MOKSLAS · EKONOMIKA · SANGLAUDA

Kuriame Lietuvos ateitį

EUROPOS SĄJUNGA
EUROPOS SOCIALINIS FONDAS

QUALITY GUIDE

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Date: 31-08-2023	Date: 31-08-2023

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INTRODUCTION

Kazimieras Simonavicius University (hereinafter referred to as the University or KSU) is a non-state research and study institution with the legal status of a private joint stock company. The main legal documents regulating the activities of KSU are the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, the Law on Science and Studies of the Republic of Lithuania and the Statute of KSU.

The main goal of the University is to organise and conduct bachelor (first cycle), master (second cycle) and doctoral (third cycle) full-time, integrated and part-time studies, and training in the fields of social sciences, humanities, arts, physical sciences, and technology sciences, and their intersections, as determined by the University's Council, as well as training of professionals and researchers, and to carry out scientific research and application of the results of scientific research.

In order to provide high quality studies, KSU has developed, implemented, and continuously improves its quality management system which is based on the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and the requirements of the quality management standard ISO 9001.

KSU's quality management system rests on a process approach, focusing on improving efficiency and effectiveness, as well as meeting the needs of stakeholders.

In implementing its quality management system, the University follows the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2015), as well as good practice of quality management in other higher education institutions.

This _Quality Guide_ is the University's quality management system document describing the University's quality management system in accordance with the requirements of the standard LST EN ISO 9001:2015. The system is aligned with the University's strategy and the provisions of the key governing legal documents.

The _Quality Guide_ is the responsibility of the Management Representative for Quality who keeps the original of this document and maintains the records relating to any changes thereof. Suggestions and comments on the improvement of the _Quality Guide_ are discussed at least once a year by a working group whose composition is determined by the MRQ.

The _Quality Guide_ shall enter into force on the date of its approval by the Rector of the University.

1. GENERAL PART OF THE QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

1.1. Scope and implementation principles of the quality management system

The requirements of the quality management system apply to all the structural and functional units of KSU and cover the planning and organisation of study and research activities.

The aim of the University is to ensure the training of marketable and skilled professionals who can compete in the local and global labour market.

The quality management system of KSU does not cover the requirement of clause 7.1.5. (Monitoring and Measurement Resources) of standard ISO 9001:2015, as no measurement equipment is used to ensure quality.

The quality management system at the University is implemented based on the following principles:

– attention to clients, employees, and other stakeholders;

– the process approach to performance;

– continuous performance improvement through a four-step process (PDCA cycle: plan, do, check, act);

– socially responsible approach to the University's mission, activity, and business.

1.2. Terms, definitions and abbreviations

ABBREVIATIONS	EXPLANATIONS
RoL	Republic of Lithuania
EU	European Union
LST	Lithuanian standard
EN	European Norm
ISO	International Standardisation Organization
University	Kazimieras Simonavicius University
KSU	Kazimieras Simonavicius University
SKVC	Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education
ŠMSM	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
MRQ	Management Representative for Quality
Clients	Students, public, employers
QM	Quality Manual
QMS	Quality Management System
MR	Management Review

Non-compliance means a deviation from the requirements set out in working procedures, orders, legislation, or work rules.

Nonconforming product means a product that does not meet the requirements of the organisation's activity.

Process means any activity or set of activities that uses resources and is managed to produce a product.

Process owner means the University employee responsible for managing and planning of the process assigned, achieving the estimated indicators, and improving the process.

Indicators mean the data that reflects the quality of the process functioning.

1.3. References

EFQM Excellence Model - the European Foundation for Quality Management's excellence model;

LST EN ISO 9001: 2015 - Requirements for the Quality Management System;

ESG - Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area.

1.4. Quality management system documents

KSU's quality management documentation includes:

– *Quality Guide* - a description of how the quality management system and its requirements interact;

– Quality Policy and Objectives - documents defining the University's guidelines and objectives for quality improvement.

– Documented procedure/process description - a document that specifies the procedure for carrying out any activity in order to achieve a defined objective. They specify the actions to be taken, responsibilities and records to be used.

– Data record - a document that provides objective evidence of the work performed, results achieved or identified by the organisation as necessary to ensure the effective planning and management of the quality management system.

Quality Guide is one of the main management system documents that explains how the requirements of standard ISO 9001 are implemented at the University, and provides references to procedures and other documents defining processes, responsibilities, and authorities.

Quality Guide is intended to inform clients, staff, and stakeholders about the quality management system in place at the University.

The validity of the *Quality Guide* is confirmed by the order of *the Rector* of the University.

The date of entry into force and the version of the *Quality Guide* are indicated on the cover sheet.

Management Representative for Quality is responsible for the supervision and improvement of the *Quality Guide*. *Quality Guide* is reviewed and, if necessary, updated at least once a year.

All the quality management processes are continuously monitored and analysed, and actions are identified for continuous improvement.

Document and record management

The procedure for preparation and management of the University's quality management system documents is described in the *Procedure for Managing Quality Management System Documents and Records (P16).* This document sets out the requirements for preparation, filing, management and record-keeping of quality management system documents relating to the activities of the University, which apply to written and equivalent documents, regardless of the method or medium of preparation.

Head of Administration is responsible for preparation, review, improvement, recording, validation, storage and traceability of the University's documents and records.

The following quality management system processes are defined in the procedure descriptions:

Management's activity

– P1 Monitoring the formulation, dissemination, and implementation of the Strategy;

– P2 Finance management;

Key processes

– P3 Development, approval, and improvement of study programmes;

– P4 Internal monitoring and evaluation of the quality of study programmes;

– P5 External evaluation and accreditation of programmes;

– P6 Organisation and implementation of the study process;

– P7 Process of student affairs management;

– P8 Career planning, monitoring and alumni relations management;

– P9 Research management;

– P10 International relations management;

Supporting processes

– P11 Communication and public relations management;

– P12 Staff management;

– P13 Procurement and infrastructure management;

– P14 Internal audit;

– P15 Management of improvement actions;

– P16 Management of QMS documents and records;

– P17 Information system and data security management;

– P18 Project management.

2. COMMITMENTS OF THE KSU MANAGEMENT

2.1 Management activity

Activity of the managers (leadership) involves the actions of the leaders, aimed at setting the direction of the University's mission, vision and values. The activities of the leaders reflect the values of the University and create a culture of quality.

In line with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, KSU management is developing a modern and competitive University, focused on the needs of students and other stakeholders. This is carried out through surveys and in the light of the market situation.

KSU stakeholders may be individuals, groups or organisations that influence KSU's activities by participating in its processes or have an interest in the University's performance, therefore identifying, balancing and being able to meet the requirements of stakeholders determine the long-term success of the University.

KSU stakeholders:

– students;

– graduates;

– employers and businesses;

– lecturers;

– researchers;

– administrative staff;

– social partners;

– public authorities and other institutions.

The expectations and requirements of stakeholders are defined in the University's normative documents (Statute, Strategy), contracts (cooperation, purchase of products or services, employment, etc.) as well as laws and regulations.

The management of the University is open to cooperation and involvement of all the stakeholders in improving the University's activities and achieving common goals. In its relations with the University's stakeholders, the management aims at ensuring ethical, transparent, and responsible operations, including compliance with ethical standards, social interests, and environmental protection requirements. Communication and partnership with stakeholders are based on the principles of social responsibility:

– Responsibility - for the impact on society, the economy, and the environment;

– Transparency - of the decisions and activities that have an impact on society and the environment;

– Ethical business behaviour - commitment to clients, reputation;

– Respect for stakeholder interests;

– Respect for the law - compliance with and recognition of legal requirements;

– Adherence to international standards of behaviour - respect for internationally recognised agreements and declarations;

– Engaging communities - recognising their importance and universality.

Quality policy

Quality Policy is made publicly available to students and stakeholders to promote the pursuit of quality and quality services. The publicly disclosed quality policy helps the public to gain confidence in the University's services and to see its direction in delivering services. More detailed ways of implementing the quality policy are to be determined in the Management Review.

The University is committed to continuously improving and enhancing the quality of studies offered to students:

– by involving students and stakeholders in the organisation of the University's quality assurance system;

– by involving stakeholders in the management of the development, implementation, control, and improvement of the University's strategy;

– by way of implementing, monitoring, and reviewing quality policies and objectives.

Quality policy is focused on the University's strategic priorities and reflects the key principles of quality management in order to meet the expectations of all stakeholders and ensure continuous improvement:

QUALITY POLICY

Ensuring the quality of studies is one of KSU's priority strategic directions. In order to foster an academic culture of quality and to continuously improve performance, the management of the University has developed and implemented a quality management system in compliance with the requirements of standard ISO 9001 and the European Higher Education and Quality Assurance standards.

As part of our higher education mission and in line with the expectations of our stakeholders, we are committed to:

– *Continuously improve the quality of studies by implementing innovative teaching methods based on practical benefits;*

– *Provide a fully supportive environment for the creative and professional skills of students;*

– *Openly and creatively apply good quality management practices to improve the quality of studies;*

– *Analyse, understand and meet the needs of the University's clients;*

– *Promote cooperation between all stakeholders in the process of improving the quality of studies;*

– *Recognise and develop the skills, initiative, and achievements of the academic community;*

– *Continuously develop the staff's skills and encourage personal responsibility for the quality of studies.*

The provisions of this quality policy are available to all the stakeholders, and are known to and understood by the University's employees.

2.2 Strategy and planning

Planning of the KSU strategy is the responsibility of *the Rector* who is guided by the <u>*Description of the Procedure for Monitoring the Formulation, Dissemination and Implementation of the Strategy (P1).*</u>

The process of strategy development is initiated by the University's *Council* and is the responsibility of the Strategy Development Group. The strategy is prepared for a period of 5 years.

The components of KSU strategy development are:

- analysis of the internal environment;
- analysis of the external environment;
- strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities;
- values, mission, vision;
- strategic directions.

A detailed implementation plan for the strategic directions is developed in line with the approved KSU strategy. Setting KSU's strategic directions and formulating the objectives defining their implementation is a part of the planning of the University's activity and quality management system.

The publicity of the approved strategy is organised by the person indicated in the decision of the University *Council* in accordance with the procedure specified in the same decision.

Commitments by the management

The management of the University undertakes to:

– develop the implemented quality management system and continuously improve its performance by informing staff about the requirements of the client, the law, and the regulatory framework;

– determine the University's quality policy and ensure that quality objectives are set;

– conduct a Management Review of the quality management system and improve its functioning;

– ensure the supply of any necessary resources;

– ensure that client needs and expectations are articulated as requirements for the organisation and that they are met.

Management Review

Management Review is designed to assess the adequacy, performance (the extent to which the objectives have been achieved) and efficiency (whether the ratio of outputs to inputs has been appropriate)

of the quality management system in the long term. Management Review is carried out at least once a year. During the Management Review, the following data is collected, reviewed, and presented by the Management Representative for Quality to the Management Review participants for information:

– University's quality policy;

– information on quality objectives and their achievement;

– results of quality management system audits;

– results of decisions taken;

– internal and external changes;

– information on the performance and effectiveness of the quality management system;

– information on the University's ongoing processes and service compliance;

– sufficiency of resources;

– effectiveness of risk and opportunity management actions;

– feedback from clients and other stakeholders;

– information on the results of corrective and preventive actions;

– information on the actions taken, which were foreseen in the previous Management Review;

– various changes that may affect the quality management system;

– recommendations for improving the quality management system.

The results of the Management Review include management decisions and action plans on:

– improving the performance of the quality management system and its processes;

– improving services to meet client requirements;

– identifying the need for resources.

Participants in the Management Review perform a review and assessment of whether the quality policy is appropriate. The minutes are taken and delivered to all those present. Follow-up of implementation actions takes place at the subsequent meetings. The relevant records are kept by the Management Representative for Quality.

2.3. Mobilising the University community

Responsibilities, powers and relations

The University's responsibilities and the scope of powers are set out in:

– Quality Guide;

– organisational structure and job descriptions;

– procedures and descriptions of procedures.

The Management Representative for Quality, appointed by the order of the Rector of the University, is responsible for organisation of the implementation, maintenance, and improvement of the quality management system.

Key tasks of the Management Representative for Quality:

– ensuring compliance with standard LST EN ISO 9001:2015;

– organising the quality management system monitoring and audits;

– adjusting the quality management system as objectives, processes or requirements change;

– informing management about the functioning of the quality management system and the need to improve it;

– maintaining and improving the quality management system;

– improving the quality management system effectiveness and its documentation;

– verifying the quality management system;

– verifying and analysing the effectiveness of corrective and preventive actions.

Internal relations

The KSU community comprises students, lecturers, University management and other staff.

KSU's ways of informing the community include:

– *E-mail.* KSU staff are informed about current issues by e-mail. The Management Representative for Quality is responsible for providing information on the quality management system;

– *Intranet.* KSU uses an intranet site that provides University's news, projects and their documentation, teaching materials, legal information, and other useful information. The Management Representative for Quality is responsible for providing information on the quality management system on intranet;

– *Informing in person.* The Management Representative for Quality acquaints the staff in charge with the objectives and targets of the quality management system, within their competence;

– *Notice boards.* There are information boards for students and staff in the University's premises, where relevant information is posted;

– *Facebook* and other social networks.

In order to create a democratic, trusting, and creative atmosphere, the University has adopted a set of values (in the draft Strategy) and a quality policy, which emphasise the following academic values: justice, honesty, respect for people, tolerance, as well as professional, scientific, and civic responsibility.

The management bodies of the University are:

– General Meeting of Shareholders (hereinafter the General Meeting);

– University's sole management body - Rector of the University;

– University Council;

– Senate.

The *General Meeting* is the supreme management body of the University. The details of the General Meeting are described in the *Statute of the University*. The procedure for convening the *General Meeting of* the University does not differ from the procedure laid down by law and is therefore not separately specified in the Statute. The *General Meeting* can take decisions and is deemed to have taken place when shareholders holding more than 1/2 (half) of the total votes are present.

The *Rector of the University* is the head of the University, acts on its behalf, represents it, and organises its activities. The *Rector* may be substituted by the Vice Rector or the Chancellor, appointed by the order of the Rector. The Rector's decisions stipulated in subparagraphs 12-19 of Article 8.2 of the *University Statute* require an approval of the *General Meeting*.

Rector convenes the Rectorate, which shall be the collegial advisory body of the University under his/her authority. The Rectorate is composed of Vice Rectors, the Chancellor, the Chairperson of the Senate, and the heads of the University's structural units, as well as a representative delegated by the students. The Rectorate considers the most important strategic and current issues of the University and assists in the implementation of the decisions by *the Rector*, the General Meeting, and the *University Council*.

The *University Council* comprises 23 members. The number of members of *the University's Council* and the procedure for its formation and approval are determined by the *General Meeting*. The *University's Council* is not a management body. Decisions taken by the *University's Council* are advisory in nature and do not restrict the right of the *Rector of the University* and the *General Meeting* to take decisions on matters that fall within the competence of the Rector of the University and the *General Meeting* under the *University's Statute* and applicable legislation. The *University's Council* is established for a period of 3 (three) years. It is formed from the members of Rectorate, heads of the University's main departments and students, eminent Lithuanian and foreign scientists, as well as representatives of business, politics, culture and the public. The *Rector of the University* is an ex officio member of the *University's Council*. The details of the issues to be discussed by the *University's Council*, its responsibilities, formation, approval procedures, etc. are described in the *University's Statute*.

The *University's Senate* is the University's community management body, advising the *Rector* on the development and implementation of the University's research and study strategy. The *Senate* is elected for a period of 3 (three) years. The *Senate* is elected by the University's researchers and scientific staff working in the University's departments. Members of the *Senate* may be elected and delegated by the University's scientists, recognised artists, students, as well as scientists and recognised artists from other research and study institutions. Students can make up to 10 % of the *Senate* members. Student representatives to the *Senate* are nominated by the Students' Representation. Teachers holding professors' positions make up at least half of the members of the *Senate*. The number of members of the *Senate* and

the procedure for electing them is laid down in the rules of procedure of the *Senate*. The Chairperson of the *Senate* is approved and recalled by the *Senate* on the recommendation by the *Rector*.

The interests of the University's students are represented by the *Students' Representation.* The *Students' Representation* takes care of students' rights and obligations, helps in organising the study process, and addresses students' social issues. Members of the University *Students' Representation* are elected at the General Meeting of the University's students. The Statute of the *Students' Representation* is approved by the *Rector* of the University. The activities of the *Students' Representation* are organised and carried out by the President together with the Presidium. Members of the University *Students' Representation* represent students in the *University's Senate, the Rectorate, the University's Council and the Lithuanian Students' Union*.

In order to involve the University community in the University's activities as much as possible, the KSU management organises various events and competitions where all members of the community are encouraged to submit their ideas for improving the University's activities and the quality of studies, as well as for shaping the image and culture of the University.
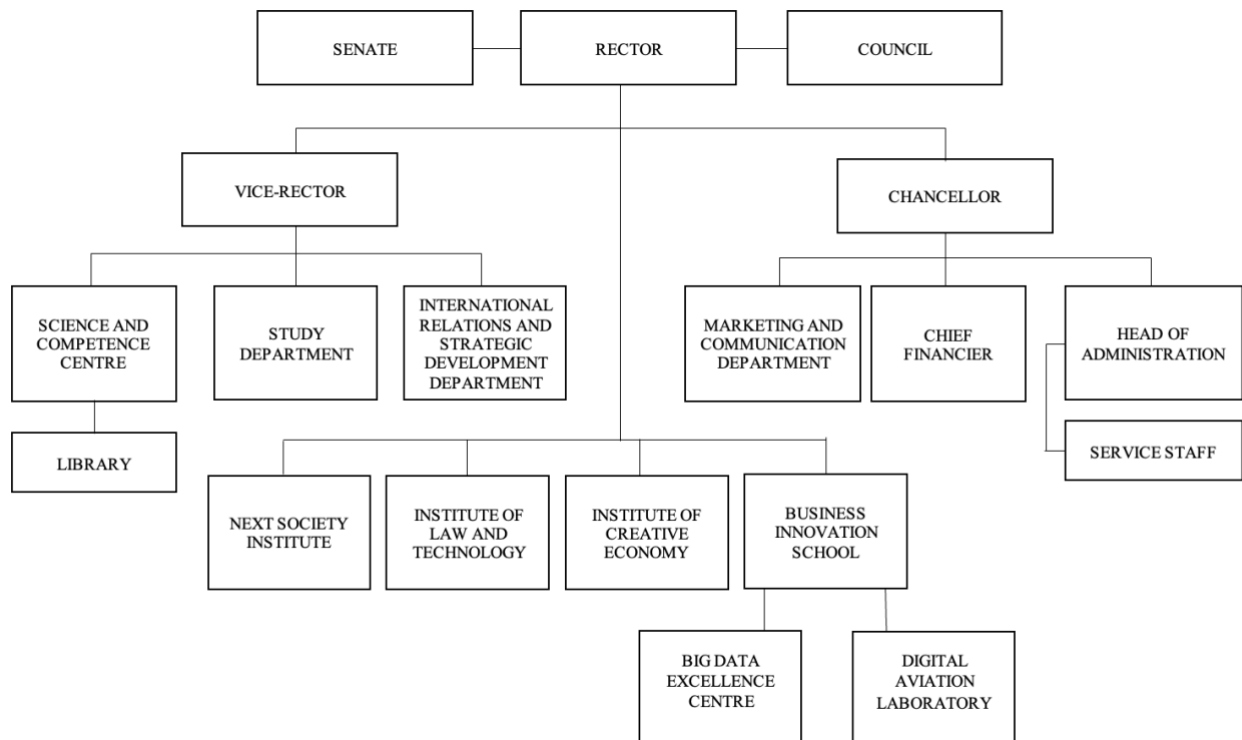
Fig. 1. Organisational structure of the University

Human resources

The management of the University's administrative and academic staff, and the management of excellence, including assurance of the quality of teaching staff through feedback, are described in the *Description of Staff Management Procedure (P12)* and the internal rules of procedure.

The Chancellor of the University is responsible for the management of the *Description of Staff Management Procedure (P12)*.

The line manager conducts staff interviews at least once a year, in accordance with the *Description of Staff Management Procedure (P12)*, to assess staff competencies, plan training, and estimate training costs. Criteria for staff assessment are based on the responsibilities described in job descriptions, procedures and other documents.

To ensure that the academic staff used to teach students are qualified and competent, the University:

– conducts student surveys and

– develops a motivational system for teachers.

Management of academic staff competences is described in the *Description of Staff Management Procedure (P12)*.

2.4. Management of research and study environment and resources, and partnership

University's infrastructure

KSU's buildings and grounds are managed under a lease agreement. Infrastructure management and its provisioning (procurement) is further described in the *Description of Procurement and Infrastructure Management Procedure (P13).* The University aims for a working environment that has a positive impact on staff motivation, satisfaction and sense of responsibility. KSU takes the following aspects into account when designing appropriate working environment:

– opportunity to better involve employees in working environment to discharge their full potential;

– occupational safety and health requirements;

– social relations.

The Chancellor is responsible for determining the need for and purchasing of material resources, maintaining the infrastructure, providing workplaces and ensuring safety at work.

University's financial resources and student support

Management of the University's finance is governed by the Republic of Lithuania Law on Financial Reporting by Undertakings, Republic of Lithuania Law on Financial Accounting, Republic of Lithuania Law on Audit, Business Accounting Standards and other legal acts.

The University's financial resources are described in the _Description of Finance Management Procedure (P2.)_. The Chancellor is responsible for implementation and supervision of the requirements set out in this description.

Description of Finance Management Procedure (P2) covers the following areas:

– preparation of accounting policies and related documentation;

– planning and allocation of financial resources;

– financial control and accountability of operations;

– organisation and control of the collection of tuition fees.

The University students who meet the set criteria are awarded progress and incentive scholarships. Additional support is provided to disadvantaged and disabled students studying at KSU.

Students travelling to international events (conferences, seminars, exhibitions, etc.) are financially supported by the University. Support for studies, internships or research placements abroad is also provided by special Lithuanian and foreign government and public funds.

University's information systems

KSU personal data is processed, supplied and used in accordance with the Republic of Lithuania Law on Legal Protection of Personal Data, the General Requirements for Organisational and Technical Data Security Measures and other legislation.

The purpose of the _Description of Information System and Data Security Management Procedure (P17)_ is to establish a unified procedure for determining the need for KSU information systems (hardware and software), servicing them, analysing the efficiency of the information systems used, and ensuring data security, in order to ensure the performance of study and research activities and compliance with the requirements applicable to this process. The Chancellor is responsible for supervision and improvement of this process.

The information system consists of databases and software for financial accounting, studies, students, virtual learning environment (Moodle), library, internal and external website, as well as email boxes, and computing and communication equipment. Users of KSU information system are students, lecturers and staff.

The description of the information systems and of the procedure for data security management covers the following areas:

– identifying and planning the need for information system;

– implementation of information system;

– maintenance of information system and efficiency analysis;

– ensuring data security.

Cooperation and partnership

The University closely cooperates with international and national organisations in the fields of science, studies, research, continuing education and technology.

3. QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

3.1. Quality assurance processes, their interactions and actors

KSU processes are grouped into four process groups (see Figure 2):

1. *Management's Activity Processes* cover the University's top-level management functions and relate to strategic planning, organisational culture, policy development and leadership.

2. *Core Business Processes* are value-adding activities within the organisation, aimed at achieving the University's main objectives.

3. *Supporting Processes* ensure efficient operation of core business processes and include administrative functions.

4. *Improvement Processes* are activities that focus on making improvement decisions based on analysis of the current situation. Improvement involves systematical measuring of achieved results (e.g. monitoring customer satisfaction, checking compliance, measuring effectiveness, self-assessment) and planning of improvement actions (setting objectives, developing quality programmes, implementing improvement initiatives).
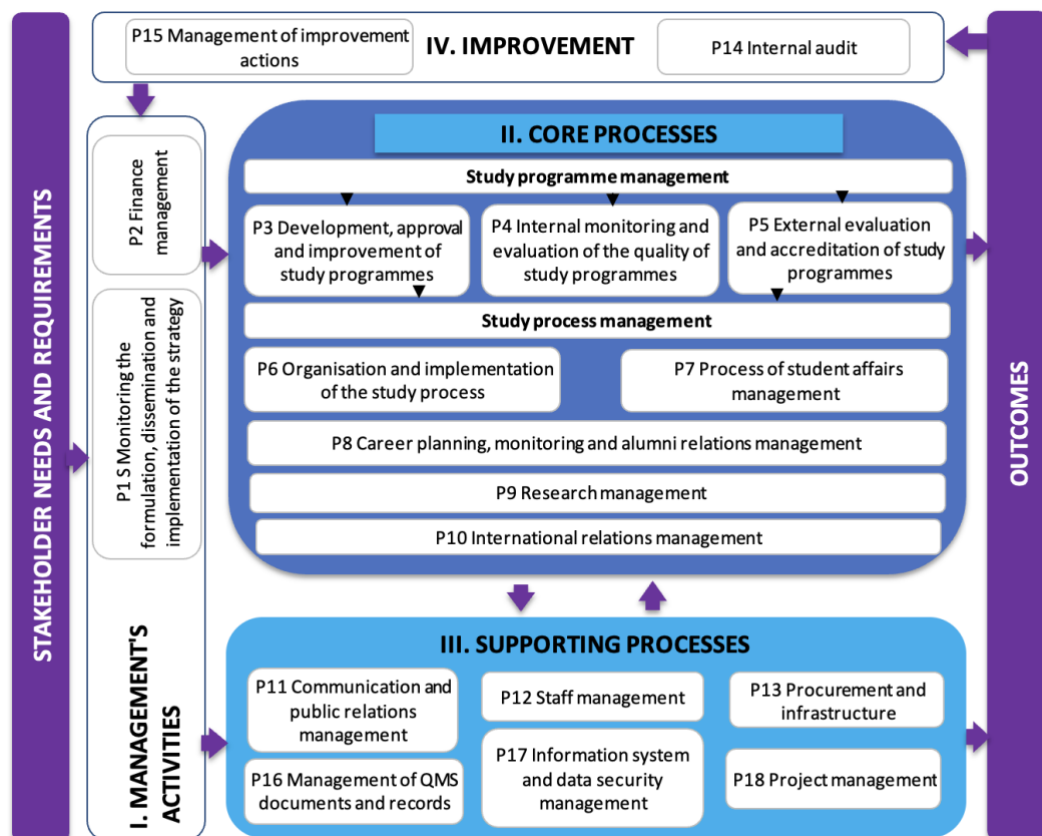
Fig. 2. Process interaction diagram

3.2. Internal quality assurance

3.2.1. Information and public relations management

The public and stakeholders can access the University's policy and the Quality Guide on the public website www.ksu.lt.

The Chancellor organises creation and maintenance of the University's website www.ksu.lt, and dissemination of information in social networks, cooperates with the media, publishes and distributes publications shaping the University's image, coordinates social campaigns, publicises the University's events to the community, and represents the University in Lithuanian and foreign public relations organisations.

More details on information and public relations management are described in the *Description of Communication and Public Relations Management Procedure (P11)*.

3.2.2. Development and improvement of study programmes

The procedure for the development, approval and improvement of study programmes is determined by the KSU Statute, the regulations on studies, orders by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania and by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, which regulate the development and improvement of study programmes.

The development and improvement of the University's study programmes is set out in the *Description of the Procedure for the Development, Approval and Improvement of Study Programmes (P3)*, which is the responsibility of the Vice Rector.

Description of the Procedure for the Development, Approval and Improvement of Study Programmes (P3) covers the following areas:

– setting up study programme committees;
– initiating the development of study programmes;
– drafting, reviewing and approving study programme descriptions
– publicising information on study programmes;
– improving study programmes.

The aim of the description is to develop the study programmes that meet the legal requirements for the study programme, the needs of the market and the requirements of stakeholders (i.e. KSU staff and management, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, social partners, the public).

The *University's Senate* proposes and approves the University's study programmes and study regulations, and monitors the quality of studies. Study programmes are submitted to the Centre for Quality

Assessment in Higher Education for assessment and accreditation in accordance with the procedure established by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania.

The head of the unit organises implementation, evaluation and development of study programmes.

The quality of study programmes is evaluated in terms of the programme's objectives and expected learning outcomes, the programme's design, staffing, material resources and market needs.

External evaluation of higher education study programmes may also be carried out by another higher education quality assessment agency listed in the European Register of Quality Assurance Agencies for Higher Education.

The study programmes evaluated during the course of the evaluation of the fields of study are accredited for a period of 7 or 3 years. Intended study programmes that can be accredited without any external evaluation procedure are accredited for the period until the next evaluation of the field.

3.2.3. Organisation of studies

The procedure for the organisation of studies is described in the *Description of the Procedure for the Organisation and Implementation of the Study Process (P6)*, which is the responsibility of the Vice Rector.

The aim of the organisation and implementation of the study process is to ensure effective performance of KSU's study-related activities: admission and adaptation of students, organisation, resourcing and implementation of studies, assessment of student performance, as well as organisation of final qualification papers submission and award of diplomas to KSU students.

The process of the organisation and implementation of studies includes:
–   study planning;
–   admission and adaptation of students;
–   organisation of studies and provision of resources;
–   implementation of studies (organisation and delivery of lectures and classes, organisation of internships, organisation of student self-expression, assessment of student knowledge);
–   organisation of final qualifying theses defence;
–   organisation of the award of diplomas;
–   analysis and improvement of the process of organisation and delivery of studies (collecting feedback, conducting internal audits, self-assessment, implementing improvement actions).

3.2.4. Assessment of student performance

The aim of student performance assessment is to monitor whether a learner's performance is in line with the specified learning outcomes and to provide timely feedback to help ensure effective student performance and achievement of outcomes.

KSU collects, organises, and analyses quantitative and qualitative data on learners' study achievements. Based on the above data, a decision is made on the assessment of the student's academic performance with the appropriate grades.

The University uses cumulative assessment to ensure students' active work throughout the semester, their ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice, and the objective evaluation of study results.

In cumulative assessment, the study outcomes are assessed by mid-term reports and the final grade is the sum of the mid-term and exam grades. Failure to complete or settle semester assignments and to obtain a passing grade - the minimum score for a specified number of mid-term settlements - precludes the student from taking the final examination.

The University uses a ten-point grading system.

3.2.5. Ensuring the quality of teaching staff performance

Ensuring of the quality of teaching staff performance is set out in the _Description of the Staff Management Procedure (P12)_. The Chancellor determines the qualifications for teaching and research staff, as well as assesses and appoints the staff. The assessment provides an evaluation of whether and to what extent a lecturer or researcher meets the qualification requirements for his/her position.

The evaluation of the competence of academic staff includes analysis of the information collected from the stakeholder survey.

3.2.6. Study resources and student support

KSU ensures that the resources necessary for students' learning and for efficient implementation of study and research are adequate, sufficient, and easily accessible. Such resources are: classrooms, library, databases, computer labs, consultants, and advisors. These tools are easily accessible to students, designed according to student needs and feedback. At least once a year, student surveys are carried out to determine the students' need for resources and whether the resources are appropriate and sufficient.

3.2.7. Academic mobility

KSU cooperates with foreign higher education institutions and other research and study institutions, providing opportunities for the mobility programme for teachers and students (Erasmus+).

3.2.8. Career planning, monitoring and alumni relations management

The process of career planning, monitoring and alumni relations management is described in the _Description of Career Planning, Monitoring and Alumni Relations Management Procedure (P8)_. The Chancellor is responsible for managing this process.

The aim of the process is to create a unified procedure for providing career guidance, counselling, and maintaining relations with alumni (Alumni database, organisation of alumni events, feedback).

The aim of the career planning, monitoring and alumni relations management process is to help students build career management skills, as well as plan and prepare for their professional careers in response to labour market needs. The process includes:

– planning of student career guidance and career monitoring;

– implementation of career guidance and career monitoring for prospective and current students;

– liaising with alumni and employers to ensure feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement of the University's career guidance.

The steps of the career planning, monitoring and alumni relations management process, the activities to be carried out, the persons in charge and the related documents are set out in the *Description of Career Planning, Monitoring and Alumni Relations Management Procedure (P8)*.

3.2.9. Research management

The process of research management is set out in the *Description of Research Management Procedure (P9)*, and the Vice Rector is in charge of its supervision and improvement.

The description of research management procedure covers the following areas:

– research planning;

– research organisation and implementation;

– dissemination of research results and their implementation in the study process.

The outcomes of the research management process are high-quality research outputs that are translated into studies and business practice, scientific and other publications, and the organisation of scientific events.

3.3. External quality assurance

3.3.1. Evaluation and accreditation of study programmes

The objectives, evaluation criteria and procedure for external evaluation and accreditation of study programmes are regulated by the Description of the Procedure for External Evaluation and Accreditation of Studies, approved by the order of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, and orders of the Director of SKVC regulating evaluation and accreditation of study programmes.

The aim of the *Description of the Procedure for External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes (P5)* is to establish a unified procedure for the external evaluation and accreditation of the University's study programmes in order to ensure that the study programmes comply with the legislation of the Republic of Lithuania and the requirements applicable to this process. The Vice Rector of the University is responsible for the implementation of this procedure and process.

Description of the Procedure for External Evaluation and Accreditation of Study Programmes (P5) covers the following areas:

– organising and coordinating evaluation and accreditation of prospective study programmes;

– organising and coordinating evaluation and accreditation of the current study programmes.

3.3.2. Evaluation and accreditation of the institution

The objectives, evaluation criteria and procedure for evaluation and accreditation of the University are regulated by the Republic of Lithuania Law on Science and Studies, the Description of the Procedure for External Evaluation and Accreditation of Higher Education Institutions and Branches of Foreign Higher Education Institutions, approved by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, the Methodology for Evaluation of Real Resources of Higher Education Institution, and the Methodology for Evaluation of Higher Education Institution, approved by the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

The purpose of external evaluation is to create the conditions for improving the performance of a higher education institution, to foster its culture of quality, to assess the needs for core funding in the light of performance, to inform the founders, the academic community and the public about the quality of the higher education institution's performance, and to make recommendations for the development of the higher education institution's activities based on the evaluation results.

The external evaluation of KSU's performance covers all the areas of activity specified in the _Statute_ and is based on the following criteria: compliance of the performance with the mission as specified in the _Statute_ and with the international level of science and studies, compliance of the assessment of study performance with the set requirements, the criteria for implementing the requirements of academic ethics and procedures, and the criteria for efficiency of use of the state budget funds, and compliance of the performance with the requirements set out in the legislation.

The external evaluation of the performance of a higher education institution is carried out at least once every 7 years. External evaluation is initiated by the Minister of Education, Science and Sport, who approves the external evaluation plan for higher education institutions by decree. External evaluation is organised by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education.

External evaluation is carried out by a panel of experts, established by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, in accordance with the Centre's approved and publicly announced Description of Expert Selection. The external evaluation involves experts from abroad.

External evaluation assesses a higher education institution's performance in the areas of management, quality assurance, study and research activities, and its impact on regional and national development.

The external evaluation of a higher education institution is based on the self-assessment summary prepared by the higher education institution, the data obtained during a visit to the higher education institution, and the results of a comparative expert evaluation of research and experimental development activities and/or the annual formal evaluation of research and experimental development activities provided by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, the results of the evaluation of the fields of study, other documents of the higher education institution, the conclusions and recommendations of the previous external evaluation and data on the progress and results of the implementation of the recommendations, data on the activities of the higher education institution from the state registers, as well as on any other information on the activities of the higher education institution (results of surveys, official statistical data, etc.).

The decision to accredit a higher education institution is taken by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education based on the conclusions of the external evaluation.

4. MONITORING, MEASUREMENT AND IMPROVEMENT

4.1. Monitoring and analysis of performance indicators

The purpose of monitoring and analysing performance indicators is to ensure effective process management and evidence-based decision-making, as well as to assess the effectiveness of the quality assurance system and to meet stakeholder requirements.

To measure and monitor performance, KSU has developed a system of quality indicators covering the following areas:

- monitoring of the implementation of strategic objectives;
- evaluation of study programmes;
- evaluation of real resources;
- evaluation of the quality of performance;

The quality indicators are set considering the University's strategy, the needs of stakeholders, the provisions by the European Quality Assurance Framework for higher education and other requirements. The indicators must be measurable, realistic and useful for decision-making.

The set indicators are continuously reviewed and updated to demonstrate their relevance to the objectives set, the external evaluation criteria and the needs of stakeholders. The indicators are measured by collecting statistics and information from internal University's databases, activity reports, feedback records and other sources.

The procedure for the monitoring and evaluating the quality of study programmes is determined by the Statute of the University, the Study Regulation, the orders of the Minister of Education, Science and Sport and the Director of the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education, regulating the evaluation of study programmes. The internal *Description of Procedure for Monitoring and Evaluation of the Quality of Study Programmes (P4)* sets out a unified procedure for the internal monitoring and evaluation of the quality of study programmes and for ensuring compliance with the applicable requirements.

4.2. Internal audits

Internal audits of the quality management system are planned through the annual audit plan and are carried out in accordance with the procedure set out in the *Description of Internal Audit Procedure (P14)*. The Management Representative for Quality is responsible for appointment of internal auditors and preparation of the annual plan, supervision of internal audit records, and for development and implementation of the *Description of Internal Audit Procedure (P14)*. The frequency of audits considers the importance of the audited process. Any non-conformities are recorded in an improvement action register, corrective actions are identified and implemented immediately, and their effectiveness is assessed. It is the responsibility of the owners of the audited processes to ensure that non-conformities identified during the audit and their causes are corrected. Areas for improvement and non-conformities

identified by internal audits are managed in accordance with the procedures set out in the *Description of Improvement Action Management Procedure (P15)*.

All audit records are managed in accordance with the requirements of the *Description of Procedure for Management of QMS Documents and Records (P16)*.

4.3. Feedback system

Existing relation with the University's stakeholders (i.e. staff, academic staff, students, public, etc.) is ensured through the management of the information (feedback) received from these stakeholders. The feedback is managed in accordance with the *Description of Procedure for Internal Monitoring and Evaluation of the Quality of Study Programmes (P4)*, the *Description of Procedure for the Organisation and Implementation of the Study Process (P6)*, the *Description of Career Planning, Monitoring and Alumni Relations Management Procedure (P8)*, and the *Description of Procedure for Personnel Management (P12)*.

The University conducts surveys and researches periodically every year in order to find out the opinions and attitudes of the stakeholders towards the quality of services provided and the University's environment.

The following surveys are performed:

– student surveys on the organisation and delivery of the Study Process;
– staff survey on satisfaction with the workplace and working conditions;
– survey of students, graduates and employers on employability and work experience.

The Vice Rector is responsible for implementation and improvement of this process.

Description of Procedure for Internal Monitoring and Evaluation of the Quality of Study Programmes (P4) covers the following areas:

– planning of the internal evaluation of study programmes;
– monitoring and evaluation of study programmes.

4.4. Performance improvement

Continuous performance improvement starts with an understanding of the quality policy and objectives by all the employees and academic staff. The management of the University is constantly looking for opportunities to improve the effectiveness of the processes and of the overall quality management system. Continuous performance improvement is implemented at the University through the following measures: quality policy and its objectives, Management Review, quality management system audits, feedback and analysis, corrective and preventive actions, and EFQM self-evaluation.

The procedure for improvement of the University's quality management system and processes, correction of non-conformities and management of preventive actions to ensure compliance of the management system and processes with the requirements is described in the *Description of Improvement*

Action Management Procedure (P15). The heads of the units concerned are responsible for eliminating the causes of non-compliance and implementing preventive actions.

Records of improvement actions are kept and maintained by the Management Representative for Quality.

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