet the allocations for research, experimental activities, administration and economic activities have been decreasing. For this reason, the University, in order to ensure the economic sustainability of the establishment and implementation of the strategic objectives, diversifies the state budget allocations distributing them between areas of activities in such a way that the income unrelated with studies, i.e. generated by other activities, increase. Using the internal and external financial resources, the University implements the main activities and creates conditions for additional activities and development of infrastructure. In addition, the University increases its competitiveness, expands the lifelong learning services, encourages collaboration of science and business, carries out contracting investigations, offers other services to Lithuanian and foreign economic entities, participates in projects, and looks for other financial resources.

The generated incomes and attracted external project allocations improve possibilities of University to distribute risks between the areas of activities and contribute to achievement of strategic goals. In this way, the University aims at permanent progress, purposeful distribution of allocations and reduction of dependence on state budget assignments. In 2017, the increment of investments from other than state budget sources was higher by 6.35 % than in 2016.

FVM as one of the largest subdivision of University, also contributes to attraction of additional finances from other sources: international projects, LMT, projects supported by the Ministry of Agriculture and contracting projects with economic entities.

The revenue is generated by LSMU FVM Small and Large Animal Clinics through extension of the list of offered services to consumers in the areas of animal treatment and prophylaxis, higher amounts of revenue generated by the veterinary pharmacy, contracting veterinary consultations, veterinary services at animal exhibitions, etc. The strategic goal of Small and Large Animal Clinics to increase annual earnings is directly related with the main objective to attract as many as possible patients and to manage as many as possible clinical cases to ensure VM studies. Therefore, the revenue generated by the Clinics does not ensure their economic sustainability but serve as a site for studies and scientific research. FVM also generates income through implementation of life-long learning services, i.e. organization of courses, conferences, and workshops for different social groups as, for example: veterinary surgeons, scientists, farmers, etc. In the last

three years, the annual FVM revenues exceeded the expenditures indicating that the Faculty is cost-effective and is able to ensure high study quality.

## 2.2. Process of financial resources allocation

To implement the task set in the University development Guidelines “To improve the distribution of financial resources for enhancement of financial sustainability” the University has undertaken elaboration and introduction of total cost model along with improvement of distribution of earnings and precise assignment of expenditures to units. For implementation of this task, build-up of reserve fund was started beginning with 2.5 % from income generated by offered services financial means per year increasing the savings every year by 0.25 %. This fund aims at accumulation of financial resources necessary for implementation of strategic projects of the University including the development of Large and Small Animal Clinics infrastructure.

Rational allocation from the budget for research, studies, administration and property management, human and animal health care and University development is within the competence of LSMU Economic and Planning Service (EPS) and Director of Administration and Finances. The yearly budget is discussed in Senate and approved by the LSMU Council. The formation of the budget for the coming year begins in October of the current year. The EPS by orders of Rector “On approval of the description of distribution of the LSMU incomes generated by services“ (No V-880, 2017-09-28) and “On the allocation of part of LSMU tuition fee for remuneration of support staff, goods and services” (No V-418, 2018-05-28), taking into consideration the planned volume of research and using the data of LSMU Study Information System (LSMU SIS), calculates and provides to units the planned assignments for salaries, purchases and services of the coming year:

1. The bulk of the budget goes to implementation of study-related activities and salaries of the staff. The University has an Open Fund (Resolution of the Senate No 8-10, 2011-04-15) supporting mobility of researchers and PhD students and Residency Mobility Fund (Resolution of the Senate No 32-06, 2013-06-07) supporting mobility of residents. In addition, the University allocates about 49.8 K EUR to carry out cultural, sports and social activities.

2. The University constantly pursues optimization of expenditures and build-up of investments for development of scientific and study infrastructure and renovation of the buildings. The expenditures on renovation of the infrastructure are increasing every year ensuring implementation of the objectives set in the University Guidelines for the strategic development (more details in Chapter IV).

## 2.3. Process of decision-making and approval

The FVM has autonomy to use the financial resources, provided by the University budget, and to plan expenditures:

1. Heads of the units make decisions on the use of the remuneration fund following the „Regulation for the calculation of teaching workload and payroll band of the units of the LSMU” (No 48-01, 2014-06-30). When the calculated remuneration fund is smaller than the number of positions occupied by competition in a unit, the factual remuneration fund is reserved for the unit until the end of official tenure (end of employment contract) (more details about enlisting of staff in Chapter IX).
2. Dean of the Faculty decides as to the use of assignments dedicated to purchases and services related with organization of studies. The process takes the following steps:
  - 2.1. Faculty units, bearing in mind the FVM Strategic goals and taking into consideration the needs determined by internal and external monitoring and SPC recommendations for VM programme improvement and assurance of study quality, draft plans of the necessary equipment and services and submit them to Dean before October 1 of the current year.
  - 2.2. In the third quarter of the year, the University EPS provides the Dean with the plan of assignments needed for purchases and services in the coming year.
  - 2.3. The Dean elaborates the budget, which meets the needs of units necessary for implementation of strategic plan, adjusts it to curriculum and prepares estimate of expenditures for the coming year lining up purchases.
  - 2.4. The Faculty always has a reserve fund for unscheduled purchases.
  - 2.5. Dean provides the estimate of expenditures to FVM Council for discussion and approval.
  - 2.6. The estimate approved by FVM Council is then adjusted with EPS and submitted for approval to Administration and Finance Director.
  - 2.7. EPS reports about implementation of the estimate to Dean every 6 months for monitoring and control of expenditures.

2.8. At the end of the year, Dean submits the report on the implementation of the estimate to FVM Council for consideration and approval.

Funds related with maintenance of studies, science and administration infrastructure, i.e. expenditures for utilities, are planned and included into the estimate on a centralized basis. The Faculty is not free to operate these financial resources.

In case of financial need for development of the infrastructure, purchases and equipment exceeding the financial capacity of the Faculty, the request is provided by Dean, discussed with VA Chancellor and submitted to University administration for consideration. Administration makes a decision to support the request acknowledged as justified and adequate to sustain the requirements for the Faculty to meet its mission and to achieve its objectives for infrastructure development and education. For example, in this way allocations were made for procurement of elevator, veterinary simulation models, etc.

Decisions on financial support of important high cost objects in order to sustain achievement of strategic goals are made by LSMU Council after discussion in the Rectorate and Senate.

The collection of estimates of University's financial year is prepared by December 31 of the current year following the Law on Public Organizations Accountability of the RL, standards of accounting and financial accountability of public sector and other legislative documentation regulating preparation of financial reports by subjects of public sector. The reports on estimates of University income and expenditures and their implementation are provided by Rector and approved by the Council.

Financial activities of the University are made public and are a constituent part of the annual report of LSMU activities. It is accessible to all community members and wider readership.

## **2.4. Internal and external Audit**

The University's budget implementation is based on national control and internal and external audit systems at different levels:

Organizational independence and freedom of activities is ensured for the Internal Audit Service of the University. The members of the internal audit do not take part in University's administrative subdivisions in order to uphold objectiveness. The conclusions of planned internal audits are submitted to Rector together with recommendations as to the possible risks and improvement of the internal control procedures. Internal auditors also monitor implementation of recommendations. A report on the University's financial control status is annually submitted to the Ministry of Finance of the LR. No cases of discounting recommendations of Internal Audit Service have been registered.

Planned financial and activities' audits of the University are conducted by the RL National Audit Office. External audit companies audit financial reports. National auditors express their independent opinion about the correctness of the University's financial and budget implementation reports.

Audit helps to determine whether the University implements the principles of economical use of resources, efficiency and resultant activity; whether the allocations from the state budget are used economically and rationally. Every national audit provides conclusions and recommendations how to improve University's activities. The University takes appropriate actions for achievement of positive changes in setting new internal control procedures.

### **Comments**

The University enhances the efficiency of the University's activities, improving the management of material resources and using funds, aiming to warrant the quality assurance of facilities, human resources development, and the well-being of staff and students.

## **III. CURRICULUM**

### **Description of how and by who the core curriculum is decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

#### **3.1. Regulation and structure of Veterinary Medicine Curriculum**

The study programme of Veterinary Medicine in Lithuania is implemented only in the LSMU FVM.

Detailed last self analysis of the programme was performed in 2016-2017 in accordance the provisions of the new Law on Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Lithuania (LHER RL), "Descriptor of the study field of Veterinary Medicine" (No V-795, 2015-07-23) and „General Requirements of the



improvement follows as a next step depending on the outcome of verification of the level of achievement of improvement objective.

### 3.3. Evaluation and monitoring of the Curriculum

Assurance of the programme quality control and improvement of the studies are facilitated by external evaluation of the programme every 7 years serving as a basis for accreditation of the programme.

At the international level, the programme of VM was assessed by the EAEVE experts in 2012. Five major deficiencies have been set and after a re-visitation in 2015, because of one not removed deficiency, the programme of VM was conditionally approved (Annex 6).

At the national level, the external evaluation and accreditation of the programme is carried out by the SKVC (<http://www.skvc.lt/default/en/>) (Chapter I, Subsection 1.7.1) established by the MES RL as an independent expert institution. The evaluation is implemented by an international group of experts. SKVC implements the evaluation following the “Methodology for evaluation of higher education study programmes” <http://www.skvc.lt/default/en/study-programme-evaluations>. The evaluation includes the goals of the programme and expected outcomes: curriculum, staff, facilities and material resources, the course of studies and assessment of students’ achievements, programme management. The quality of study programme is assessed in scores according to the listed six assessment areas. The programme of VM was assessed by SKVC in 2011 and accredited (Annex 7). The accreditation was valid until 30<sup>th</sup> June 2017. However due to the higher education reform in Lithuania, the evaluation of the VM programme was postponed and accreditation validity extended until 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019 (Annexes 8 and 9) and at present is in force.

Based on recommendations of external (SKVC and EAEVE) evaluations “Plans of Measures for Elimination of Deficiencies Pointed out by Experts in the VM Study Programme” (2013 and 2015) were developed and approved in the FVM Council. Actions were taken to implement the recommendations. The annual reports of FVM Dean contain information about implementation of planned measures for elimination of deficiencies.

Study Quality Monitoring and Improvement Commission (SQMIC) develops the strategy and coordinates monitoring, assessment and improvement of study quality at the LSMU. Commission collects, generalizes and considers the outcomes of study quality assessment and submits a report to Rectorate. Rector makes decisions as to the measures for study quality improvement and their implementation. Faculties with study quality deficiencies pointed out in the assessment are committed to analyse the causes, develop the plan of measures for study quality improvement and their implementation.

The Study Programme Committee of Veterinary Medicine (SPC) (Chapter I, Section 1.8) evaluates and plan improvements for the Curriculum and execution of study programme annually. For assurance of consistent activities, SPC annually prepares a programme improvement plan which is approved by Dean.

SPC prepares and initiates updating of documentation on study processes (regulations, rules, etc.), cooperates with programme implementing units and commissions, carries out surveys of students and graduates’ opinions. Bearing in mind the Strategic Guidelines of FVM and legal acts of the RL, taking into consideration external expert recommendations and study quality monitoring outcomes, SPC improves or corrects study programme after coordination of Dean and FVM Council. Minutes are taken of all SPC meetings. The outcomes of implementation of the plan are submitted in a written form to Dean and SQMIC after every semester. Based on the report, Dean decides on the necessity of the measures for study quality improvement and takes strategic actions for their implementation.

The described processes ensure that the goals and outcomes of study programme, its content and structure are in line with the EU Directives and national documentation regulating the VM studies programme, its structure, resources, academic staff competences, implementation of the study process and that graduates of the programme acquired all Day One Competences.

Students’ representatives, social partners, units and administration of the University or Faculty also can initiate updating of the programme or its parts.

### 3.4. Process of study plan development and approval

Study plan is one of the key documents regulating the quality of study programme implementation. A study plan for the next year is prepared by SPC. Seeking for achievement of planned study outcomes through the relevant content of study programme and volume of modules, interdisciplinary integration and continuance of knowledge, SPC evaluates the relevance of teaching methods and ratio between the lectures, laboratory and desk based work, non-clinical animal work, clinical work and supervised self learning to ensure the student-oriented studies, taking into account the opinions and recommendations of academic staff and students. The plan is submitted to FVM Council, Rectorate and is approved in Senate before November 1 of the current

year. The approved study plan is uploaded on the LSMU website <http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/16440/vm-u6mstudijuplanas2019-20201-3k.pdf>; <http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/14945/vmu-vu2018-20195.5.pdf>.

### **3.5. Preparation of the subject description**

After approval of the study plan by Senate, SPC, following the Regulation of the Studies of LSMU, annually revises the subject descriptions, which are the key documents describing the teaching-learning process. The subject descriptions are uploaded on the LSMU Study Information System (LSMU SIS) database (Annex 10). SPC evaluates and compares the content of subjects in order to avoid repetition and duplication, analyses the subject assessment strategy, validity, credibility and transparency of assessment principles and the content and form of assessment methods. In this way, SPC ensures that the anticipated study outcomes will be achieved consistently and effectively and will form a cohesive framework. SPC submits recommendations on preparation and updating of subject descriptions to academic units on the LSMU SIS database before February 1 of the current year. The subject description is prepared (updated) by the subject coordinating teacher. The teachers revise and update (when required) assessment forms taking into account the study outcomes of the last year, competences acquired by students and students' survey results. The subject description contains annotation, requirements for beginners of the subject, expected competences and outcomes, content of the subject with indicated contact and individual work hours and tasks, assessment strategy and methods, and list of literary sources. The subject descriptions are prepared in Lithuanian and English languages. Students are also familiarized with the subject description during introduction into the each subject.

Successful implementation of the study programme is in direct dependence on the competences of academic and support staff (Chapter IX) as well as on material resources (Chapter IV).

### **3.6. Feedback principle for improvement of Curriculum**

Coordination of study quality monitoring in University is performed by SQMIC. SPC and Vice-Dean of the Faculty carry out surveys according to the "Procedure for Organizing the Surveys of Graduates and Social Partners (Employers)". Students' survey results give information about students' opinions on the study process, environment, subjects, quality of studying resources, teaching and academic support. Analysis of students' satisfaction with assessment forms of knowledge and skills is made via electronic study assessment system anonymously, which automatically generalizes and analyses the survey questionnaires.

An optional surveys about separate subjects in the LSMU SIS electronic environment are programmed in such a way that questionnaires are available only for student which has studied those subjects. Though students' activity in filling questionnaires is not very high but the received answers are informative and facilitate improvement of teaching and assessment processes. If necessary, SPC organizes student surveys to find out their opinion about the study process and other study quality aspects not directly related with subjects through special SPC questionnaires.

SPC also carry out surveys of the staff. The results are used for evaluation of the opinions about study process, volume of study modules, available material resources, studying environment and its ethics, learning quality, possibilities of accommodation of academic staff pedagogical, practical and other activities, and needs for educational and professional improvement.

Career Centre in coordination with the Faculty carries out surveys of employers, graduates and other social partners at least once in two years period. The results are used for evaluation of compliance of the acquired competences with professional requirements and for evaluation of the need to update the competences to ensure they remain adequate to the changing business and activities environment.

After the end of the practical training, supervisor gives recommendations on the improvement of the quality of practical studies.

Teachers from time to time organize short students' surveys about the particular subject studies. They use the obtained information for improvement of subject teaching process and assessment.

The surveys organized by students' representatives usually are concentrated on a particular study programme or issues relevant for all University students, e.g. improvement of the library service. Generalized results are communicated to Rectorate and Dean. Face-to-face or virtual discussions are organised.

The data of all kinds of surveys are analysed and generalized and the obtained information is used for improvement of study quality indices. The intended measures for improvement of the study programme and eliminated deficiencies are communicated to students during meetings or through the First Class system of

LSMU. The use of the feedback results for certification of study quality are described also in other chapters of the present Self Evaluation Report (SER).

### **3.7. Planning of further actions for assurance curriculum quality**

In 2017, the discussion and the search for different models were introduced to change the more traditional structure of the VM curriculum to ensure interdisciplinary integration of subjects, to understand the theory, which is the basis for, and which in essence sustains practice.

Efforts to find ways to deal with curriculum overload and to find attractive students-oriented learning methods, to change the minds of academic staff from thinking about what they are teaching to thinking about what students learn, were made. Dean assisted by Vice-deans and SPC is responsible for implementation of this process. For achievement of the intended goal, a second vice-dean was appointed to Faculty by Rector's order. Students and academic staff were engaged in the development of the new curriculum as well. Consultations by MES RL, SKVC, SFVS and OIE representatives were organised. Dean and academic staff of the Faculty got experience through participation at targeted symposiums: Diplomats for Life (ICDL): Connecting medical education and clinical practice (<http://medicaleducation.lt/#portfolio>) (2016), Diplomats for life (ICDL): Simulation and Virtual Reality for Education in Health Care and Patient Safety (<http://medicaleducation.lt/#portfolio>) (2017), Education Spring 18 – Education in the Digital Age. In autumn of 2018 a targeted seminar leading of experienced professor in this field and a representative of curriculum group from the Norwegian University of Life Sciences Faculty of VM was organized for administration and academic staff of FVM to prepare for improvement of curriculum.

### **3.8. Practical training**

Practical training is one of the key parts of VM curriculum. To ensure that graduates acquire all necessary competences the number of hours (hands on) for acquisition of clinical competences has been increased. VM students acquire practical skills during 1. Laboratory work, 2. Intra-mural and 3. Extra-mural practical training.

Laboratory work is performed in groups. In most cases, the tasks are fulfilled individually or in groups of 2-3 students under the supervision of academic and support staff. This includes laboratory works such as: preparation and evaluation of microbiological specimens, histological and histopathological samples, ante mortem examination of animals and post mortem inspection of carcasses, examination of cadavers, performing clinical procedures on the organs (injections, wound sutures, etc.). Students individually and during laboratory work form their practical skills at the VMSC (more details in Chapter IV). A part of laboratory work in Food hygiene is performed in slaughterhouses where 5 students work in one group performing the tasks given by the teacher: inspect and evaluate carcasses and internal organs, observe animal acceptance, slaughtering process, etc.

#### **Intra-mural Practical Training**

Intra-mural clinical practical training (thereafter Clinical rotation) are performed at Small and Large Animal Clinics of the Faculty and at Large Animal Clinic during mobile ambulatory trips. Procedures of clinical rotation are described at the “Procedure of Formation of Practical Skills of the Student in the Study Programme of Veterinary Medicine”.

Clinical rotation is integrated into clinical modules and is compulsory for all students. It is implemented at different subdivisions of Small and Large Animal Clinics of the Faculty and lasts from the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of studies through to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> year. Clinical rotation takes place in groups of 2-3 students supervised by an academic staff. The night shifts are carried out individually.

To ensure that every graduate has achieved the minimum level of competence, as prescribed in the European System of Evaluation of Veterinary Training (ESEVT) Day One Competences, every student fills a personal Logbook of Practical Skills (Annex 11) of achieved clinical practical competences beginning with the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of studies. Student's acquired skills are assessed daily by the teaching staff (more details in Chapter VIII).

#### **Extra-mural Practical Training**

Students have three types of Extra-mural Practical Training:

1. Extra-mural practice in veterinary laboratories (3 ECTS, 4<sup>th</sup> year) is organized at external veterinary laboratories according to Procedure of Practice of the Students of the Study Programme of Veterinary Medicine of the VA of LSMU in the Veterinary Laboratories (2015-11-26, No 05). The practice is completed individually supervised by qualified tutor.

2. Food hygiene practice at slaughterhouses (2 ECTS, after 5<sup>th</sup> year) is organized according to Code of Practice on Food Hygiene Placement Learning (last version approved 2018-03-21). In Lithuania,

slaughterhouses (bases for practice) are subordinate to the SFVS. Therefore, the contract of Food hygiene practice should be signed by the University, SFVS and a student. The list of recommended sites for practice is prepared by SFVS on Coordinator's request taking into account the FVM requirements for the practical site. The sites for practical training must ensure the necessary conditions for formation of practical skills and the adequate number of slaughtered animals. The practice is mostly completed individually in summer time and is supervised by veterinary surgeon-meat inspector.

3. Extra-mural clinical practice (15 ECTS, 6<sup>th</sup> year) is organized at extra-mural sites according to Procedure of Clinical practice of the student in the study programme of Veterinary medicine<sup>3</sup>. This is an important part of the studies assuring acquisition of clinical practical competences scheduled in the programme. The practice is completed individually. The Faculty has 58 contracts with extra-mural animal clinics and farms. Approximately 15 % of VM students annually complete extra-mural practical training at the universities in abroad within the Erasmus programme. University has 21 Erasmus agreements for VM study programme for study year 2018/19.

### **3.9. General procedures of organisation of Extra-mural Practical Training**

Extra-mural practical training is conducted following the procedures for organization, implementation and assessment of practical training described in the aforementioned procedures. Practices are organized by FVM and coordinated by Coordinator of practical training (Coordinator). Coordinator is responsible for organisation and coordination of practical training procedures: plan and coordinate intended events and times, prepare agreements, organize training for supervisors of extra-mural practice and to carry out other related activities. Coordinator adjust his activities with heads of Faculty units and extra-mural practical sites. The information for students is communicated via the First Class system of LSMU.

The site for practical training must ensure adequate conditions for acquisition and improvement of practical skills. It must have veterinarians (supervisors) with at least five-year professional experience who have relevant competences in instructing students on practical issues and have completed practical training courses organized by the Faculty. Memos are prepared for all practical training supervisors. The site for practical training also must have an adequate number of different clinical cases and equipment. The list of practical training sites is made and updated following the criteria described in the aforementioned procedures and national requirements for veterinary clinics, SFVS recommendations (Food Hygiene practice) and conclusions of assessment commission (Extra-mural practice). The list of extra-mural practical sites is available on the First Class system and in the coordinating unit.

A tripartite agreement is concluded between the University, practical training site and student (Annex 12). The University is represented by a Dean of FVM appointed by Rector's order. The agreement provides for the possibility to change the site of practical training if for objective reasons the conditions are inadequate. The Faculty pays to the practical training site the established fee for supervising the student.

Before the practical training, Coordinator communicates to students the procedure of practice, tasks and assessment criteria. The Faculty controls the course of practice. Coordinator and/or academic staff visit students in practical training bases. They check whether the practice takes place on time, communicate with students and practice supervisors, verify the compliance of procedures and conditions provided for in the agreement. During the practice, students fill individual Logbooks with information about acquired competences. Information about practice evaluation and student assessment is presented in Chapter VIII.

After the completion of practical training, Coordinator conducts students' surveys in order to analyse students' opinion about organization and content of practical training. The results of analysis are discussed with the Practice Assessment Commission and SPC. Taking into account students' recommendations, the procedures of practical training are improved or updated.

The practical competences obtained within all studies are assessed at the end of studies during the Qualification examination (more details in Chapter VIII).

### **3.10. Additional practice**

Additional practice is not compulsory. The additional practice of the students may be carried out and accounted for according to the reporting form of additional practices approved by LSMU. The additional practice is carried out at free from studies time when no contact work time is calculated according to the study programme (including time of professional practice). The Logbook of additional practice must be filled every day of the practice, indicating the level of independence, skills and duration of additional practice in hours (the practice supervisor indicated in the contract shall sign under the performed daily tasks). The time of

additional practice has to coincide with the schedule of additional practice approved by the supervisor of additional practice. The student after completion of additional practice must submit the report on additional practice to the responsible employee of the Career Centre. If the student has performed at least 40 hours of additional practice and submits the properly completed report on additional practice, the hours of the implemented additional practice shall be included into the supplement of diploma.

### Comments

The curriculum of VM is properly designed, resourced and managed (**Fig. 3**). The learning outcomes of the VM programme are being regularly reviewed, managed and updated to ensure they remain relevant, adequate and are effectively achieved. The quality assurance of the VM study programme is performed at international, national and Faculty levels. Plans of measures for elimination of deficiencies pointed out by experts are developed and implemented. The VM Study Programme Committee is responsible for development, management, assessment and improvement of VM study programme. It performs the basic parts of study quality assurance system in the Faculty: oversees quality assurance of the curriculum, evaluating, making change and responding to feedback from students and stakeholders. Students and external stakeholders are involved in this process.

A new methodology (updated logbook) for assessing the acquired Day One Competences has been implemented to ensure that every graduate has achieved the minimum level of competence.

The improved VM programme allows students to acquire all necessary competences. However, in view of the new requirements and changing demands and expectations of students and stakeholders, development of a new model of VM curriculum is started, which even better will ensure full interdisciplinary integration, renewed teaching and assessment strategy and improved competences of graduates.

### Suggestions for improvement

- Implementation of a new model of VM curriculum;
- Development of interactive teaching/learning and assessment methods to generate students' interest not only in clinical subjects and to ensure effective individual work and assessment.

## IV. FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT

**Description of how and by who changes in facilities, equipment and biosecurity procedures (health & safety management for people and animals, including waste management) are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

### 4.1. The location and General Characteristics of the Facilities used for the veterinary curriculum

The LSMU FVM occupies a compact enclosed 5.95 ha territory where study and research facilities and students' dormitories are situated (Plan of VA campus Annex 13). The PTTC situated at the distance of 7 km from the Faculty. The Faculty has the following facilities for the implementation of VM study programme: Large and Small Animal Clinics, library, lecture theatres, teaching laboratories and seminar classrooms with appropriate laboratory and clinical equipment. The premises are renovated and in a good state. Their number and size is appropriate for the number of students. All buildings have emergency evacuation plans and signs. Evacuation paths are properly maintained to ensure its functionality. The buildings are equipped with elevators or special stair climbers for disabled, biosecurity measures, supplied with proper number of fire extinguishers and fire hose complying with relevant national legislation.

#### Short description of the main buildings:

- Central building (2576 m<sup>2</sup>) housing a lecture theatre with 210 places, 7 classrooms for group seminars, 3 specialized laboratories and FVM Dean's office.
- Building of Veterinary Pathobiology Department (1270 m<sup>2</sup>) was reconstructed in 2013. It houses 5 specialized laboratories (106 study places), 3 seminar classrooms and Parasitology research laboratory.
- Vivarium (416 m<sup>2</sup>) was reconstructed in 2015. Breeding and housing of laboratory animals for research is the main purpose of the building. There is classroom and teaching laboratory with 18 places (total area 109 m<sup>2</sup>).
- The Institute of Microbiology and Virology (1378 m<sup>2</sup>) houses Microbiology and Virology research laboratories. The Laboratory of Microbiology has biosafety cabinets of class III.
- Anatomicum (751 m<sup>2</sup>) houses prosectorium, lecture theatre, three specialized laboratories, research laboratory and Museum of anatomy.
- All before mentioned premises are objects of cultural heritage.

- Learning block of laboratories No 4 (5237 m<sup>2</sup>) houses a lecture theatre with 280 places and teaching laboratories of Food Safety and Quality (184.7 m<sup>2</sup>), Biochemistry and Animal Breeding departments (639 m<sup>2</sup>). In addition, it has 7 teaching laboratories and 14 seminar classrooms. There are research laboratories of Safety and Quality of Foods of Animal Origin, Nutrigenomics and Animal Breeding and Animal Nutriciology. The teaching block also includes the VA library.

- The total area of the VA library is 646 m<sup>2</sup>, the area devoted to students is 578 m<sup>2</sup>. Presently the VA library is under the renovation (more details in Chapter VI).

- Learning block of laboratories No 5 has houses lecture theatres (with 275 places each), 36 teaching laboratories, and 28 seminar classrooms. It also houses five research laboratories, students' leisure zone (70.63 m<sup>2</sup>) and cafe (36.74 m<sup>2</sup>).

- Building No 12 was renovated in 2014. It houses a lecture theatre with 108 places, a seminar hall, and the Centre of Veterinary Medicine Simulation (VMSC), which was established in 2018.

- Building of Large Animal Clinic (1819 m<sup>2</sup>) also belongs to cultural heritage. The roof and heating system, clinical lecture theatre (105 places), riding hall and shower room of horses has been renovated. Ventilation system and washhouse have been installed. The nearby building houses animal isolation facilities.

- The Centre of Pathology, renovated and equipped for autopsy and storage of animal cadavers, occupies 972 m<sup>2</sup>. There is Histopathological Laboratory in the Centre, which is equipped with state-of-the-art laboratory equipment used for studies and research.

- The Small Animal Clinic occupies 676.71 m<sup>2</sup>. The premises of the Clinic have been renovated adapting them to expanding clinical activities and for creation of a better environment for students and staff.

- The PTTC of LSMU has three dairy cattle farms called Giraitė farm and Muniškiai farm. Warm loose-housings for cows and calves and a silo trench in the Muniškiai farm and cold loose-housing for cows in Giraitė were renovated in 2015. Learning spaces, changing-rooms and shower cabins were installed. At the Giraitė farm there are two student training facilities (117 m<sup>2</sup> and 66 m<sup>2</sup>).

- On the campus of VA there is Institute of Sports. It belongs to the Faculty of Nursing of MA but it is freely available for use of FVM students and staff. In the building of the Faculty of Public Health of MA, two laboratories belong to the FVM. In the Faculty of public health VM students and academic staff can use the newly equipped remote learning rooms. The LSMU Biological Research Centre in the territory of FVM is used for implementation of VM Qualification exam.

#### **4.2. The vehicles used for VM students' transportation, mobile ambulatory clinic**

Visits to extra-mural farms are important for a development of clinical competencies in VM studies. To support this there are 15 vehicles of different sizes (from 3 to 42 places) for transportation of students to extra-mural sites. Two mobile ambulatory clinics equipped with diagnostic equipment are used in emergency cases. In view of increasing demand for mobile veterinary services, procurement of one more vehicle for mobile ambulatory clinic has been planned.

Property Management Service coordinates the operation of the University transport. It ensures the proper technical status, repair and safekeeping of vehicles. Vehicles are ordered on the First Class system and in Eco-Fleet system ([www.ecofleet.lt](http://www.ecofleet.lt)). Administrator of the Transport Department authorizes the orders.

#### **4.3. Investment Planning in Facilities**

Management facilities and equipment is regulated by the LHER RL and Statute of the University. The facilities and equipment are renovated or renewed on a regular basis in order to meet the needs of FVM. Annually, after evaluation of the state of facilities, funds for their maintenance, renovation and development are allocated. The Rector makes decisions related with the management, use and disposition of University's resources and property. University Council on advice of Senate makes strategic decisions about the management and development of facilities and infrastructure.

For improvement of study environment and accessibility facilities have been systematically renewed and new infrastructure and equipment acquired. Renovation of buildings and procurement of equipment which was planned in the LSMU Guidelines for the Strategic Development 2012-2016 have been implemented. The list of implemented projects is given in Annex 14. Preparatory works for renovation of the infrastructure of the Large Animal Clinic (part of Clinic has been renovated) and construction of new Small Animal Clinic are carried out.

**The process of planning the upgrade of FVM facilities and equipment, used for studies, practical training and research is the following:**

1. The heads of structural units of FVM in accordance with the Strategic plan of FVM evaluate the needs of the units, communicate them to Faculty Dean, who communicates them to the FVM Council and, after coordination with the VA Chancellor, to LSMU Development Department;
2. After consideration of the feasibility of project implementation, the Development Department submits the information to the University's Strategic Plan development team, which, if needed, revises the development plans framed in the Guidelines for Strategic Development, corrects the priorities and submits the plans to Senate. LSMU Senate approves the list of strategic projects and Guidelines for Strategic Development of the University.
3. EPS, which is planning a budget for the development of the guidelines, participates in the formation of the University's strategic development and financing policy. The budget is discussed by the Senate and approved by the Council of the LSMU (more details in Chapter II).
4. LSMU Construction and Investment Service implements plans related with facilities development. It participates in the process of planning the necessary investments for construction and maintenance of LSMU buildings and is in charge to supervise maintenance and upgrading of facilities.
5. Every year the implementation indices are qualitatively and quantitatively analysed and the outcomes are announced in the annual report of LSMU activities.
6. Development Department continues analysis of development plans set up in the Guidelines, controls implementation of projects, evaluates new demands and makes a list of renewed project recommendations. New priority projects are selected and included in the Guidelines for the Strategic Development of the University.

Development of Animal Clinic is one of the LSMU strategic development priorities for 2017-2021. By decision of University Council No UT-1-24-4, 2018-08-31, four millions Euros of University funds were allocated for development of the Animal Clinic facilities and equipment. For implementation of Small Animal Clinic development plan, the University intends to attract external funding resources. An investment project "Development of LSMU VA FVM Small Animal Clinic infrastructure necessary for implementation of the study programme Veterinary Medicine" was prepared. The project was submitted to MES of RL in June 2018. It was planned, the Small Animal Clinic will be constructed at a walking distance of 20 min from the VA campus. It is planning the Clinic is due to be finished in 2023. Procurement of valuable durable equipment was started.

LSMU Council also has approved establishment of Stray Pets Centre (1217.22 m<sup>2</sup>) (Decision of University Council No UT1-22-1, 2018-15). Construction of the Centre has been started using financial assistance from private sponsors. The Centre is due to be opened in 2019. The Centre will have the rooms with clinical equipment necessary for animal housing and clinical care. This will allow expansion of clinical activities of FVM and will ensure acquisition of clinical competences for students.

#### **4.4. Strategies for maintaining, upgrading and restoring of facilities and equipment**

Reconstruction, construction and maintenance of buildings is implemented according to the requirements of the Lithuanian Technical Construction Regulations. The overall status of all buildings complies with the safety requirements. LSMU Building Maintenance and Repair Service (PERT) coordinates the processes of preventive maintenance of buildings. It plans, organizes and implements daily and major repairs of buildings, premises, engineering networks and equipment. In this way, relevant status and functioning of buildings, premises and engineering systems is ensured. The needs for major repairs are evaluated and planned in line with the Strategic Plan of the University.

Daily problems related with the functional status of buildings and equipment is resolved by the technical maintenance service on request placed in the information system: <https://pertis.lva.lt/login.php>.

PERT is responsible for evaluation of the needs and takes corresponding measures through coordination with EPS, which includes the financial resources for exploitation and maintenance of premises in the budget of the academic year. When there is a need to invite external technical maintenance specialists, PERT coordinates the tasks to be fulfilled by selected and approved supplier.

Implementation and coordination of the maintenance of technical state of equipment of the Faculty is planned to ensure the needs of Units. The needs of each unit are submitted to Dean and later is discussed in the Faculty Council (more details in Chapter II).

The LSMU Accommodation Service organizes and implements physical safekeeping of facilities, fire safety, and appropriate cleanness. The Service ensures hygiene standards, daily cleaning of facilities and unsorted, sorted and bio-waste removal. All mentioned services are subordinate to LSMU Administration and

Finances Director. For security of the premises, contracts are concluded with external private security companies.

#### **4.5. Biosafety and biosecurity procedures**

Requirements for biological security and biological safety at FVM are described in the Biosecurity and Biosafety Standard Operating Procedures used at the FVM (thereafter Biosecurity SOP) (see Annex 3 of Re-visitation Report, 2018). Representatives of all FVM units participated in the preparation of the Biosecurity SOP. The Biosecurity SOP was approved at the Council of FVM. The Biosecurity and Biosafety Committee (thereafter Biosecurity Committee) of the FVM is responsible for biosecurity and biosafety implementation and timely development according to new risks or needs. The Committee sets the main biosecurity and biosafety requirements at the faculty level and participates in developing of procedures for each particular unit of the Faculty.

The requirements framed in the Biosecurity SOP are compulsory for the Faculty staff, students and guests. The students are familiarized with the Biosecurity SOP in the first months of their studies in study subject “Introduction into the Studies of Veterinary Medicine” and later are instructed on biosecurity measures for each study subject (where it applies) and sign letters of conversance. Special attention to student’s knowledge and attitudes regarding biosecurity requirements is paid before any activities in Large and Small Animal Clinics, Centre of Pathology, anatomy practice and going for clinical service outside the Faculty. Heads of units are responsible and coordinate implementation and familiarization of students with biosafety requirements at the unit level.

By decision of the Biosecurity Committee, every Faculty unit has a person responsible for coordination of biosecurity and biosafety requirements in the unit. These persons ensure implementation of biosecurity in a unit, ensure proper compliance to the requirements, identify new risks, and communicate them to Biosecurity Committee. For operative solution of issues related with biosecurity, an e-mail address [va.biosauga@lsmuni.lt](mailto:va.biosauga@lsmuni.lt) was created for FVM staff, students and responsible persons. Any person, who has any suggestion or complain regarding biosecurity issues at the Faculty or has questions, can straight away address the Biosecurity Committee.

The Biosecurity Committee implements audits in units once a year. It evaluates the situation, identifies critical points and gives recommendations or compulsory requirements to unit heads and responsible persons. FVM Dean and VA chancellor are informed about the audit outcomes. In order to keep high quality of biosecurity at FVM it was agreed with the Lithuanian State Food and Veterinary Service in external audit once per year (the first will be made in the beginning of 2019). The Biosecurity Committee meets for discussion of the issues related with biosecurity strategies at least once in four months or more often if needed. In December of each year, a plan of activities for the next year is prepared. The Biosecurity Committee submits the audit conclusions to Dean. Dean takes into consideration the conclusions and plans relevant budget for procurement of implements. When there is an urgent need for an investment in biosecurity and biosafety, the necessary means may be allocated from the reserve foundation of the Faculty.

At the Faculty students sign letters of conversance about the possibilities of vaccination against rabies and tetanus, which are stored in the Dean’s office. All FVM students electronically are repeatedly informed about the possibilities of vaccination against rabies and tetanus twice a year before the beginning of each semester. In the high risk zones, the information is additionally communicated to students by academic staff orally and through posting.

Since 2013, all VM students have been annually insured against accidents during studies. The insurance is valid for students during lectures, laboratory work and practice as well as for direct way from residence place in the state of learning (practice) to lectures, laboratory work and practice place and back to the place of residence. The Dean informs students about insurance policy orally and by intranet of LSMU.

Occupational Safety and Health Service is responsible for safety of the staff, students and guests. This Service works out annual plans for examination of health condition of staff. The examination is free of charge.

The occupational safety is regulated by LSMU Rector’s order prepared following the Lithuanian Law on Safety and Health at Work and general rules of fire prevention and safety. Heads of structural units of the University (Faculty) are responsible for familiarization of staff members with the rules and signing in journals. The journals are kept at the units. Occupational Safety and Health Service controls the rules and is responsible for appropriate management of dangerous wastes in LSMU units. A contract is concluded with a certified company (presently UAB Toksika) for hazardous waste removal from the Faculty. FVM units comply with the valid safety requirements and facilities where chemicals are used have eye showers marked with special signs. The staff members learn how to use them in emergency cases. All buildings have emergency exits, fire extinguishers, and first aid kits.

The Faculty follows requirements of Lithuanian legal acts regulating the use and disposal of waste of animal origin (animal cadavers, etc.). At the FVM disposal of waste of animal origin is done through the Centre of Pathology and is in accordance with Biosafety requirements. Biological waste is placed in special containers and stored in cold storages (-10° C) until disposal. There is a contract No P17-514 (2017-11-17) with certified company UAB Rietavas veterinarinė sanitarija, which provides service for proper removal and utilization of biological waste.

LSMU Civil Protection Service is responsible for control of extreme situations if any. This Service checks dosimeters of diagnostic staff every three months.

### **Comments**

There is a need of faster developments in building the new facilities for the Small Animal Clinic with properly designed infrastructure and room layout, and further investment into renovation of Large Animal Clinic. It is of major importance for the maintaining and upgrading quality of VM studies and further development of biosecurity culture at the Faculty.

### **Suggestions for improvement**

- Attraction of governmental funds for building of new or upgrading of existing facilities must be sought;
- Biosecurity culture and competence would benefit from training in other entities of veterinary medicine education across the Europe;
- More biosecurity and biosafety specialized events organized in the VA would contribute to the development of this field.

## **V. ANIMAL RESOURCES AND TEACHING MATERIAL OF ANIMAL ORIGIN**

**Description of how and by who the number and variety of animals and material of animal origin for pre-clinical and clinical training, and the clinical services provided by the Establishment are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

### **5.1. Description of the general strategy of the Faculty about the planning of acquisition of animals and material of animal origin**

Animals and material of animal origin are used for teaching the following subjects: Anatomy (cadavers of euthanized animals, animal carcasses and organs from slaughterhouses, veterinary simulation models, alternative methods); Physiology (healthy laboratory animals, alternative methods); Animal Hygiene and Animal Welfare, Animal Production (healthy animals); Pathology (cadavers, organs with pathologies from slaughterhouses); Food Hygiene (carcasses and products of animal origin), Clinical subjects: Propaedeutic (diseased animals, veterinary simulation models, alternative methods), Surgery (organs from slaughterhouses, cadavers of euthanized animals, alternative methods, veterinary simulation models, diseased animals); Internal diseases (diseased animals and veterinary simulation models), Obstetrics, Reproduction and Reproductive Disorders (healthy and diseased animals, organs from slaughterhouses, veterinary simulation models).

**The Faculty has a functioning system ensuring that there is no deficiency of animals, material of animal origin and clinical cases for study process:**

1. The SPC is responsible for the planning and upgrading the FVM Curriculum. Among the members of SPC there are heads and representatives of Small and Large Animal Clinics and Centre of Pathology who supervise issues ensuring proper number of animals, material of animal origin etc., for the study purposes.
2. Planning is carried out in advance following the approval of VM study plan and taking into consideration the number of students.
3. In every subject there is a teacher in charge for planning and acquisition of the number of animals, amounts of material of animal origin and animal cadavers necessary for study competences development by students.
4. The information about the necessary purchase of animals and material of animal origin is communicated to Dean (more details in Chapter II).
5. The applications for purchasing animal carcasses and organs from slaughterhouses are prepared for two years. A person appointed by Dean is in charge of purchasing. The Faculty is registered as a Category III User of material of animal origin approved by order of SFVS (No 33IV-294, 2017-06-07, Registration No LT80-19-002).

6. The application for purchasing food products of animal origin for the coming year is prepared at the end of every calendar year. The food products are purchased at the shopping centre contractually.
7. Head of VA Centre of Pathology is in charge for ensuring the necessary number of cadavers. Cadavers are provided by veterinary clinics, animal, poultry and fur animal farms, zoos and other enterprises. Cadavers delivered to VA Centre of Pathology for diagnostic purposes also are used for studies. To avoid deficiency the cadavers are stored in refrigerators or freezers.
8. Cadavers of euthanized animals (non-infected) and animals euthanized after experiments (non-infected) are procured from animal clinics with owner's consent, Biological Research Centre of LSMU and VA Vivarium. Units submit the schedule for the demand for cadavers for the coming year at the end of academic year.
9. The orders for laboratory animals necessary for the next studies year are submitted to VA Vivarium. Vivarium has a permission of SFVS (Order No LT-59-101 and No LT-61-102, 2011-12-23) to house and breed laboratory animals. FVM has a permission issued by the Lithuanian Experimental Animals Ethics Commission at the SFVS on the use of laboratory animals for studies (resumed every three years, the last resume No B1-272, 2018-03-22). Procedures with laboratory animals are conducted observing the requirement to implement 3Rs principles set out by Directive 2010/63/EU.
10. The preclinical studies with livestock animals are conducted in PTTC of LSMU. In three farms of PTTC approximately 230 cows, 200 heifers and 30 bulls of different breeds are kept. External farms within the frame of collaboration agreements are also used for practical training of students. The agreements clearly define the conditions ensuring students' participation in animal treatment processes. The average number of animals per farm ranges from 10 to 1200 cattle, from 3 to 600 sheep, from 3 to 300 horses, and from 10 to 70 alpacas and llamas. The agreements ensure the variety and necessary number of animals. Students travel to farms and slaughterhouses by University transport which is paid by the Faculty. This form of training is organized under direct academic supervision.
11. All procedures with live animals are conducted following the SFVS Director's Order <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.437081/opUDVCJSGD>. The animals are used strictly observing the legislation ensuring biosecurity and animal welfare.
12. Every FVM unit has a person in charge of filling the logbook for records of animals and material of animal origin used for teaching, academic trips with students and delivery of used material of animal origin to VA Pathology Centre. The logbooks serve as a basis for planning purchases, resumption and conclusion of agreements.
13. In order to reduce the number of animals used for teaching and improve their welfare, implementing the 3R principles, the Faculty uses simulation models (Annex 15) and other alternative methods for practical training (more details in Chapter VI).

## **5.2. Description of the specific strategy of the Faculty in order to ensure that each student receives the relevant core clinical training before graduation**

Assurance of the necessary number of patients for clinical VM studies is provided for in task 4 of FVM Strategy "To ensure diversity and quality of animal disease diagnostics, treatment and prevention". The Large and Small Animal Clinics are requested to increase the number of animal patients by at least 5 % every year, to extend qualification of veterinary surgeons, to offer new modern treatment methods, and to upgrade the clinical equipment. These tasks are directly related to the main objective of Animal Clinics to enlist as many as possible patient's and to have as high as possible number of clinical cases to ensure VM studies. Heads of Small and Large Animal Clinics of FVM are in charge of implementation of these strategic tasks.

The collaboration between veterinary surgeons of the Faculty clinics and leading European veterinary universities is of high importance and is being intensified. The Faculty invites the European veterinary diplomates to give lectures and practical training for veterinary surgeons. The veterinary surgeons of the FVM improve qualification at the veterinary clinics of foreign universities.

The Faculty procures new equipment (Annex 16) and offers new veterinary services. At the end of academic year heads of Small and Large Animal Clinics submit reports to Dean and FVM Council. The reports contain information about the number and varieties of treated animals, generated income, procured equipment and assurance of the quality of clinical skills of students. The future needs are also indicated.

On the average eight thousand patients visit the Small Animal Clinic annually (see ESEVT Indicators Annexes 17 and 18), of which 73.0 % are dogs, 23.7 % cats and 4.3 % animals of other species.

Students of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year rotate in the Small Animal Clinic for 8 hours per day in different subdivisions (laboratory, veterinary pharmacy, therapy department, VMSC and PTTC) and visit veterinary clinic of the

zoo under supervision of FVM veterinary surgeon. Students record case history of patients (anamnesis), perform clinical examination and nurse the hospitalized patients.

Clinical rotation of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year students takes place on weekly basis including night shifts at the Clinic. Following the rotation principle, 4<sup>th</sup> year students practice in groups of 2 or 3 students at the Therapy section under the supervision of veterinary surgeons with various specialisation: ophthalmologist, dermatologist, cardiologist, gastroenterologist and radiologist.

5<sup>th</sup>-year students practice in the surgery and intensive therapy departments under the supervision of veterinary surgeon. They administer anaesthetic, perform soft tissues surgery procedures, assist and perform echoscopy, odontological, orthopaedic and other procedures. During a nursing of the hospitalized patients of the surgical department, students have an opportunity not only to be acquainted with the primary diagnosis of the patients but also to observe their treatment and progress for all week.

The Large Animal Clinic is the only establishment in Lithuania providing specialized hospitalisation services for horses and production animals. In Lithuania this Clinic is the one where difficult and exclusive clinical cases usually are submitted for diagnosis and treatment.

On the average Clinic has 2200 clinical cases per year (see ESEVT Indicators Annexes 17 and 18). For cattle practice dairy and beef cattle account for up to 80 % of cases during external farm visits and the rest of cases are small ruminants and camelids. The ratio of acute cases (Caesarean section, LDA or RDA, traumas etc.) and chronic cases is about 60/40 %. During farm visits, students have an opportunity to encounter different clinical situations: reproduction cases (more than 1200 cases per year), surgery cases, hoof diseases and calf diseases. About 70 % of clinical work load during the farm visits are individual cases and the rest 30 % are population cases.

The Large Animal Clinic has 770 horse patients per annum. Approximately 60 % of all clinical cases are chronic diseases and 40 % are acute diseases. The number of clinical cases of horses and production animals is increasing thus preventing a threat of shortage.

Students of 3<sup>rd</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> year rotate at the Large Animal Clinic. Under supervision of academic staff, they take care of hospitalized patients, participate at clinical examinations of new cases or are involved in laboratory and surgical work. The training starts from practical examples about handling of animals, clinical examination, test sampling and preparation through to main principles of treatment (3<sup>th</sup>-year students). After that, small groups of 3-4 students attend in the clinic obtaining practical knowledge in internal diseases (4<sup>th</sup>-year students), surgery, obstetrics, gynaecology and reproduction (5<sup>th</sup>-year students).

Students have an opportunity to take part in mobile veterinary service cases to make clinical examination of patients on farms during external visits and have practice in groups of 3 or 4 students. The mobile veterinary service is provided according to agreements (the total of 7 agreements at farms with an average of 200 to 1200 animals). The provisions of the agreements ensure students' participation not only in animal treatment but also in population based veterinary medicine. This training also is organized under direct academic supervision. The demand for and the number of mobile ambulatory clinical services increases by 10 % a year. Large Animal Clinic operates an out-of-hours emergency service for urgent cases every day of the year.

Owners of animal visiting the Small and Large Animal Clinics of the FVM, sign a consent allowing participation of students in the animal treatment process. Thus, all patients of the Clinics are used in the teaching process. This ensures an increasing number and variety of patients and acquisition of necessary clinical competences by students.

To ensure required number of clinical cases for studies, renovation of the Small Animal Clinics' infrastructure is included into the strategic plan of the University for 2017–2021 as one of the priorities. The VA Small Animals Clinic will provide veterinary Stray Pets Centre, which is currently under construction, providing additional opportunities for students to develop clinical competences (more details in Chapter IV).

For control of the process and timely elimination of weaknesses, FVM units also carry out students' surveys for information about their satisfaction with the clinical studies. Critical remarks and recommendations are immediately taken into consideration. For example, based on surveys the number of ECTS devoted to clinical subjects and training of practical skills was increased, clinical subjects are taught according to animal species, etc.

All of this confirms the Faculty has enough available cases and teaching material of animal origin as well as a marketing plan to increase them, anticipating the needs.

### **5.3. Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin for training in Anatomy, Physiology, Pathology, Food Hygiene, Veterinary Hygiene and Animal Production**

For teaching Anatomy, animal carcasses and organs are obtained only from slaughterhouses where veterinary inspection is carried out. Students work in sub-groups of 4-5 students in each. The same animal

cadaver or organ is used repeatedly to make a better use of it. The used carcasses and anatomical material are handled according to biosecurity requirements and are disposed using service of Pathology Centre.

Alternative study methods also are used for Anatomy studies. Moreover, students are provided with a set of desiccated, macerated or plastinated specimens to be studied during the practicals and on demand. Skeletons of different varieties of animals (18 items), muscles (bovine and equine), moulages of blood vessels and nerves (4 items) and of different organs (28 items), and plastinated specimens of heart and brain, are available at the Anatomy Museum and are used for studies.

Physiology practicals with laboratory animals take place at the teaching laboratory of Vivarium. Students work in groups of 3-4. They learn to restrain the animals for obtaining blood samples, to examine them, to determine reflexes, to conduct comparative assessment of heart function, and etc. Additionally, alternative methods are also used: licenced computer programmes – Interactive Physiology (Inche) and Video material for Animal physiology lab works, and Physiological patterns of animal tissues and regulation of their functions (in DVD).

Pathology. Students perform necropsies while studying General and Special pathology and Forensic veterinary medicine. Practical work is conducted under supervision of academic and qualified support staff. Depending on the topic of practical work, students are supplied with different varieties of cadavers. The work is performed by rotation method (making entries in the register) in order that all students obtain all necessary competences.

Necropsy of animal cadavers is also one of the clinical practice tasks for the 6<sup>th</sup> year students. Students perform the task individually. All performed necropsies are registered to the individual practice logbook by every student. Each necropsy carried out at the VA Centre of Pathology is recorded in the electronic record system and logbook, which can be used by students. The animal by-products are documented allowing planning of the number of cadavers and organs for the coming year. Detailed information on the number of cadavers used for necropsies is given in Annexes 17 and 18, proving that the number of cadavers is sufficient and the situation is stable and under control.

Food hygiene. Students obtain practical skills in control of slaughtering process, ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection during visits to slaughterhouses. A group of students during one visit participate in slaughtering of at least 100 pigs, 50 cattle or 20 horses under the supervision of academic staff and veterinary inspector of the slaughterhouse. Students work in sub-groups, not more than 5 students in each.

Practice of Food safety training also is conducted at slaughterhouses. For acquisition of competences pointed out in subject description, every student must perform ante-mortem and post-mortem inspection and sanitary expertise of carcasses of at least 50 bovines and 200 pigs.

Teaching of Veterinary Hygiene and Animal Production is conducted in PTTC of LSMU and in external farms. This ensures the sufficient number of animals necessary for practical training. During the visits of the farms, the students are supervised by academic staff.

Veterinary Hygiene visits to farms are scheduled in the study plan. The average size of the group is 13 students. The tasks are performed individually or in groups of 2-3 students. Visitations are organized to farms with different animal housing technologies. Each of them keeps from 80 to 200 cows and about 10-12 calves aged to 12 days. The students practically apply the theoretical knowledge through individual tasks: evaluate housing conditions, health status and welfare of animals (nine animals per student per time). During the practice of Animal Production, students assess management, veterinary and animal science parameters of dairy and beef cattle (type of farm, animal constitution, features of the breed, milk-yielding capacity, milking procedure, etc.). Two students assess one animal. In addition, visits are organized into poultry and sheep farms. Every student evaluates housing and feeding technologies of sheep of different age groups, learns to fill certificates of origin and purchase agreements, etc. Students may volunteer at annual milking contests. Practical training in Pisciculture is performed at Laboratory of Aquaculture of LSMU.

## Comments

The Faculty has sufficient number and quality of animal resources and teaching material of animal origin as well as a marketing plan to ensure supply if needs are increased. The use of the alternative methods is being further expanded.

## Suggestions for improvement

- Updating of the electronic patient record system of Large and Small Animal Clinics;
- Permanent monitoring of sufficiency of the number of clinical cases for studies.

## VI. LEARNING RESOURCES

**Description of how and by who the learning resources (books, periodicals, databases, e-learning, new technologies) provided by the Establishment are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

### 6.1. Digital platform for studies and academic work; E-studies

E-studies Department plans and implements development of E-studies and electronic studies administration. The University uses the following information systems (IS) for study processes (<https://pagalba.lsmuni.lt/>): LSMU SIS - <https://lsmusis.lsmuni.lt/>, Moodle - <https://moodle.lsmuni.lt/>, First Class - <https://fc.lsmuni.lt/>, Office 365, Dovas SP. Every contracting student is given an account and uses a unified connection to all systems. All mentioned systems have textual and video user guidelines with using, operation, placing of material and testing instructions.

LSMU SIS provides access to all academic documentation of every study subject and information related with organization, implementation and assessment of the study process as well as information about the feedback, study guide, student questionnaire results, etc. The subject descriptions, study material are worked up and posted on the site by teachers.

Students remotely connect to the systems where they can see descriptions of subjects, learn about expected study results and assessment system and their student's credit book, control progress, submit requests and provide recommendations on the issues of studies organization and quality.

All FVM teaching material is in obligatory manner placed on the First Class system and subject web conferences. Students can use the material and consult subject teachers (via e-mail). SPC controls timely placement of study material on the site, carries out students' surveys on the teaching material and information technologies (IT) systems functioning, analyses the results, gives recommendations on elimination of deficiencies, informs Information Technology Centre (ITC).

The Moodle system for teaching FVM students (lectures, tasks, progression) launched on 2016 and intend to be completed by 2020. The training is organized for academic and support staff by Department for Teachers' Educational Competence (DTEC) and implemented by E-studies department. Part of the academic staff already use the Moodle system to provide subjects information and assess students' achievements. Therefore, currently references are placed on First Class and Moodle systems. Vidyo program <http://lsmu.vidyo.liedm.lt> is used for direct transmission and recording of lectures.

Academic Information Department provides methodical assistance on the issues of study progression and organization as well as administrative services on the phone and through e-mail [infos@lsmuni.lt](mailto:infos@lsmuni.lt). A compulsory subject "Introduction to Veterinary Medicine studies and Information Technologies" is included in the first half-year curriculum for the first year students. Students learn how to use LSMU SIS. This kind of training also is organized for academic and support staff.

LSMU SIS is matched with the software and is adapted to mobile devices. Since the September of 2017, E-studies department has been organizing IT competences training courses for support staff. In 2018, LSMU was given the status of authorized European Computer Driving License (ECDL) testing centre. The staff members have an opportunity to pass ECDL tests free of charge (one staff member of FVM already has ECDL certificate).

Large and Small Animal Clinics have installed electronic patient record system. Using the mentioned systems, students can learn about and analyse the clinical cases and are able to see and analyse x-ray images. The operating theatre of the Small Animal Clinic has a special operating equipment with a video-recording system, which directly transmits the view to the training classes where students and the teacher have an opportunity to watch the operation and analyse the process. Video recordings are stored and used in the teaching process for later analysis of surgical cases.

### 6.2. Library

The LSMU Library and Information Centre (BIC) is the leading state-of-the-art University library among the Baltic universities, which is accessible for FVM students. LSMU BIC opening hours: I 7.30–00.00, II–V 00.00–24.00, VI 00.00–6.00 and 10.00–22.00, VII 10.00–22.00. The library has six reading halls with 544 workplaces (including 143 computerized workplaces), three team-learning rooms, multimedia room with eight workplaces, computer-training classrooms with 12 workplaces, and 2 seminar and conference halls. The computer room PC No 1–4 has an installed SPSS Campus Professional Desktop package. The LSMU BIC repository stores 744 677 documents.

Yet students of FVM prefer using LSMU BIC affiliation VA library settled in the VA campus. The VA library has a fund of information sources meeting the needs of the FVM study programme. The open VA library book repositories consist of 17 000 items. VA library repositories also store over 26 312 titles/103 936 copies of printed documents. The documentation repositories are regularly complemented with new printed documents. In the last three years, the Section of Veterinary Medicine was supplemented with 1 280 items/131 titles of printed editions. In 2017, VA library users were provided with 82 913 documents. The number of visits amounted to 91 230.

VA library databases include 13 thousand titles of e-books and 706 titles of e-journals (key words: Veterinary medicine; Veterinary science). In addition, two collections of CABI database are subscribed: Nutrition and Food Sciences, Descriptions of Fungi and Bacteria. In 2017, through the OVID platform, LSMU BIC subscribed 58 databases providing access to 25 618 titles of full-text e-journals and 486 867 e-books.

VA library is open from 8.00 a.m. to 9.00 p.m. on workdays and from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m. on weekends. The staff of the library is composed of 7 members. All of them have higher education: three of them are university graduates of library science. The library area devoted to students occupy 578 m<sup>2</sup>. The library has a reading-room with 60 places, a computer zone with 24 places, and group learning room with 12 places.

SPSS Campus Professional Desktop package is installed on four personal computers. The Faculty has also acquired 70 licences of 3D programmes for the study of equine, bovine, porcine, canine, feline, avian, and rodent anatomy using virtual models (<http://biosphera.org/international/>). The applications display the anatomy of these species with high specificity and enable viewing different types of tissues and individual organs: the programmes are particularly useful to students for their understanding of the locations and relationships of the different structures. The programme licences are installed on computers in the Department of Anatomy and Physiology, Small and Large Animal Clinics and the VA library offering free access to students.

The library also has a student lounge area. Students may use printers, scan devices (free access), binding equipment for documents, wired and wireless internet links (Wi-Fi). Students also may use their personal laptops, tablet computers and smart phones.

VA library has special auxiliary equipment for students with specialized needs. Library annually organizes courses for first-year students in the first half-year. The courses are designed to familiarize the students with the main operation principles of the library, search for information, reference management (Mendeley program) and discovering bibliographic data in databases (PubMed, MEDLINE). The library provides consultations on the issues of bibliographic description and making reference lists, helps to place metadata of the master theses and dissertations and abstracts in Electronic Theses and Dissertations database; to search for articles in full-text databases. Students are instructed on RefWorks usage following the navigation guidelines. Since 2016, LSMU has access to URKUND system for plagiarism checking (<http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/12891/urkund.pdf>).

Students can use books and scientific journals in reading halls, may take home. Booking in advance is also available. Inter-library loans also are possible by TBA service. All students and staff have free access to the virtual library of LSMU and cumulative Lithuanian Academic Electronic Library (eLABa) LIBIS catalogue. The virtual library provides a possibility to subscribe to publications stored at the library, to have automatic updating through e-mail, to place on e-mail your own search results and requests, etc. The free access to subscribed date bases is possible without passwords only from LSMU computer networks; remote access from other computer networks is possible using EZproxy or Virtual LSMU network (VPN).

The VA fund is complemented in a centralized manner, taking into consideration VA study programmes and research areas and following the Law on Libraries of the RL and LSMU Rector's order.

SPC controls assurance of educational literature complying with the subject description in the VM programme, organizes students' surveys on the quality, accessibility and sufficiency of the number of literary sources, analyses the survey results, communicates the information to teaching staff and submits reports to Dean and FVM Council.

Academic staff of FVM annually update the list of compulsory educational literature taking into consideration recommendations, study programme and students' needs. Every year, the staff of the Complementation and Storage Subdivision provides lists of requested or lacking educational literary sources. The library procures the necessary editions and communicates the information to academic staff and students via the LSMU VA e-mail. The expenditures on procurement of information resources are allocated according to the number of students in LSMU units. The purchases are financed by budget of University.

The information about new databases and newly obtained printed material is periodically communicated to the community through forum [lsmuva@lsmuni.lt](mailto:lsmuva@lsmuni.lt). Besides, the LSMU e-catalogue <http://lsmu.library.lt/> (complemented on a regular basis) provides full information about textbooks and educational material,

periodicals and dissertations. The newly obtained books are demonstrated on the “New Books” stand and thematic exhibitions of books.

The VA library registers the number of students’ visits. Every year, a students’ survey about the satisfaction with the library is carried out and the obtained results are analysed. Responding to students’ recommendations, the working hours of LSMU BIC and VA library have been extended. VA library renovation was included in the strategic development Plan of LSMU for 2017-2021. Now the VA library is under the renovation and modernization.

### **6.3. Information Technology Centre and equipment**

The ITC of LSMU headed by Director, who is under direct control (reporting once a year) of Vice-Rector for Studies is in charge of renovation of IT equipment in VA auditoriums.

The ITC activities include analysis of functioning, development and needs of University IT systems. The ITC implements projecting, exploitation and development of technical equipment, and installation of computer network and information systems’ software ensuring functionality of study, science and administration activities in the University. The staff of the ITC is composed of 20 specialists (FTE) including three IT specialists (2 working remotely and one in the VA). When required, as many specialists are engaged as is necessary for elimination of problems.

The ITC supports technical assistance to students and staff. The users directly connect to <http://is.lsmuni.lt/> informing about troubles with the equipment and receive consultation or technical aid. The renovation of the general IT equipment is centralized and financed from the University budget. The FVM departments renovate their equipment using FVM allocations.

Wi-Fi is free accessible in VA auditoriums and Animal Clinics. In 2015, a free EDUROAM service was installed.

VA has three computer classrooms. FVM students also can use with six computer classrooms equipped with video projectors and computers with installed basic Microsoft package and R statistical package, SPSS and NetSupport School network software (for testing and surveys) in the Faculty of Public Health (VA campus). Practical works take place in classrooms. Students can use the classrooms for performing tasks and/or statistical data analysis. The total of 213 desktop computers and the wired access to internet are available for students.

The needs for learning equipment (computers, smart boards, etc.) are provided to heads of units by software procurement coordinators. Heads of units include the reported needs into procurement plans (more details in Chapter II and IV).

### **6.4. Centre of Veterinary Medicine Simulation**

VMSC was established in 2018 to enable the continuous training of practical skills in veterinary medicine by using veterinary medical simulation methods. The activities of the Centre are carried out in accordance to the Regulations of the VMSC approved by the Senate of the University. The Centre is a student-centered space where students can practice in a safe, stress-free, self-guided learning environment without any risk of harming animals.

Thirty-one different stations with learning manuals are currently available in the Centre (Annex 15). Sixteen of which are hands-on training stations using branded veterinary simulation models.

A specific record addressing the learning objectives and presenting the procedure is available at every station. The QR code technology is also used which allows students to get access to extra video tutorials via smartphones or tablets, supplementing the information provided in the VMSC learning manuals. All stations are equipped with required working tools so that students can get acquainted with standard laboratory procedures performed in daily practice.

The academic staff teach and consult students on veterinary simulation models as well as the methods to gain skills in VMSC. The Centre implements scheduled clinical practice studies as well as students self-studies in lecture free time. VMSC working hours are from 10.00 a.m. to 6.00 p.m., students can see occupancy of the Centre online and book visitation time by email [vetstim@lsmuni.lt](mailto:vetstim@lsmuni.lt)

### **Comments**

Digital study platforms are used for organization of study process and its quality assurance. Students and staff have free access to e-study platform from any location. The Library offers courses, the textual and video guidance in support of use of the e-facilities for students and staff.

VA library holds a comprehensive and up-to-date range of educational and research literature covering the VM study programme and research. The flexible opening hours and loan arrangement, modern on-line communication, free access to data bases are available for staff and students and meet the needs for self-learning. Periodical surveys to estimate satisfaction of students and staff using learning resources and IT facilities are conducted by SPC, Library and Student Union. Library resources are reviewed and renewed according to recommendations elaborated in close collaboration among experienced librarians in the area of veterinary sciences, SPC, academic staff, students and approved by Vice-Rector for Studies.

The contemporary IT facilities are used in FVM. IT learning opportunities are expanded and updated on a regular basis. The VMSC was established and integrated in the curriculum of VM.

### **Suggestions for improvement**

- Further development of IT systems to meet the needs and expectations of students and staff ensuring the student-oriented studies.
- Further development of VMSC and even stronger integration into VM curriculum for acquisition of pre-clinical and clinical practical skills.

## **VII. STUDENT ADMISSION, PROGRESSION AND WELFARE**

**Description of how and by who the admission procedures, the admission criteria, the number of admitted students and the services to students are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

### **7.1. Student admission and enrolment**

Admission to the VM programme is implemented according to the provisions of LHER RL, Order of the MES RL “On the approval of the Description of Ranking the Best Students who Completed the Secondary Education Programme for 2018” and Admission Rules approved by LSMU Senate for the current year. These documents set forth the requirements for the entrants.

The number of prospected students to different study programmes (Resolution of Council of LSMU No UT1-23-4, 2018-05-30) is annually approved by the University Council on Dean’s advice and the preliminary number of state-supported students is approved by Order of MES RL.

Admission to all higher schools in Lithuania is organized via Association of Lithuanian Higher Education Institutions for General Admissions (LAMA BPO, <https://lamabpo.lt/>). LAMA BPO was established in 1998 and acts as an institution authorized by MES RL. Its purpose is to assist in entering higher schools, to achieve the highest levels of impartiality by selecting the best-prepared entrants, to eliminate the risk of the only possible opportunity and to simplify the admission order.

Applications and documentation are submitted only online. An applicant can be admitted if s/he has secondary or corresponding education certificate. The competitive examination score is the main selection criterion for the admission. The composition of the score is publicly announced two years in advance.

The minimum admission score is set every year by MES RL (3.6 score in 2018). Persons with lower score do not take part in the competition for the university studies. Universities are free to increase this score. In order to admit persons able to successfully complete the VM studies and develop all the ESEVT Day One Competences, the minimum admission score of 4.5 was approved on Dean’s advice for applicants in 2018.

The admission score is calculated from assessment grades of biology, Lithuanian language and chemistry or mathematics state maturity examinations as well one freely chosen subject.

Meeting the highest priority requirements for enrolment into study programme and taking into consideration the number of study places, persons with highest scores are enrolled from the applicants list. All admission procedures are implemented in a digital form and transparently in the LAMA BPO database.

After the end of the general enrolment and given there are still free places left, additional admission to the places not supported by the state is implemented. Only the persons who took part in the general admission procedure may take part in the additional admission. The diagram of admission procedure is given in Annex 19. LAMA BPO announces the official admission results of all universities on LAMA BPO website.

International students to the Veterinary Medicine studies (teaching in English language) are enrolled following similar principles and criteria as national students but in parallel to national admission platform. These are presented in the same Admission Rules approved by LSMU Senate. There are three main criteria for admission of international students:

- Eligibility for higher education studies (verified by the qualified personnel at LSMU in cooperation and surveillance by SKVC) according to approved procedure;

- Quality of previous education (verified by the entrance exam or calculated from matriculation in case of trusted educational systems);
- Motivation for studies in the speciality, LSMU, Lithuania (face-to-face, obligatory for all applicants to Veterinary Medicine);
- Ability to communicate in English language (official certificates, LSMU test, etc.).

Final enrolment is based on the completion, evaluated by the final score following criteria above.

Detailed information about admission procedures and conditions is announced in <http://www.lsmuni.lt/en/study-at-lsmu/degree-studies/admission/>. The application period begins on November 1 of every year and normally last till June 30. Application are accepted online at <https://apply.lsmuni.lt>.

Applicants are provided everyday support and consultations during the application process.

Decision on admission depends to the University Rector under the suggestion of Admission Committee of LSMU approved for academic year. Applicant shall sign the Study contract with the University before that decision (since 2017 online). Based on the contract, Rector issues an admission order. Enrolled students get access to studies information systems of the University (more details in Chapter VI). A report of LSMU Admission committee about admission results is presented to LSMU Rectorate and Community of VA.

The applicants have the right to appeal against admission results or procedures. An Appeal Committee composed of representatives of Faculties, IRSC and students' representative manage appeals against admission procedures and other related issues. The international entrants have the right to appeal against admission results or procedures to the same commission as for national admission.

## 7.2. Communication to students, academic staff and public

Admission to the LSMU FVM is a transparent process. The University provides accurate information regarding the VM programme by providing clear and up to date information on application procedures for potential applicants on the University website <http://www.lsmuni.lt/lt/stojantiesiems/>. The website contains information about study programmes (content, study plan, admission rules, tuition fees, competitive subjects for 2018–2019, reference to LAMA BPO and FVM websites). FVM website provides all documentation required by the quality systems: the reports from the assessment agencies, ESEVT FVM status and SER, Day One Competences, plans for improvement, survey results on students' satisfaction with the studies, compositions of Faculty Council and SPC, main approved documents of the Faculty Council, descriptions of Faculty units, and contact information.

Persons interested in the information about study programmes can get it at the Dean's Office of FVM, IRSC and Career Centre, which, in collaboration with the Faculty, organizes Open Days for prospective students and tours through the Faculty, participates at national study fairs, implements projects for publicising study programmes, concludes agreements with social partners. Programme is made publicly visible by the efforts of FVM SPC members, Vice-deans, academic staff, students and LSMU Marketing and Communication Service and Career Centre.

## 7.3. Integration of admitted students

IRSC (for foreigners) and Student Union (SU) help newly enrolled students to integrate into the University community by appointing specially prepared students/mentors. They share experience with and give assistance to first-year students integrating them into the academic and social activities of the University. Veterinary Academy Students Association (VASA) also participates in the integration process.

The study begins with the Introduction to VM Studies during which Dean and Vice-Dean meet with students and familiarize them with provisions of the Regulation of the Studies of LSMU and general rules of study and processes for students support.

Academic Information Department ([infos@lsmuni.lt](mailto:infos@lsmuni.lt)) and FVM Dean's Office render methodical counselling on the issues of study organization and process and provide administrative services.

Monitoring results have revealed that the greatest number of withdrawals occurs in the first year of studies. For timely identification of problems and enhancement of students' opportunities to achieve study outcomes and progression the function of tutoring (abandoned in 2010 after merging of universities) was resumed. Every group of first-year students have a tutor who acts following the FVM students' tutoring rules: meets the tutored student group at least once per month and advises students on the issues of time management principles and organization of learning and individual work, etc. Students may communicate with tutors via e-mail or face to face when there is a need.

The University has established favourable conditions for students' self-government. There is a SU, VASA, and International Veterinary Students Association (IVSA).

There is a modern sports complex on Campus of VA where students have an opportunity to make sports during their leisure time. Students train under supervision of sports and health specialists. Students have an opportunity to participate in artistic activities. In 2017-2018, 90 FVM students took part in social activities.

#### **7.4. Monitoring of student academic progression**

The University implements monitoring of students' academic progression. The student progression after the completion of the full study year is evaluated by attributing student to certain level of achievements (Chapter X of Regulation of the Studies of LSMU). The evaluations of the subjects are summarized and the level of study outcomes for the evaluation period is determined. All students except the newly enrolled ones take part in the procedure.

Three levels of study achievements are distinguished: excellent, typical and threshold. It is considered that the student has reached: 1) an excellent level of study achievements in the evaluation period (one study year) is if the evaluations of at least four fifths of the subjects are on excellent level, and the others – not lower than on typical level; 2) a typical level is if the evaluations of at least three fourths of the subjects are on typical or excellent level, and the others – on threshold level; 3) a threshold level is if s/he has accounted for all the subjects, but his/her study achievements do not reach typical level.

The student is considered to be academically successful if s/he does not have academic failures, has implemented all the requirements set for the study programme for the evaluation period, and who has achieved excellent or typical level of achievements. The purpose of this process is to determine the best students and to provide them with an opportunity to gain or preserve state support.

The academic failure is considered to be the failed academic exam/test during the evaluation period that cannot exceed one academic year. Students who get less score than 5 for final grade of summative evaluation are entitled to repeat the subject/s. Students repeating study subject are not promoted to the next grade level. The student can repeat the same semester or course not more than twice.

Monitoring of academic progression every semester is described in Chapter VIII. It allows identifying students who are not performing adequately and who need support for a better study results. It also allows identifying successful students and motivating them to engage in scientific activities (more details in Chapter X).

The LHER RL and Regulation of the Studies of LSMU provide that students who cannot continue studies due to disease, pregnancy, care of child or maternity/paternity leave may be granted an academic leave, but that cannot exceed the period of three years and due to personal reasons - once per study period. During the academic leave, the student preserves the student's status. The student is entitled to repeat the subjects, where s/he had academic failures, and to complete them during the academic leave.

Owing to the fact that the veterinary degree involves a large amount of practical training, attendance of lectures and practicals is mandatory for all students. If the student misses without any justifiable reason more than 20 % of the contact hours (if this makes at least 30 hours) of certain subject, the student has to repeat the subject.

Students may be evaluated using alternative modes if there are reasons due to which they are unable to report following the settled order. The alternative reporting mode ensures that the student achieves the adequate study outcomes. The students are entitled to study according to the individual timetable.

The studying results of the student, who has studied at other higher education institution according to the contract between the higher education institutions, or having the content of studies coordinated on other legal ground, shall be recorded without any restrictions, provided any violations of the contract or other document, whereby the curriculum have been coordinated, are not determined with regard to the studied subjects. The inclusion is conducted electronically in LSMU SIS.

Since 2014, an anonymous electronic system has been functioning at the LSMU via which the student can offer suggestions, comments and complaints.

The University Administration and Students' Representation promote and comply with the principle of academic ethics and integrity. The teachers and support staff follow the principle of maximal impartiality and principle of privacy (confidentiality) of the evaluated results, unless special provisions of results' announcement are provided by other legal acts. Since the academic year 2013-2014, first-year student sign the academic integrity pledge before beginning their studies at the University, and senior students sign it prior to each exam.

Fraudulent behaviour during the assessment, by the suggestion of the Commission (three representatives of administration and academic staff and two representatives of SU) formed by Dean and the resolution of the

Rectorate, results in the expelling of the dishonest person from the University. The Regulation of the Studies of LSMU contains a provision for checking for plagiarism.

### **7.5. Support for the personal needs of each student (student welfare)**

The FVM is open for all persons meeting the necessary criteria and willing to study. Committee for Granting/revoking financial support to persons with disabilities studying at the LSMU take care of the students with social needs (more details in Chapter I, Section 1.8).

As a partner, the University participates in the State Studies Foundation project designed for accessibility of education and improvement of study conditions and quality for students with special needs. The means of this project and previously implemented projects and University's financial resources have improved the conditions for studies of persons with special needs at the FVM: entrances to buildings were suitably adjusted, special stairclimbers installed, special equipment and electronic Braille writing system procured, etc.

For enhancing competences of academic staff working with students with social needs, DTEC organizes seminars for pedagogical staff "Improvement of accessibility of studies for students with special needs".

All students meeting the requirements can have support from the University or Government of the RL. The support includes financial support, targeted payoffs, social scholarships and government loans on easy terms for living and tuition fees, etc. The SSF awards and administers the state supported loans. The Study Centre of the University appoints a person responsible for administration of the issues related with support of students with special needs.

The "Regulations for the Support of Students of the First- and Second-Cycle and Integrated Studies of LSMU", approved by the Senate (No 47-02, 2014-06-20), specifies the procedure for student grants and scholarships. The average score of semester, which predetermines whether the scholarship will be awarded, is calculated using all subject scores for the evaluation period. A one-off payoff may be awarded in the case of misfortune. VM students also are awarded nominal scholarships. In 2017, such scholarships were awarded to eight Veterinary medicine students.

For students from large families, orphans or those parenting children, tuition fee may be reduced following the order framed by the University Council in "Sponsorship Regulations of Students of the first cycle, the second cycle and integrated studies at LSMU" (2014-06-20, No 5-3).

VM students can accommodate in the University dormitories, which are allocated according to the "Regulations of the student dormitories of LSMU". The University has nine dormitories which ensure adequate living conditions and meet the students' needs. The four dormitories are near the VA, have free internet access. Students can have their meals at the cafeterias surrounding to the VA and on the cafeteria located in the Learning block No 5 of VA Campus in front of the student leisure zone. There are several places for vending machines on VA campus.

For objective reasons, the students can apply to Dean for transfer to other group of students or for change of teacher. When necessary, students can get professional psychological assistance that can be provided both in Lithuanian and in English. All students have the right to choose the medical institution and can receive medical treatment free of charge. In the summer, students can have continuous holidays lasting at least one month. The timetable of international students is composed with the main national public holidays of the countries they came from in mind.

### **Comments**

The VM study programme is one of the most popular and is rated among the top ten study programmes every year in Lithuania. The programme is in great demand, with 4-5 applications to every available place. It is likely the number of candidates can start to decrease due to the demographic situation in the country.

The Dean of FVM has a possibility to plan and suggest the number of study places, however the dean cannot markedly reduce it due to financing policy of the Republic of Lithuania. The number of state funded places is determined by the Government and is beyond the influence of the Faculty. Presumably, the financial support of the studies from the state budget could be changed the next year.

The admission process is carried out following the principles of transparency, equality, clarity, reliability, consistency, and non-discrimination. The LAMA BPO assists in entering higher schools, to achieve the highest levels of impartiality by selecting the best-prepared entrants and to simplify the admission order.

For the timely identification of problems and enhancement of students' opportunities to achieve learning outcomes and progress, the Faculty has an updated tutor system. The permanent academic progression stimulates students to seek best study outcomes and to preserve the status of successful student. Sufficient social support is available for all students.

## **Suggestions for improvement**

Beginning with 2019, the admission procedure will include motivation interview for selection of candidates for VM studies.

## **VIII. STUDENT ASSESSMENT**

### **Description of how and by who the student's assessment strategy is decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

#### **8.1. Description of the global student's assessment strategy of the FVM**

Student assessment is regulated by "Regulation of the Studies at the LSMU" Chapter IX, Sections 1 to 12, developed in accordance with the LHER RL and University Statute. The aim of the assessment strategy is that all students know the procedures how the assessment will be implemented, that students are fairly treated by teachers and the assessment is objective for every student.

The procedures of assessment of clinical rotation, practices, Master thesis and Qualification exam are determined by specially designed documents (Chapter I, Section 1.7.4. of SER) which are prepared by the SPC, and approved by the Faculty Council. The procedures are in agreement to the legal acts of the RL, and the provisions of Regulation of the Studies of LSMU.

The assessment strategy and methods for each subject are designed by academic staff responsible for the subject and has to be approved by the SPC. The assessment strategy explains forms, terms and criteria for the assessment. The Faculty applies a 10-point assessment scale with positive scores from 5 to 10.

Studies are divided into semesters and the following examination sessions after which study results for each subject are evaluated by the final grade. The semesters are organized via timetables, which are made for each of the study semester by Study Centre of LSMU in coordination with FVM units and Dean. A timetable of studies is composed of the following parts:

1. Teaching plans for the coming academic year are prepared and announced before February 1 of each year. In the teaching plans there are study subjects, time for examination sessions and dates for completion of academic failures indicated.
2. Lecture timetables are prepared and announced for semesters before August 1 of each year. It contains information about the form of studies, schedule and place of lectures or laboratory works.
3. Taking into consideration students' suggestions, timetables of students' assessment and completion of academic failures are announced at least two months before the end of the semester.

#### **8.2. Description of the specific methodologies for assessment**

Formative and diagnostic assessments are applied for assessment of competences particularly in clinical study subjects and practices.

The final grade is used to assess study achievements of the student for each study subject. It is obtained through procedure of summative evaluation. The final grade consists of cumulative grade, which is obtained through intermediate assessments, and of final verification grade, which is obtained after the completion of the subject and taking the final verification. The cumulative grade constitutes no less than 50 % of the final grade and it is determined in each subject. The cumulative grade components are used to evaluate certain study results indicated in the study subject.

The information about expected study outcomes of the subject, assessment forms and structure of formula of cumulative grade is provided to students in the LSMU SIS together with the description of the study subject. Assessment procedures additionally are specified on the First Class system before the beginning of studies. The procedures of an assessment a study subject cannot be changed during the ongoing study period.

In case a student did not pass a component of the cumulative evaluation it is allowed to retake the intermediate evaluation a single time. Cumulative grade has to be no less than 50 % of cumulative part. Then a student acquires the right to take the final verification. If the minimum grade (at least 50 %) stated in the subject description has not been accumulated student shall repeat the subject.

The final verification shall not make more than 50 % from the total score of the assessment. Final verification is considered as passed when it has been evaluated at least by the minimal positive grade (five). If student did not pass it, the negative grade of final verification shall not be added to the total score of examination and only grade of the cumulative part is reordered as total score for subject.

The student may decide not to take the final verification, if in the course of studies has managed to accumulate such cumulative part of the final grade of subject that is sufficient for being awarded a passing grade 5.

If a student fails in the final verification, but in the course of studies has accumulated cumulative part of the final grade sufficient for being awarded a passing grade, the grade of the cumulative part is entered as the final grade of a subject.

For the purpose of getting prepared for the final verification, at least 2 work days are given.

Student who fails to pass final subject assessment following the determinate procedures have the right to retake the assessment for two times (more details in Chapter VII of SER).

The final verification is organized based on the “Procedure of Passing the Examination” approved at the FVM Council (during evaluation there are no less than three persons of academic staff for 10 students). The tasks performed in the written form are encoded.

The assessment final grade is recorded in the LSMU SIS database of the electronic register within 5 days from the date of assessment indicated in the electronic register. Having completed studies of respective study year (not less than 60 ECTS), students are transferred to the next year of studies from September 1.

### **8.3. Providing students with feedback on their assessment and a guidance for requested improvement**

Every student can see only his own grades of assessments in the electronic study register. A student has the right to be familiarized with a detailed assessment of his work and receive explanations on the demerits and mistakes made. Explanation of assessment is organized within one day from the day of announcement of assessment results. Having observed inaccuracies, student may appeal to Dean’s Office.

During the semester, subject consultations are organized providing an opportunity for students to discuss with teacher own progression and other issues related with the subject studies.

### **8.4. Appealing procedures**

Policies for managing appeals against academic and progression decisions are transparent and available in the Regulation of the Studies of LSMU in Chapter IX, Section 8 and Chapter XII, Section 3. If the student does not agree with the assessment of the study achievements and its explanation provided by academic staff conducting the assessment or with the evaluation procedures, s/he is entitled to submit an appeal to Dean within one working day (in the case of interim assessment) or within two days (in the case of final subject evaluation). After reception of appeal, the appeal commission is formed following the procedure specified in the Regulation of the Studies of LSMU. The appeal commission shall be composed of 1/3 student representatives delegated by SU, 1/3 members of academic staff and 1/3 representatives of administration of the Faculty.

In the case of appeal regarding assessment of the Qualification exam or Graduation work, the appeal commission is constituted and approved in advance. The appeal is submitted to Rector within one day from the announcement of assessment. The appeal commission makes decisions by common agreement. It may make the following decisions: 1. No to satisfy the appeal and to leave the previous assessment; 2. To satisfy the appeal and to change the assessment; 3. To satisfy the appeal and to allow repeating the assessment; 4. To satisfy the appeal and to allow re-taking the exam or re-defending the master thesis. Decision is submitted to the appellant not later than in two workdays after the decision has been made. In the case of student’s disagreement with the decision, s/he has the right to appeal to the LSMU Commission of Dispute Settlement, Senate or Court of the RL.

### **8.5. Educational activities and teaching, learning and assessment methods**

The curriculum includes six types of educational activities: 1. Lectures; 2. Laboratory works; 3. Workshops; 4. Seminars; 5. Practical training; 6. Assignments/Project work.

Specific methodologies are used for assessing theoretical knowledge, pre-clinical, clinical and food safety practical skills. Assessment by any form means that the grade corresponds to the level of acquired knowledge and study achievements.

#### **Assessment of theoretical knowledge**

Theoretical knowledge is assessed according to acquire knowledge and understanding. Assessment forms for theoretical achievements are colloquium, test, case analysis, term paper, project (assessment scores for cumulative score) and final assessment.

The content of colloquium or test is chosen by subject teacher taking into account the scheduled concrete study achievements for subject term. The questions are designed to evaluate the expected achievements. The test may have the form of open questions, multiple-choice tests, case analysis, etc. The test is done in the written form or on computer.

The term paper is an assessment of theoretical study achievements which cannot be assessed in any other assessment form. The subject matter of term paper is chosen by the student after the start of subject studies and familiarization with its content. The themes of term papers are individual (they do not repeat in the group of students seeking for the same outcomes).

Evaluation content of colloquiums, tests and final verifications is uniform for all students seeking the same study outcome.

#### **Assessment of pre-clinical practical skills**

Pre-clinical practical skills are assessed by acquired skills, which conform to the content of subject studies. Study outcomes achieved during seminars are assessed as theoretical knowledge whereas outcomes achieved during laboratory works and practical training are viewed as reflecting the acquired competences. This principle is applied to all students.

Assessment forms are: defence of practical work, analysis of clinical case and final practical test. Defence of practical work may include a few study outcomes but not more than specified in the subject description about the competences for defence of practical work. Consistency of study outcomes and competences and their correlation with the theoretical knowledge serve as a basis for assessment design of practical work.

#### **Assessment of clinical practical skills**

Clinical practical skills are obtained via laboratory work, clinical rotation and practical clinical animal work performed under academic supervision at Small and Large Animal Clinics of FVM. Hands-on tasks also are performed during practical training at PTTC, laboratories, extra-mural practice sites and farms under the academic supervision.

To ensure that every graduate has achieved the minimum level of competences, as prescribed in the ESEVT Day One Competences, beginning with the third year of studies, every student fills in a personal Logbook of practical skills (thereafter Logbook). The procedures of filling Logbook and assessment design for acquired competences are specified in "Procedure of formation of Practical Skills of the Student in the Study Programme of VM". The design of the Logbook is based on the principle of interdisciplinary integration and excludes assessment of individual subjects. The volume of assessment embraces all practical competences acquired during all studied subjects. While developing practical skills, the student works hands-on together with veterinary surgeon and keeps records of acquired competences in the individual Logbook. The supervisor evaluate the student's acquired skills and confirms the grade with his signature. At the end of every academic year (3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>), students perform reflective analysis of clinical cases. The Mini Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) principle of formative assessment is applied. At the end of academic year, the final verification takes place during which acquired practical skills, specified in the outcomes of subject study, are evaluated.

Assessment of clinical practical competences obtained by extra-mural practice are specified in the "Procedure of Clinical Practice of the Student in the Study programme of VM" and its annexes. During the practical training, the students perform self-evaluation indicating evaluation of their obtained competences, amount of practical manipulations and self-support level of their performance and fill up the individual Practice Logbook registering patients and acquired competences. The supervisor on a weekly basis assesses the obtained competences. At the end of the practice, the supervisor assesses the outcomes of the practical training in scores. This assessment is a constituent part of overall assessment of practice.

Following completion of practical training, the students prepare written report and submit it together with the Practice Logbook to practice Coordinator. Students are assessed by the Practice Assessment Commission. Commission is composed of academic staff teaching clinical subjects and veterinary surgeons. The student presents acquired practical competences to Commission orally.

#### **Assessment of Qualification exam and Master thesis**

The description of evaluation of the Qualification examination provides for procedures of assessment of professional readiness and self-sufficiency levels, ability to apply special knowledge, and practical skills necessary for acquisition of veterinary surgeon qualification. The assessment of clinical competences is conducted based on the Miller's pyramid. The assessment is implemented by Qualification Assessment Commission. Commission includes members of academic staff and representatives of social partners veterinary surgeons practitioners.

During the public defence of the Master thesis, the students must demonstrate scientific and practical knowledge and skills, which are evaluated by Master thesis defence Commission, which also includes

members of academic staff and representatives of social partner's veterinary surgeons practitioners. The head of the Commission is veterinary surgeon from outside having PhD degree.

## **8.6. The process to review assessment outcomes**

Dean prepares a report on study outcomes assessment at the end of each semester. The report is discussed at the Council of FVM and LSMU Rectorate.

During Dean's annual report, the assessment outcomes are made public through meeting with members of Faculty community, students and representatives of administration. The reports include information about average grades, number and cause of academic failures and distribution curve of grades. Dynamic of changes of assessment outcomes of various subjects and through the study years (comparison of five last years) is introduced. In case if study results are inadequate, Dean organizes meetings with academic staff of respective subjects to find out the reasons for this and discuss how to improve the study process. At the meeting academic staff explains the subject assessment strategy. The causes of students' failure to fulfil the requirements for respective study subject are analyzed and recommendations are provided. First-year students encountering difficulties in studies may appeal to a tutor for academic support (more details in Chapter VII).

### **Comments**

There is a clear and objective strategy for the assessment of study outcomes at the FVM. A more comprehensive analysis of underlying reasons why some competences are achieved with difficulties and others with an ease would contribute to the progress of the assessment strategy.

### **Suggestions for improvement**

It is planned to continue to improving digital students assessments procedures enabling easy and transparent student's assessment as well as continuous self-assessment.

The implementation of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) throughout the whole curriculum would be completed for the assessment of Day One Competences;

## **IX. ACADEMIC AND SUPPORT STAFF**

### **Description of how and by who the strategy for allocating, recruiting, promoting, supporting and assessing academic and support staff is decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

Academic staff teaching in Veterinary Medicine study programme consist of 129.775 FTE teachers (including 70.75 FTE with academic degree), 27.75 FTE veterinary surgeons and 16.7 FTE researchers. The majority (81.75 FTE or 63.76 %) of the academic staff are persons with veterinary surgeon qualification. The support staff is composed of 69.25 FTE members. Members of academic staff from other University faculties (Animal Sciences, Medicine and Public Health) also are engaged in the VM study process.

### **9.1. The strategy for allocating, recruiting, promoting, supporting and assessing academic staff**

In order to create and implement an effective human resources management policy, quantitative and qualitative analyses of the current staff is continuously performed at the Faculty (for the general staff needs, for the needs of lecturers and researchers as well as the staff who assist in studies and for determining the composition, structure and qualifications of the staff). The most comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Faculty staff is carried out for the Dean's annual activity report which is approved by the FVM Council. In recent years, the number of FVM personnel has been stable. (See ESEVT Indicators Annexes 17 and 18).

Academic staff qualification assessment and analysis of educational competences also are implemented through students' surveys created by SQMIC, which are placed on LSMU SIS and which are filled by the students after completion of subject studies. The results are analysed at the SPC. Academic staff is familiarized with the results. Students' complaints about the academic staff are evaluated by SPC and recommendations are submitted to Dean. Dean takes measures to solve such issues. If necessary, the teacher is recommended to take appropriate educational subject courses. In case of permanently recurring problems, the employment contract may not be renewed or even be terminated.

### **Academic staff**

In order to ensure that employees' abilities, skills and knowledge are sufficient and appropriate to fulfill the strategic development of the FVM, the Faculty plans and implements recruitment of human resources in accordance with the Statute of the LSMU, Guidelines of Strategic Development, Labour Code of the RL, LHER RL, European Commission Recommendation on European Charter for Researchers and Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers (2005/251/EB) and Procedure of Competition Organization and Assessment for Teachers and Researchers at LSMU (thereafter - Procedure) and other legal acts.

For academic staff selection and recruitment, an open competition for the majority of teachers and research staff is announced according to the established Procedure which describes internal rules and regulations of LSMU provide for:

1. The requirements for different levels teaching staff and scientist with very precise fulfilment indicators: number of publications published in the editions of Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WOS) database, participations in the educational activities, number of teaching hours, research projects, received grants, etc.
2. Announcement, organization and implementation of competitions;
3. Routine and special assessment procedures;
4. Principles of constituting competition and assessment Committee and rules of procedure.

By the end of the first term of office, or in case of a vacancy, Rector on recommendation of the head of the Unit passes a resolution on the public competition for appropriate post. The announcements about the competition are published on the University website and in the University weekly newspaper Ave Vita.

At first, the selection of candidates for academic positions are discussed at the Unit. The selection of candidates for professor's or senior researcher's position is discussed at the LSMU Committee for Recruitment and Assessment of Professors and Senior Researchers (more details in Chapter I, Section 1.8). Associate professors, lecturers, assistants and researchers are considered at the VA Committee for Recruitment and Assessment of Teachers and Researchers (more details in Chapter I, Section 1.8). Committees inform Senate about their conclusions. Senate evaluates candidates and informs Rector about their conclusions.

Another part of academic staff is invited to work on fixed-term contracts for a period of no more than 2 years (lecturers- for the period of one study year).

According to the Statute of LSMU (clause 149), the recruitment of visiting academic staff is not subject to the appointment procedures established by the regulations. However, for short-term selection of employees (selected by the head of an academic Unit and Dean of Faculty), they must meet the qualification requirements set for the position specified in the University documents. A part of academic staff is employed to work under a fixed-term contract due to the changing number of students admitted and changes in the financing of the studies, as it would be extremely difficult for the University to provide all academic staff with positions for a 5-year term.

If there appears a vacancy and the teacher wishes to continue teacher's career and meets the competition requirements s/he must take part in the competition for appropriate post in compliance with the above-described procedures.

All academic staff employed in University is required to spend their working time for teaching and research. Head of FVM unit distributes structural parts of teacher's job following the Order of the MES of the RL (No V-2538, 2011-12-23) "On the Approval of Recommendations for University Teachers Working Hours Framework" and job description ensuring implementation of the study process and related activities and conditions for the academic staff to fulfil during the tenure the minimal requirements for competitive post.

The heads of the University, the deans of Faculties and heads of departments, clinics, etc. are appointed to work according to the procedure established by LSMU Statute and Senate Regulations (an open competition is announced). Dean and heads of the structural units of FVM must have qualification of veterinary surgeon and in their work follow the Code of Good Management Practices of LSMU (Senate resolution No 54-02, 2015-01-23).

Heads of administrative departments of the University and the Centres, their deputies and other employees are appointed by the Rector. The Staff Service complying with the Labour Code of the RL implements recruitment. The recruited person familiarizes with and signs the job qualification requirements.

Veterinary surgeons who have no permanent employment contract with the University conclude fixed-term contracts for implementation of students' external practice. Veterinary surgeons are reimbursed for their job and invited to participate in the Qualification Assessment Commission and Master theses defence Commission (in compliance with the Descriptor of the Study Field of Veterinary Medicine).

At present, two veterinary medicine diplomates – neurologist and parasitologist – work at the Faculty on a permanent basis. One person is still studying. In order to ensure as many diplomates lecturing specialists as

possible, the Faculty is implementing a project according to which next year three veterinary surgeons will be sent for European veterinary residency studies. Coordination of the contract is in progress.

### **Qualification extension of academic staff**

For achievement of the strategic goals, staff members develop their educational, scientific and practical competences. DTEC of LSMU monitor and improve educational competences, matching the global trends, of academic staff participating in the VM programme and support staff following the LSMU procedures for assurance of educational competences of academic staff. Improvement of educational competences is one of the criteria for assessment of academic staff. In five-year tenure, every person engaged in academic activity is entitled to complete at least 30 academic hours of educational competence courses for refreshment or acquisition of lacking competences.

Each member of academic staff executes a research work under the priority areas of FVM approved by the Senate (more details in Chapter X). Scientific activity and the number of scientific publications during 5 years is one of the critical indicators of attestation. Research and applied scientific activity improve academic staff professional qualification, create conditions to supplement instructed subjects with latest knowledge of science and practice, also endow students with skills of research.

Academic staff constantly improve their subject qualification looking for and studying novelties of research and technologies, they take part in the conferences, seminars, training sessions, qualification improvement courses, Erasmus+ exchange program. They themselves organize courses, publicise research articles, are able to communicate freely in at least one foreign language used for international co-operation. To this aim a special LSMU Open Fund was set up (Chapter II).

Licensed Veterinary surgeons-practitioners of FVM Animal Clinics taking part in the implementation of VM studies must improve their subject competences (professional knowledge and practical skills). Every veterinary surgeon is entitled to develop professional competence through at least 32 qualification extension hours every two years

<https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/legalAct.html?documentId=6dd5e360655c11e7b85cfdc787069b42>. Some training courses are obligatory for veterinary surgeons. Veterinary surgeons-practitioners working at the Faculty extend their professional qualification at foreign universities and clinics under the supervision of European specialists of veterinary medicine.

### **Support staff**

All members of the support staff have higher education. Mostly of them are veterinarians or animal science specialists. The support staff is employed following the Labour Code of the RL and Lithuanian Classification of Occupations (Official Gazette 2013, No 30-1492). A person is recruited after familiarization with and signing job description providing for obligation of qualification extension. All members of administration and support staff extend their qualification at seminars, special courses and other training events. Staff is instructed at regular intervals in topics of work safety, biosecurity, etc. The University organizes specialized training courses for support staff on a regular basis: Development of Communication Skills; Data Security. Ethics, and the Internet; Teamwork and Conflicts, etc.

### **Promotion of academic staff**

Persons who won the competition for the second professor's or associate professor's term of office may be awarded an respective academic rank. The academic rank may be awarded before the end of the first office term if the person fulfils the qualification requirements beforehand but not earlier than three years after the appointment to the post. Award of academic rank is discussed and resolution made by Senate on Rector's recommendation. Diplomas of academic ranks are delivered during a public celebratory ceremony.

Based on merits to the State of Lithuania and to the University, Senate may award the rank of Professor Emeritus to professors aged over 65 who occupied professor's position for more than 15 years and who were engaged in the educational and scientific activities for no less than 20 years.

Academic staff is stimulated by granting honorary ranks, public nominations and appreciation letters delivered during Faculty celebratory events. During the jubilees, celebrants receive nominations from social partner organizations – Ministry of Agriculture of the RL, SFVS, MES RL, etc. The Students' Council every year nominates the best teacher.

Academic staff are also stimulated by extra payments for best achievements in the occupied position (greater number of scientific publications, greater educational workload, higher generated income, etc.) and for participation in administrative activities as is framed in the job description. Five best FVM teachers in the field of agricultural sciences are awarded with extra pay from the LSMU Science Fund annually. Academic staff who fulfil administrative or management functions may have smaller workload and may be allocated a

premium for implementation of important and complex work. By resolution of University Council, the 13<sup>th</sup> salary is allocated to the all staff members at the end of every year.

### Comments

The total number, qualifications and skills of all employees involved in the implementation of VM study programme, are sufficient and appropriate to implement the VM study programme and fulfil the Faculty's mission.

Assessments of academic staff of the FVM every 5 years (veterinary surgeons every 2 years in the SFVS) to check conformity with qualification requirements helps to ensure the educational, scientific and practical improvement. The competitions and assessments of academic staff are implemented following the principles of expedience, publicity, transparency, impartiality, non-discrimination, objectivity, equality, competence attraction, quality, respect for human dignity, and life-long learning principles. This ensures the appropriate quality of teaching, research and veterinary practice, motivates integration of studies, scientific and practical activities and stimulates creative activity of employees.

In 2018, ranking data of Lithuanian universities showed that according to qualification of academic staff and researchers the LSMU was recognized as one of the strongest educational-scientific establishments in Lithuania. However, despite this fact high dependency on studies funding according to number of students restricts opportunities to attract of the most talented young people to seek academic, research and practical career at University.

Preparation of procedures for recruitment of support staff and system of competences development at the University is in progress.

### Suggestions for improvement

It is necessary to ensure the continuous training of the academic staff (in particular of veterinary surgeons specialisation).

## X. RESEARCH PROGRAMMES, CONTINUING AND POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION

**Description of how and by who research, continuing and postgraduate education programmes organised by the Establishment are decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised**

### 10.1. Research Activities of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine

In 2017, following the LSMU and FVM Strategic Development Guidelines, by Senate decision No 96-08, 2017-12-22 the new priority research areas of agricultural sciences were approved (**Fig. 4**). Veterinary research field according to classification of research fields and branches in Lithuania is assigned to agricultural sciences.

The approved research priorities combine vertical and horizontal integration of both Veterinary Medicine and Animal Husbandry faculties and Animal Science institute under umbrella approach "ONE HEALTH". This approach enables to consolidate the existing research potential in both Medical and Veterinary Academies of the University, closely connecting human and animal health and considering the fact that environmental changes are also affected by animal husbandry and have a significant impact on human and ecosystem health at the end.

The research priorities of the FVM were designed using a bottom-up approach: discussions at a Faculty unit level before vertical approval up to the Senate of the University. There are 3 approved vertical research priorities of equal importance (**Fig. 4**) which represent Veterinary Faculty and its specificity in the Agricultural (Veterinary) Sciences.

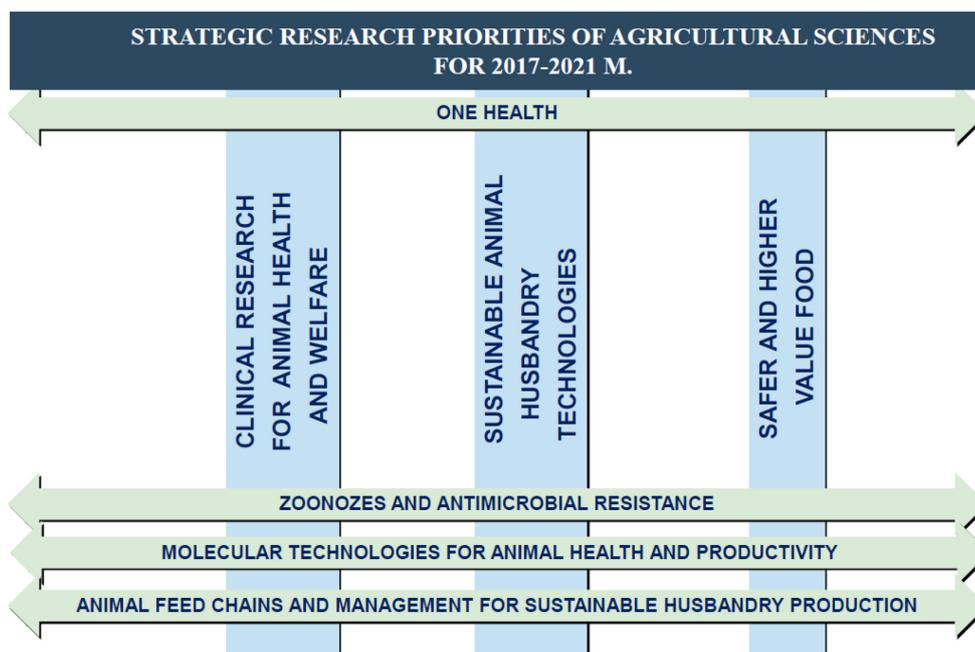
The development of research at a unit level is organized and implemented through the horizontal keystones which are considered as essential for joint research activities within VA units with focus on: 1. ZOONOSES and antimicrobial resistance, 2. MOLECULAR technologies for animal health and productivity and 3. ANIMAL feed chains and management for sustainable animal husbandry production.

The developed and approved research priorities are in line and reflects the Lithuanian Programme on the Implementation of the Priority Areas of Research and (Socio-Cultural) Development and Innovation (further Smart Specialisation) and their Priorities which were approved on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April, 2014 by the Resolution No 411 of the Government of the RL. The vertical and horizontal priorities reflects the studies carried out by the FVM – Veterinary Medicine, Food Science and Food Safety. The research complements to the quality of studies and helps to attract the most promising students to the research field. The research priorities needed

to maintain and enhance the growth of the agricultural sector. The implementation of research priorities enable us to achieve our main strategic goals: to become visible regional and international leader in Veterinary Sciences through successful competition for external funding and the development of critical mass of excellent research staff; to increase relationships and collaborations with leading international research institutions through joint research grants and bilateral cooperation and to transform our research potential to impact and stimulate positively on the agricultural sector and economy, industry and society in general.

The internal and external monitoring of scientific activities is implemented at all levels. The achievements are generalized and conclusions are included in the annual reports of FVM units and Dean's. The Dean's report (the internal system for evaluation of research activities) includes analysis of scientific production during the reporting cycle (absolute number of publications, share of input of the Faculty authors, indices per one researcher's position, scientific projects, number of permanent and temporary researches, quality of PhD studies, etc.), which reflects the implementation of strategic plan of the Faculty. The annual achieved outcomes of the Faculty are included in the annual LSMU report.

Every five years, a comparative expert Scientific Research and Experimental Development (MTEP) evaluation takes place in Lithuania. International experts implement the evaluation on request of MOSTA. Evaluation is based on three key criteria: assessing the quality of R&D, assessing economic and social impact of R&D activities, and assessing the potential of R&D activities. Beginning with 2019, the evaluation results will be used in budgeting the MTEP national science and studies establishments. The Comparative expert assessment of research and development organised by the MOSTA was carried out by the international experts in 2018 and revealed the research potential of FVM. Outcomes of the assessment: The quality of R&D activities – 3 (good); The economic and social impact of R&D activities – 3 (good); Development potential of FVM – 5 (excellent).



**Fig. 4. Strategic research priority areas of Agricultural Sciences of LSMU (2017-2021)**

## 10.2. Student involvement in research activities

From the first year of studies, students are involved in research activities compulsorily and electively. In October 2015, an internal survey was carried out for information about students' demand for evidence-based medicine (EBM) studies. The number of respondents amounted to 429 including 7 % of FVM students. A positive response to the question whether respondents lack the knowledge about EBM and the ways of its application accounted for 84.1 %. 91.4 % of respondents pointed out that it would be expedient to integrate EBM into the study process. In 2017, LSMU established Evidence-based Medicine Centre and has organized theoretical and practical teaching. A representative of academic staff of FVM represents the Faculty in the Centre Council. EBM lectures were included into the curriculum of the first and third-year VM students. Training courses have been organized solely for residents and PhD students of VM.

Introduction to Studies and Information Technology (5 ECTS) is a compulsory subject for the first-year VM students. It presents an opportunity to familiarize with the library rules and databases of scientific literature. Biomathematics and statistics (3 ECTS) is a compulsory subject for the second-year students. Elective subject Methodology of Scientific Research (3 ECTS) is offered for fourth-year students. VM students begin working on their Master thesis in the 9<sup>th</sup> semester. Following the Descriptor of the study field of Veterinary Medicine, the Master thesis is given no less 15 ECTS. The procedure of preparation of Master thesis is formulated in “Procedure of preparation, defence and evaluation of Master thesis of the study programme of Veterinary Medicine”. Students perform individual research and applied investigations, generalize them and analyse scientific literature on chosen topic. Students are given access to facilities and equipment of departments, clinics, specialized experimental laboratories, and open access centres necessary for preparation of the Master thesis. Supervisors, who help to choose the research topic and coordinate the research work, supervise the preparation of Master thesis. One and half ECTS are given to lectures about the structure of research work, rules of thesis preparation, accumulation and use of scientific information, rules how to make a research presentation and writing scientific articles. Master thesis are placed on eLABa and checked for plagiarism.

Students are encouraged to participate in research through engagement in the activities of Students' Scientific Society (SSS) of LSMU. At present, Society includes 49 groups of different areas of science. The group of Veterinary Medicine has 61 VM student. Students carry out investigations, present the accomplished works, prepare publications, hear lectures of advanced researchers, participate at national and international student conferences, and give presentations. A publication of students' scientific researches is issued every year. Though SSS activity is not compulsory they are free to join it. For membership in SSS, students receive extra scores entering PhD studies and residency.

LSMU BIC annually organizes optional training for students in order to improve their skills of bibliographic browsing and use of references in research and clinical practice. The University organizes seminars, for instance How to write a World Class Scientific Paper and recognizes the need for devoting more attention to preparing students for academic career, knowing that a significant aspect of this career includes publishing scientific papers.

### **10.3. Postgraduate degree programmes: PhD programme**

#### **Monitoring of the PhD programme**

LSMU graduates have an opportunity to start the PhD studies. Permission to provide PhD programme in Veterinary research was granted by the MES of RL on June 11, 2011, revised and extended on August 28, 2017. PhD programme in Veterinary research field are organized following the Regulation on Doctoral Degree (Order by Ministry of Education and Science No V-149, 2017-03-08) and Regulation of LSMU on Doctoral Degree in Agricultural Research Area (2017-05-19, No 90-1). The generalized order of LSMU PhD studies organization is given in Annex 20.

The number of positions for PhD programmes is set by MES of RL. In the last 5 years, three positions per year for PhD programme in Veterinary research field were allocated. It should be pointed out that active researchers also have an opportunity to apply for EU funded positions for PhD programmes. LMT conducts an expert evaluation of these applications. In 2017-2018, six places were allocated for FVM. At present, Faculty has 31 PhD student.

PhD students are admitted by open competition, which is described in LSMU Admission rules for the current year. The selection criteria are as follows: outcomes of higher education qualification studies, evaluation of the interview at the University Doctoral Admission Commission (more details in Chapter I, Section 1.8), importance of published scientific papers, opinion of head of unit and foreseen principal supervisor about the applicant (given in the recommendations), expertise in the prospected research field of the candidate.

Every year, the PhD student's progress are assessed within the appropriate unit and by Doctoral Committee. Appeals and complaints can be submitted to as to the PhD programme are settled consistent with the order formulated in the Regulation of Doctoral Degree. All other disputes related with the PhD programme study process are resolved in compliance with dispute resolution and arbitration procedures.

The PhD student may apply for financial support to LSMU Science Foundation, which annually allocates financial support for scientific research of PhD students by competition (in 2017, 10 PhD students of FVM received support) and for covering the article publication fees, announces a competition for the best PhD student of the year. Most active and productive PhD students are awarded premiums.

The LSMU Open Fund renders annual financial support to PhD students for PhD traineeship abroad, participation at scientific events and presentation of research results. During the PhD programme, the students may engage in pedagogical activity (at FTE of 0.25 - 0.5).

Since 2013, annual internal assessment of the quality of PhD programme has been taking place using the approved anonymous questionnaires. The survey results are published on the LSMU website. In 2017, the experts from the LMT positively assessed the quality and efficiency of PhD programme in Veterinary research

The efficiency and weak points of PhD programme are annually analysed. It should be pointed out that the final effectiveness rate of PhD programme are assessed after completion of PhD programme by all graduates. This process takes some time due to academic leaves related with childbirth or childcare and sickness. For this reason, the outcomes of the previous year are revised for the annual activity report. Generalization of the results of graduates of PhD programme in the last four years show that the process of studies is streamlined and efficient: the percentage ratio of postgraduates of PhD programme and those who defended doctoral dissertations is 87,7 %. FVM puts effort to employ the graduates of PhD studies at the Faculty.

#### **10.4. Postgraduate degree programmes: Veterinary Medicine Residency Studies**

##### **Development of a new and monitoring of the existing residency programmes**

Taking into consideration an increasing demand for veterinary surgeons with practical specialization, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania passed a decision in 2006 by which the FVM was given the right to implement Veterinary Medicine Residency (VMR) studies. VMR studies bear applied character, are oriented toward practical activity and development of the skills of specific practical work and grant professional veterinary specialization. The training in VMR and certificate are of national category. The FVM at present has 25 residency students.

FVM provides 16 postgraduate veterinary residency programmes (Annex 21) that complement and strengthen the VM degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society. The curriculum of VMR programme consists of 132 ECTS including 25 % for theoretical part and 75 % for practice. The curriculum of each VMR programme is developed in such a way as to provide a respective specialization of Veterinary Medicine.

Development of new residency programmes and annual planning of places of residency take place after evaluation of country's demand for specialists and their opportunities of employment, demands of SFVS and other enterprises and associations, available or prospected learning resources, etc. The intention to develop a new residency study programme may be initiated by University Rector, Dean and Units of the Faculty. The new residency study programme is developed in compliance with the requirements for residency study programmes framed in the legal acts of the Republic of Lithuania.

The programmes of VM residency were designed using a bottom-up approach: discussions at a Faculty level, approval up to the Senate of the University before accreditation of SKVC.

After accreditation the programme is registered in the Register of Study and Learning Programmes and Qualifications. At any stage, the programme may be returned to the starting level for correction.

VMR studies carried out in accordance with the general procedures for the implementation of VMR studies framed by decision of the RL Government in "Procedure of Veterinary medicine Residency implementation requirements and supervision" (2018-03-14, No 248) and under the "Regulation of LSMU Residency Studies" prepared in compliance with LHER RL and approved by the Senate of the University. Postgraduate Studies Centre (PGSC) of LSMU is responsible for organization of postgraduate and continuing studies at University. For the coordination of the VMR studies there is Coordinator (veterinarian of FVM) appointed.

Residency study programmes are monitored annually, revised or renewed (partially or completely) by Residency Commission (Chapter I, Section 1.8). Partial renewal of the study programme is implemented after annual assessment or at other frequency set by Residency Committee (Chapter I, Section 1.8) taking into consideration the assessment results and recommendations of social partners and residents. Residency Council, Faculty units, Residency Committee or Commission and administration may initiate the unplanned renewal of residency study programme. The updated programme is considered and discussed following the same procedure as with the new programme. The updated programme is implemented beginning with the new academic year. The decisions are announced on the University website.

##### **Demand for residency places and admission to VMR programme**

The demand for residency places is evaluated by SFVS, which, after coordination with the FVM, send advises to the MES of the RL. The latter, in its turn, allocates the number of places for residency studies.

The University announces admission to residency studies on its website and in weekly newspaper Ave Vita. Admission Procedures every year approved by Senate secure transparent admission of new students.

Residency Committee organizes admission to residency studies and resolves all issues framed in the regulations. Admission is implemented by competition through general admission LAMA BPO (<http://www.rezidentura.lt>). Applications are submitted online. The application may include a list of six preferences. The selection criteria are evaluation of motivation, average score, and score of the Qualification exam or Master thesis (depending on the year of graduation). For admission to VMR, candidates must hold master's degree and qualification of veterinary surgeon and valid license of veterinary practitioner.

The motivation interview is organized following the procedure set by decision of LSMU Senate. By Rector's order, Motivation Commissions are formed for every individual programme. A representative of residents delegated by Residency Council is included into the Motivation Commission as an observer. Academic staff evaluating motivation take special course organized by DTEC.

After the announcement of interview results, one day is allocated for submission and settling of appeals. Admission of a candidate to residency studies is formalized by Rector's order.

Residency is implemented under supervision of university academic staff/veterinary surgeon with at least 5-years working experience in the field of veterinary practice, which corresponds with the resident's target veterinary medicine practice specialization.

Having fulfilled the residency programme, a resident must take examination and is assessed by the Veterinary Specialisation Assessment Commission, which is formed for every programme and is composed of three teachers/veterinary surgeons and two representatives of social partners. A representative of residents delegated by Residency Council is included into the Commission as an observer.

## 10.5. Continuing education

Organization and implementation of professional qualification extension for VM specialists is regulated by LSMU Regulation of Continuing Education (2014-06-20, No 47-23). FVM units implement continuing studies by organizing courses, seminars, practices, and scientific-practical conferences. PGSC administrates the implementation processes. VM continuing education programmes are developed by order of SFVS Director, on initiative of FVM units or on recommendations of SFVS or other establishments. The programme is discussed and approved by FVM Council and harmonised with SFVS and/or Associations of Veterinary Surgeons of Lithuania (LVGA). The approved and coordinated continuing professional education programmes are registered at the LSMU information system Medas ([www.medas.lt](http://www.medas.lt)). Applications for continuing education are submitted online. At present, the Faculty organizes 10 continuing education programmes.

After fulfilment of the programme, an anonymous survey of listeners is carried out. The results are analysed and evaluated by the organizing unit and PGSC. Taking into account the recommendations, programme organization or content the quality of programme is improved or programme is renewed. The Faculty holds scientific-practical conferences for veterinarians and other interested persons. Large Animal Clinic organizes different one-off practical seminars.

FVM teaching staff take an active part in the project and educational activities designed for dissemination of scientific knowledge and innovations implemented by the Centre for Continuous Education and Consulting in Veterinary Science of LSMU. The information about the ongoing projects is placed on the website of the Ministry of Agriculture and in press. Reports on project implementation and recommendations are prepared for contracting authorities.

FVM teaching staff lecture at training courses organized by the Centre for farmers, cattle inseminators, animal transporters, and employees of slaughterhouses and milk processing enterprises.

## Comments

High quality of research, reflected by increase of the number of scientific publications and increasing citation levels of published scientific articles, is one of the main priorities of the Faculty. However, research carried out at the Faculty is not well-internationally recognized so far. Therefore, quality and internationalization of the research should be increased.

PhD, residency and continuing education programmes strengthen the FVM and veterinary degree programme and are relevant to the needs of the profession and society. Every year employment rate (%) of PhD holders is analysed. However, overall average of persons who obtain PhD degree and remain to develop their academic and scientific carrier at University is around 55 % only.

## Suggestions for improvement

- To enhance planning and employment of PhD graduates at the Faculty what would allow consistent planning of natural rotation of the academic staff and offer an opportunity for scientific career at the Faculty.
- To increase the number of international contacts and projects, and seek to take a leading role in some of them.
- In cooperation with SFVS and Government of RL, to pursue the change the legal status of VM residency and its validation in the Law on Veterinary Activities as indicated in Official Gazette 2010-12-18, No 148-7563.

## XI. OUTCOME ASSESSMENT AND QUALITY ASSURANCE

### Description of how and by who the QA strategy of the Establishment is decided, communicated to staff, students and stakeholders, implemented, assessed and revised

#### 11.1. Fundamental principles of Quality assurance in the study process

FVM in the frame of general quality assurance system apply the following fundamental principles of Quality assurance in the study process:

- Involvement of students and social partners into the decision making process;
- Evidence based decisions using data obtained from the study process;
- Feedback from and to academic community on results of quality assessment and continuous improvement results.

Three basic components related to the study process are used to implement aforementioned principles:

- Well performing study programme;
- Well performed facilities and equipment;
- Assurance of the competence of academic staff;
- Student orientated study process;

Quality principles and components are published at the University website, page Quality assurance LT version: <http://www.lsmuni.lt/lt/veikla/kokybes-uztikrinimas/> and EN version:

<http://www.lsmuni.lt/en/activities/quality-assurance/components-and-principles-of-quality-assurance/>.

FVM follows internal quality assurance system and participate in external quality surveillance, which is provided by accreditation of the institution in whole and each study programme by the national quality assurance agency SKVC (<http://www.skvc.lt>). Study programme Veterinary Medicine hold full accreditation status from SKVC.

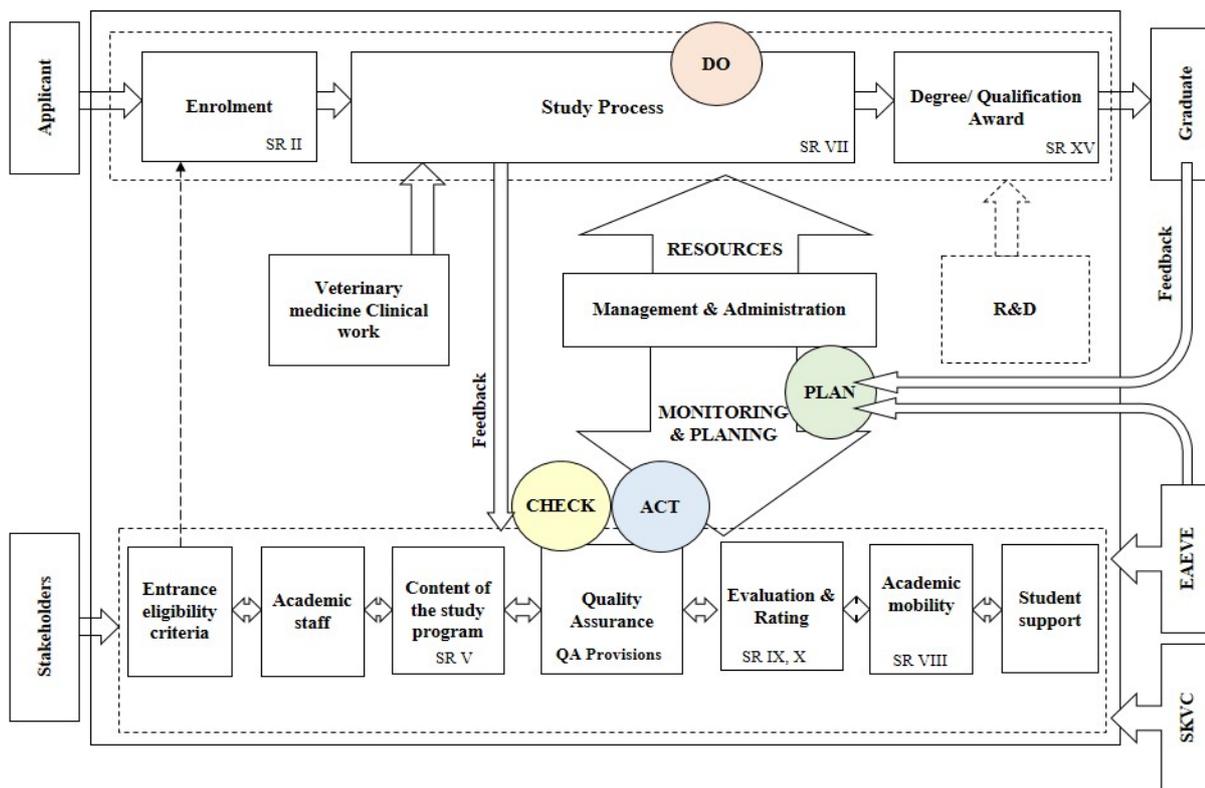
#### 11.2. Processes

The basic provisions on quality assurance are formalised and documented in the “Provisions of Assurance of Study Quality in the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences”, (Resolution of the Senate of LSMU No 17-01, 2012-01-20). By this document, the key responsibility for coordination of the quality assurance in studies is delegated to:

- Commission for Study Quality Monitoring and Assurance, at the University level;
- Faculty dean, at the Faculty level;
- Study Programme Committee, at the level of Veterinary Medicine programme.

The detailed procedures implementing provisions of quality assurance into the study process are defined by “Regulation of the Studies of LSMU” which implements the principles of ESG2015 into the study process <http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/14695/studyregulation2017.pdf> . Operational process diagram (Fig. 5) is shown below including continuous improvement cycle.

Degree and qualification in Veterinary Medicine provided by the University strictly conform “Description of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework” (approved by the Decision No 535 of Lithuanian Government 2010-05-04) which is in line with the European Qualifications Framework. Conformance to “Description of the Lithuanian Qualifications Framework” is periodically verified by external evaluation of study programmes. SPC is committed acts a key body in curriculum design and development (refer to 1.8, 3.2-3.6 of SER for detailed description of functions of the SPC). Study Programme Committee by default involves representatives from social partners (students and employers).



**Fig. 5. Operational process diagram of the VM studies** (SR – Regulation of the Studies of LSMU)

### 11.3. “Life cycle” of the student

Full “life cycle” of the student is covered by the Regulation of the Studies of LSMU (Chapters II, VII and XV of SR). Graduates are involved to University and FVM activities through participation in various internal management bodies and Commissions and Alumni Association. FVM tracks its graduates’ careers in the extent allowed by personal data protection laws.

### 11.4. Student orientated teaching

FVM is implementing the student orientated teaching model which is executed by implementing following key principles of the European Higher Education Area:

1. Implementation of student orientated teaching methods;
2. Objective evaluation of student achievements according to defined learning outcomes which also reflect perspectives of future careers.

#### **1. Implementation of student orientated teaching methods is introduced by:**

- 1.1. Variety of teaching methods allowed/offered by Regulation of the Studies of LSMU (Chapter V of SR) which are under the free choice for academic staff;
- 1.2. Academic staff training in development of flexible and efficient methods for presentation of their materials in the teaching process.
- 1.3. Assuring certain amount of time for independent work of students during studies of the subject, providing proper tasks and academic staff support during independent work, regulated amount of lecturing hours in the benefit of practical classes (Regulation of the Studies of LSMU Chapter V, Section 4 and Chapter VII Section 5), “Descriptor of the study field of Veterinary Medicine” (Order of Minister of MES of RL No V-795, 2015-07-23) and “General Requirements of the implementation of Study Programmes” (Order of Director of SKVC No V-1168, 2016-12-30);
- 1.4. Cooperation and mutual respect between the student and academic staff (Code of Ethics of LSMU Resolution of Senate of LSMU No 38-07, 2013-11-22);
- 1.5. Collecting feedback from students in formal or informal way and using it for process development.

## **2. Objective evaluation of student achievements is facilitated by:**

- 2.1. Continuous improvement of evaluation competences of academic staff (e.g. internal courses/seminars provided by DTEC, external training possibilities) (more detailed information see in Chapter IX of SER);
- 2.2. Defined procedure of evaluations of student achievements (Regulation of the Studies of LSMU Chapter IX), which require that criteria for evaluation are in-line with mandatory study results defined in the subject description;
- 2.3. Variety of achievement evaluation schemas to grade to student performance and appropriate training of academic staff;
- 2.4. Approved procedure of appeals due noncompliance in evaluation results or procedure (Regulation of the Studies of LSMU Chapter IX Section 8);
- 2.5. Surveys of summarised evaluation results and sharing them between faculties after each semester.

### **Implementation of student orientated teaching model is coordinated:**

- At the Faculty level – by the Study Programme Committee;
- Centrally – by the Commission for Study Quality Monitoring and Assurance.

## **11.5. Resources**

**Quality of the teaching staff.** Qualification criteria and ranking for teaching positions are set in the “Principles for the selection and assessment of the staff” (Resolution of the Senate No 19-09, 2012-03-29) and “Procedure of Competition Organization and Assessment for Teachers and Researchers at LSMU” (Resolution of the Senate No 105-05, the newest version dated 2018-09-21). Departments participate in the selection of the academic staff by defining the list of obligatory competences for the academic position and some selection criteria. The selection process flow is according to procedure above. More information on practical aspects of the implementation of link between teaching process and academic and support staff assurance process also competence assurance of existing staff is presented in the Chapter IX of SER.

**Funding the teaching process.** Funding of FVM is allocated annually following internal rules of the distribution of the basic University budget. FVM dean is involved in to the planning in order to assure necessary amount of funding for operational activities and development. For the detailed procedure of allocation of funds see Chapter II of SER.

**Animal resources and teaching material of animal origin.** Teaching process is tightly connected with clinical work process in Small and Large Animal Clinics. Necessary animal resources are provided as a result of the clinical work process to teaching process. The link between both processes is assured involving heads and representatives of both clinics and Centre of Pathology as members of the SPC of the Veterinary Medicine programme, thus making them directly involved to the planning of changes and improvements within the programme and keeping motivated to plan the development of the clinical work accordingly. In some extent clinical work process serves as one of provider of dead animals to preclinical studies (detailed information see on Chapter V of SER).

**Learning resources, R&D, continuing education.** The link between teaching process and R&D process is assured by involving the academic staff and students to the research process in parallel to the teaching and training activity (detailed information see on Chapter X of SER). Each member of academic staff is obligated to generate scientific results and part of the working time is allocated for this activity in the planning of their working hours. See more in the clause “Quality of the teaching staff” of this chapter. Access to learning resources (library, IT, etc.) is regulated by the rules and procedures for appropriate departments. They are improved implementing the operational plans of strategic guidelines where one of the aspects is the need of the Study process.

## **11.6. Collection of data and evidence based decisions**

University collects feedback from students and employers which is later transformed to the data used for decisions. Feedback is collected at various levels (central, faculty/department (SPC) or individual teacher) and consequently used for planning of process improvement. Data collection is regulated by “Procedure for Surveying the Opinions of Students, Teachers and Social Partners (Employers) of the LSMU” approved by the resolution No 19 – 04 of the Senate of LSMU in 29 March 2012. The “Procedure for Organising the Surveys of Graduates and Social Partners of the LSMU”, approved by order of the Rector No V-962, 7 October 2013, defines the process for data collection.

Data from surveys is used by the Study Programme Committee of FVM for planning of changes and improvements in the curriculum or operational documents. Periodical surveys to determine satisfaction with learning resources are conducted by Library and Student Union.

### **11.7. Communication**

University website is used as a key tool to communication information to academic community and other interested parties including prospective students. A page Quality Assurance <http://www.lsmuni.lt/en/activities/quality-assurance/components-and-principles-of-quality-assurance/> (En), (<http://www.lsmuni.lt/lt/veikla/kokybes-uztikrinimas/>) (Lt) links to:

1. General principles of quality assurance;
2. Operational documents;
3. Results of evaluation of quality of study process;
4. Accredited study programmes including external evaluation reports.

The feedback from the academic community is received by surveys and involvement of students and academic staff to all committees and commissions where they represent a defined part of academic community.

### **11.8. Programme review and continuous improvement**

Studies Programme Committee is obligated to perform programme reviews and run the cycle of continuous improvement according to the approved “Procedure for the Development, Improvement and Management of Study Programmes at the LSMU” (Resolution of the Senate No 21-12, 2012-05-30). The detailed explanation of the activity of SPC and continuous improvement of the programme of VM is presented in the Chapter I, Section 1.8 and Chapter III of SER.

### **11.9. External quality assurance**

External quality assurance is based on period evaluation and accreditation of the programme by SKVC (the national quality assurance agency) and peer evaluations by EAEVE. National evaluation (accreditation of the programme) is in line with ESG2015 and uses principles established by ENQA (Part 2: Standards and guidelines for external quality assurance of ESG2015). SKVC has been accredited by ENQA since 2012 (membership reconfirmed 21 June 2017). Evaluation results are announced in the pages Quality Assurance <http://www.lsmuni.lt/lt/veikla/kokybes-uztikrinimas/> and FVM <http://www.lsmuni.lt/en/structure/veterinary-academy/faculty-of-veterinary-medicine--/about-faculty/>. In addition, University passed institutional accreditation provided by SKVC in 2012 and got a positive evaluation [http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/5051/lsmuveiklosvertinimoivados\\_anglk.pdf](http://www.lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/5051/lsmuveiklosvertinimoivados_anglk.pdf).

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