

LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES
MEDICAL ACADEMY



STUDY FIELD OF
NURSING

SECOND-CYCLE (MASTER DEGREE) STUDY PROGRAMME
CLINICAL NURSING
(State code – 621B70002)

SELF-ANALYSIS REPORT

Rector
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Sciences


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Kaunas
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Main data of the study programme

Study programme	Clinical Nursing
State code	621A60004
Type of study	University studies
Cycle of study	Second (Master)
Form of studies (duration in years)	Full-time (2 years) and part-time (3 years)
Scope of the study programme in credits	120 ECTS
Degree and/or professional qualification awarded	Master of Nursing
Date of the programme registration	1999
Programme language	Lithuanian

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ABBREVIATIONS

CQAHE	Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
FN	Faculty of Nursing
FPH	Faculty of Public Health
LSMU	Lithuanian University of Health Sciences
MA	Medical Academy
SSS	Students' Scientific Society
VA	Veterinary Academy
MN	Master in Nursing
CN	Clinical Nursing
FC	FirstClass

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1. Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (hereinafter - LSMU) is the largest educational institution for preparation of health care specialists. It has long standing traditions and its history goes back to the Faculty of Medicine at Vytautas Magnus University, which later became the Institute of Medicine. According to the resolution by Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the 30th of June, 2010 Kaunas University of Medicine and Lithuanian Veterinary Academy were merged.
2. The University has two collegial management bodies – the Council and the Senate and a sole management body – the Rector, who is elected by the Council. Chancellors and Vice-Rectors provide help for Rector. Medical Academy and Veterinary Academy are the main units of the University, which also includes Faculties, Research Institutes, University Hospital, Veterinary Clinics, Centre of Practical Training and Experiments, Theoretical and Clinical Departments, Faculty Institutes, Research Laboratories; other structural and functional units, which provide the needs for studies, research, health care and social, and cultural life.
3. Teaching staff of LSMU consists of 161 professors, 229 associate professors, 298 lecturers, and 454 assistant professors (by December 31, 2014). This entire staff provides qualitative studies of the first, second, integrated and third circle in biomedical sciences. The University offers 29 study programmes. More than 6481 students including 613 foreign students from more than 35 countries are studying in these programmes.
4. The Faculty of Nursing (hereinafter - FN) was established in 1990 and consists of six departments: Department of Rehabilitation, Department of Geriatrics, Department of Nursing and Care, Sports Institute, Department of Children Rehabilitation, and Department of Behavioural Medicine. **The mission of the Faculty** is to prepare highly qualified specialists of nursing, midwifery, physical therapy, and occupational therapy by giving them knowledge, professional skills, and forming the system of their attitudes and values, also by letting them participate in scientific investigations of nursing, midwifery, rehabilitation, gerontology, physical therapy and occupational therapy. They can also participate in the formation and implementation of health policy decisions.
5. Four bachelor programmes of the first cycle are conducted at the faculty: *Nursing, Midwifery, Physical therapy, and Occupational Therapy* and four master programmes of the second cycle: *Clinical Nursing, Health promotion and Rehabilitation; Art Therapy* (a joint programme with Kaunas Faculty of Vilnius Art Academy). The graduates from these programmes have a right to work in all health care institutions of our country.
6. LSMU is the only university in Lithuania having the right to conduct third cycle studies (doctoral studies, PhD) in nursing¹.
7. Nursing training as a separate subject started to evolve from the main body of biomedical training at the University a few decades ago.
8. Master studies in *Clinical Nursing* (hereinafter – CN) were introduced in 1999. This was the first nursing study programme at the master level covering the issues of modern Nursing in Lithuania. The programme was gradually developing according to the changing needs of the society and contemporary challenges in nursing, and was supported by scientific evidence-based knowledge. The part-time CN programme was developed, meeting the needs of working professionals in 2011.
9. This self-evaluation report contains data about the second-cycle programme *Clinical Nursing*.
10. The self-evaluation workgroup was formed by the Rector of the University². All members were responsible for a certain task in the report field. The summary of the self-evaluation was discussed at the meeting of Nursing and Care Department staff on the 13th of April, 2014 (protocol No. SLF-04-4-14). The summary of self-evaluation has been prepared according to the requirements of external audit for the study programmes^{3,4}.
11. The Master study programme *Clinical Nursing* so far has not been submitted for external expert evaluation.

¹ Decision Ministry of Education and Science. 2011-06-08 Nr. V-1019 and 2011-06-21 Nr. B-1124

²LSMU Rector's Order, 27- 03 - 2014, No V-145 "On the formation of the self-assessment group.

³ The Description of the external audit and accreditation order, confirmed by the Minister of Education and Science of LR on 24 July, 2009, No ISAK- 1652. (Amendment of the order No V-1487, 29-07-2011 by the Minister of Education of LR)

⁴ The Methods of study programme evaluation, accredited by the order of director of the Study Quality Centre on December 20, 2010.

1. ANALYSIS OF THE PROGRAMME

1.1. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE PROGRAMME

12. **The aim** of the *Clinical Nursing* programme is to provide Master students theoretical and practical knowledge for the evaluation of the quality of nursing, for the planning and organisation of the provision of nursing services, for the planning of research, and for the creation of the conditions for the verification of the results of research in practice, and applying evidence based nursing knowledge into practice.

13. The purpose of the programme is to educate master students in clinical nursing, whose professional and research activity would be based on the most recent scientific evidence-based knowledge in nursing, the development and practical application of methods, understanding of health policy, coordination of the provision of nursing services, management and leadership, planning alternative solutions, evaluation of changes in the health care environment, and preparation for academic and scientific work.

13. Objectives of the programme:

- To train special and personal skills, which are necessary for continuing professional development in nursing practice.
- To develop competencies in planning, conducting, analysing, and communicating research in nursing.
- To empower graduates to integrate nursing and management and education competencies in the process of leading and managing nursing in health care institutions.

14. *Sources where the aims and learning outcomes of the Clinical Nursing programme are presented.* The aims and learning outcomes of the *Clinical Nursing* programme are presented on the LSMU website⁵ and the Study Information System (SIS) website page of the LSMU Study Centre⁶ as well as in the national AIKOS database⁷. This study programme is advertised during higher education fairs and University Open Days. The University regularly publishes booklets about the training programmes at LSMU, where information about the *Clinical Nursing* programme is presented as well.

15. *Links of the programme aim with University mission and development strategy.* The aim and objectives of the *Clinical Nursing* programme conform to the mission of the LSMU⁸, aiming to create, accumulate, systemise and spread scientific knowledge, the newest achievements of studies and science, to teach and develop the creative, honest, initiative-showing, educated, independent and enterprising personality, to foster democracy and welfare, and to develop a healthy and educated society; to stimulate the economic and cultural prosperity of the country, competitiveness of economic activity, social unity by such an activity, regardless gender, race, political and religious beliefs, nationality and citizenship of employees, students and auditors.

16. The objectives of the University⁸ are as follows:

- To conduct the studies, which provide the person with higher university education and qualification of higher education corresponding to the modern level of knowledge and technologies based on scientific research, and to develop the comprehensively educated, ethically responsible, creative and enterprising personality.
- To elaborate harmoniously the scientific cognition of various areas, to conduct scientific research and experimental (social, cultural) expansion of high level, to prepare scientists, to conduct various practical activities and to cooperate with national and international partners in the scientific and other areas.
- To promote the development of the regions and entire country through cooperation with public and economic partners through scientific, educative, artistic and other cultural activities;
- To train the society open to education, science, art and culture, which would be able to explore science effectively and compete in the market of technologies, products and services of high level.

⁵<http://ismuni.lt/lt/veikla/studijos/studiju-programos/ii-pakopos-studijos/>

⁶https://sis.ismuni.lt/visiems/Visiems/dalyku_paieska.aspx

⁷<http://www.aikos.smm.lt/>

⁸ Statute of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on 30 June 2010, No. XI-973.

17. The aim and objectives of the *Clinical Nursing* programme are relevant to the objectives of the University and correspond to the National Lithuanian Health Programme, aimed at improving the Lithuanian health care system and educating highly qualified health managers. The objectives and the structure of the programme are discussed with professional associations, such as Lithuanian Nurses Association, the Union of Lithuanian Nursing Managers, Lithuanian Midwives Association, and hospital directors for nursing who are social partners of the FN and are involved in the management and realisation of the studies at the Faculty.

18. *Compliance of objectives with the study area and level.* The objectives of the *Clinical Nursing* programme meet the requirements for master's studies in the area of Nursing. The structure and content of the study programme grant necessary professional knowledge and abilities. The programme corresponds to the national criteria of the Description of the Study Field of Nursing⁹ project, international criteria of the European Qualifications framework (EQF)¹⁰, European Credit Transfer System for vocational education and training (ECVET)¹¹, The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN)¹², The European Quality Charter for Mobility¹³.

19. *Validity and exclusiveness of the programme.* The *Clinical Nursing* programme is the programme in Lithuania, which combines nursing, management, theoretical clinical, and education competencies, and awards a Master degree in Nursing. It is popular among nurses' professionals willing to start their careers in the area of health management and working nurse managers/ administrators in different health care institutions aiming at continuous professional development.

20. *Competencies and learning outcomes of the programme.* The objectives of the *Clinical Nursing* programme are continuously achieved throughout the whole study period, which provides knowledge and develops competencies in modern clinical nursing. This is reflected by students' positive assessment after each study subject and successful employment of the graduates. Learning outcomes determine the complexity level of knowledge, assessment ability, practical and transferable competencies of the graduates of the *Clinical Nursing* programme. The competences acquired and the learning outcomes of the *Clinical Nursing* programme are presented in Table 1.1.

21. *Learning outcomes at the programme level.* A set of learning outcomes is achieved during 2 years in full-time and 3 years in part-time programme. The graduates of the *Clinical Nursing* programme defend a thesis for the master's degree and earn a Master degree of Nursing. Successful graduation from the programme guarantees the sufficient preparation of the graduates for doctoral studies in Nursing and other related areas.

22. *Associations of the learning outcomes with the programme at the subject level.* Learning outcomes at the subject level match with the learning outcomes of other study subjects and reflect general learning outcomes at the master's level. Learning outcomes are achieved through the defined objectives of study subjects and their contents. The study subjects included in the *Clinical Nursing* programme efficiently provide future specialists with necessary knowledge and develop their practical skills, thus aggregating the necessary knowledge and competencies. Associations between the learning outcomes and the study subjects are presented in Table 1.2. and Table 1.3.

⁹Description of the Study Field of Nursing. Vilnius, 2015

¹⁰European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Adopted April 2008 the European Parliament and Council

¹¹European Credit Transfer System for vocational education and training. Adopted May 2009 the European Parliament and Council

¹²EU Resolutions on Lifelong Guidance (2004; 2008)

¹³European Quality Charter for Mobility. Adopted of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006

Table 1.1. Competencies and learning outcomes of *Clinical Nursing* programme

Competences		Learning outcomes	
1.	<i>Knowledge and its application</i> A graduate has abilities:	1.1	to apply the latest nursing science knowledge by solving non-standard situations in a professional activity, by implementing novelties;
		1.2	to analyse critically and independently nursing science and practice situations and to create new research in nursing field
		1.3	to transfer independently nursing science knowledge to students and colleagues, to guide nursing practice;
		1.4	to distinguish the peculiarities of cross-cultural nursing, considering the cultural development of different social groups and nationalities.
2.	<i>Abilities to conduct a research</i> A graduate has abilities:	2.1	to initiate and coordinate the planning and conduction of nursing and multidisciplinary research;
		2.2	to analyse and manage the obtained results and to submit and interpret the results correctly;
		2.3	to apply in practice different nursing science methods: theoretical and experimental;
		2.4	to evaluate the reliability of research and to simulate the corresponding nursing science solutions and to apply them in practice.
3.	<i>Social abilities</i> A graduate has abilities:	3.1.	to work as a member of health care and inter-sectorial teams both in Lithuania and internationally;
		3.2	to develop models of inter-agency and inter-institutional cooperation by improving nursing of the healthy individuals and those with disorders;
		3.3	to provide knowledge of a professional activity and practical experience in a qualified way;
		3.4	to build support teams focused to continuous professional renewal.
4.	<i>Personal abilities</i> A graduate has abilities:	4.1	to present independently the results of the conducted research and to offer practical recommendations at the local, national and international levels;
		4.2	to discuss relevant issues on nursing in a professional and interdisciplinary environment at the local, national and international levels;
		4.3.	to develop independently one's professional competence and career;
		4.4	to take innovative decisions with the evaluation of moral responsibility for one's professional activity.
5.	<i>Special abilities</i> A graduate has abilities:	5.1	to develop a creative environment for the health care institution by enabling the team members of health care to solve problems of patients, staff and management;
		5.2	to manage to evaluate changes in health care system and to prepare and apply in clinical practice the nurse procedures standards, developed on the basis scientifically substantiated knowledge;
		5.3	to develop strategies of nursing issues solution and nursing science and practice development;
		5.4	to improve independently in a professional and interdisciplinary activity as well as to motivate colleagues by emphasising the latest nursing research achievements and practice priorities at the national and international levels.

Table 1.2. Associations between learning outcomes and study subjects in *Clinical Nursing Programme* (full-time)

Study subjects (modules)	ECTS	Total workload of student	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Study results of Master of Clinical Nursing Programme																			
					Competences																			
					1. Knowledge and its application				2. Abilities to conduct a research				3. Social abilities				4. Personal abilities				5. Special abilities			
1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	2.1	2.2	2.3	2.4	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.4	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4					
1st Year	60	1596	833	763																				
Semester 1	30	798	413	385																				
Obligatory subjects	30	798	413	385																				
1 MF/FMB/KS-M13 Nursing Research	5	133	67	66		+			+															
2 VSF/SMK/KS-M15 Public health, health care and health information technologies	9	239	120	119									+	+										
3 SLF/SLK/KS-M48 Development in Nursing Theory and Practice I	6	160	80	80				+												+				
4 SLF/RE/KS-M06 Systems of Nursing and Rehabilitation	7	186	93	93								+					+							
5 VSF/FES/KS-M03 Human relations	3	80	53	27														+	+					
Semester 2	30	798	420	378																				
Obligatory subjects	26	692	367	325																				
6 SLF/SLK/KS-M49 Qualitative research methods	5	133	66	67						+		+												
7 SLF/SLK/KS-M50 Clinical ethics. Law	5 2	133 53	66 36	67 17											+			+						
8 SLF/SLK/KS-M40 Quality management in health care institution	3	80	53	27														+	+					

23. *Renewal of learning outcomes.* The necessity regularly to renew learning outcomes is related to changing regulatory environment and priorities in health care area both in Lithuania and the European Union (EU). A regular evaluation of the learning outcomes of the *Clinical Nursing* programme ensures the competitiveness of the programme and gives the graduates a competitive advantage in the labour market. The renewal of learning outcomes guarantees an adequate reaction to society expectations and changes in the labour market. Programme outcomes are evaluated considering the achievements in nursing science and practice, evaluating the opinions and recommendations of potential employers and graduates. The process of the renewal of learning outcomes is implemented through annual graduates' interviewing and summarising their general opinion about the study programme and readiness to work. The Study Programme Committee analyses information on the adequacy of learning outcomes to current achievements in practice and science, evaluates the shortcomings of outcomes, and recommends ways to eliminate them. Social partners are invited to present their opinion about the graduates' knowledge and practical abilities. Social partners also participate in the Faculty Council and in the defence of graduation theses. The same questions are addressed to the graduates, aiming at indication of the possible ways for improvement of the programme and its outcomes.

24. *The place of the Clinical Nursing programme among other similar study programmes at the University.* The FN also offers first-cycle programmes "Nursing" and "Midwifery" as well as second-cycle programmes in the biomedicine area of science - "Health Promotion and Rehabilitation" and "Art Therapy".

25. *The place of the Clinical Nursing programme among programmes offered at other universities.* The *Clinical Nursing* programme is one of three Master programmes in Lithuania that grant Master's degree in Nursing (the other two programmes are located in Vilnius University and Klaipėda University).

Summary

26. The aim of the Programme meets the University mission, and the learning outcomes of the Programme correspond to the international recommendations.

2. THE STRUCTURE OF THE PROGRAMME

2.1. Curriculum of the programme

Table 2.1. The structure of the Clinical Nursing programme (full time and part time) in compatibility with the requirements of the legislation

	Clinical Nursing study programme	The legislation requirements¹⁴
Subjects of the study field	120 ECTS	≥60 credits
Research paper and graduation thesis	45 ECTS	≥30 credits
The percentage of independent work in subjects in full-time studies	47%	≥30%
The percentage of independent work in subjects in part-time studies	55%	≥30%
The number of subjects studied and accounted for per semester	1-5	≤5
The percentage of scientists teaching the subjects	78,6%	≥60%
The percentage of professors teaching advanced subjects	42,8%	≥20%
Total volume of the programme	120 ECTS	90-120 credits

27. The *Clinical Nursing* programme is offered in two forms: full-time and part-time. The duration of the full-time programme is 2 academic years (4 semesters). The total number of ECTS credits is 120, and the total number of hours is 3192 (of them, 1687 are contact hours accounting for 53% of all teaching workload). In the programme, the first to third semesters are devoted to studies in global health management and clinical subject management, with a gradual increase in research activities. The fourth semester is fully dedicated for writing the Master' thesis and its defence. The detailed description of the curriculum is presented in the Table 2.3.

28. The duration of the part-time Clinical Nursing programme is 3 academic years (6 semesters). The total number of ECTS credits is 120, and the total number of hours is 3192 (of them, 1440 are contact hours accounting for 45% of all teaching workload). The detailed description of the curriculum is presented in the Table 2.4. 29. Subjects from the first-cycle (Bachelor) of *Nursing* programme are not repeated in the second-cycle programme.

¹⁴ Order of Minister of Education and Science of LR "On the approval of the description of general requirements of undergraduate and integrated study for granting degree" on April 9, 2010, No V-50,1 Vilnius

Table 2.3. Curriculum of the Master of *Clinical Nursing Programme* (full-time)

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Lectures (h)</i>	<i>Seminars (h)</i>	<i>Self-studies (h)</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Responsible teacher</i>
Semester 1					
Nursing Research	20	47	67	5	Dr. L. Pauliukėnas
Public health, health care and health information technologies	41	79	120	9	Prof. Habil. Dr. R. Kalėdienė Assoc. Prof. V. Kalibatas Lecturer V. Skvernys
Development in Nursing theory and Practice I	20	60	80	6	Dr. D. Kriukelytė
Nursing and rehabilitation systems	22	58	80	7	Prof. Habil. Dr. V. Lesauskaitė V. Keizeris
Human Relations	21	32	26	3	Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Laskienė
<i>Subtotal (1)</i>	<i>124</i>	<i>276</i>	<i>373</i>	<i>30</i>	
Semester 2					
Qualitative research methods. Scientific work	18	48	67	5	Dr. A. Vaškelytė
Clinical ethics.	18	48	67	5	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
Law	8	28	17	2	K. Astromskė
Health care quality management	16	41	23	3	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
Development in Nursing theory and Practice II	16	130	148	11	Assoc. Prof. O. Riklikienė
Elective course	24	29	54	4	
<i>Subtotal (2)</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>324</i>	<i>376</i>	<i>30</i>	
Semester 3					
Nursing Research	14	39	27	3	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
	10	16	27	2	Dr. L. Pauliukėnas
Methods of nursing quality assessment	48	45	93	7	Assoc. Prof. Dr. O. Riklikienė
Clinical standards of nursing	32	59	96	9	Prof. Habil. Dr. V. Lesauskaitė
Mentorship in Nursing	30	23	28	3	Assoc. Prof. Dr. O. Riklikienė
Leadership and Management in Nursing	26	54	80	6	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
<i>Subtotal (3)</i>	<i>160</i>	<i>236</i>	<i>351</i>	<i>30</i>	
Semester 4					
Final Master thesis	-	531	270	30	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
<i>Subtotal (4)</i>	-			<i>30</i>	
Total	508	1367	1370	120	

Table 2.4. Curriculum of the of *Clinical Nursing* programme (part-time)

<i>Subject</i>	<i>Lectures (h)</i>	<i>Seminars (h)</i>	<i>Self-study (h)</i>	<i>ECTS</i>	<i>Responsible teacher</i>
Semester 1					
Nursing Research	20	40	74	5	Dr. L. Pauliukėnas
Nursing and rehabilitation systems	22	46	92	4 3	Prof. Habil. Dr. V. Lesauskaitė V. Keizeris
Progress in Nursing Theory and Practice I	20	52	88	6	Dr. D. Kriukelytė
Human Relations	21	32	26	3	Assoc. Prof. Dr. S. Laskienė
<i>Subtotal (1)</i>	<i>83</i>	<i>170</i>	<i>280</i>	<i>21</i>	
Semester 2					
Public health, health care and health information technologies	40	68	132	9	Prof. Habil. Dr. R. Kalėdienė Assoc. Prof. V. Kalibatas Lecturer V. Skvernys
Qualitative research methods. Scientific work	18	48	67	5	Assoc. Prof. Dr. O. Riklikienė
Clinical ethics.	18	42	74	5	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
Law	6	18	29	2	K. Astromskė
<i>Subtotal (2)</i>	<i>82</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>302</i>	<i>21</i>	
Semester 3					
Nursing Research	10	26	44	3	Dr. L. Pauliukėnas
Progress in Nursing Theory and Practice II	18	114	161	11	Dr. A. Vaškelytė
Elective course	23	25	59	4	
<i>Subtotal (3)</i>	<i>51</i>	<i>165</i>	<i>264</i>	<i>18</i>	
Semester 4					
Health care quality management	12	24	44	3	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
Methods of nursing quality assessment	43	51	103	7	Assoc. Prof. Dr. O. Riklikienė
Clinical standards of nursing	32	76	132	9	Prof. Habil. Dr. V. Lesauskaitė
<i>Subtotal (4)</i>	<i>87</i>	<i>151</i>	<i>279</i>	<i>19</i>	
Semester 5					
Mentorship in Nursing	28	8	44	3	Assoc. Prof. Dr. O. Riklikienė
Scientific research work	10	14	29	2	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
Leadership and Management in Nursing	26	46	88	6	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
Final Master thesis	-	108	132	9	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
<i>Subtotal (5)</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>176</i>	<i>293</i>	<i>20</i>	
Semester 6					
Final Master thesis	-	252	308	21	Assoc. Prof. Dr. A. Blaževičienė
<i>Subtotal (6)</i>		<i>252</i>	<i>308</i>	<i>21</i>	
Total	367	1090	1726	120	

2.2. Descriptions of the study subjects and/or modules

30. During the first year of the studies, the students learn various models of nursing theories and their application in concrete cases, the principles of public health and health care, the quality of health care, and clinical ethics. Research work already begins in the first semester and continues throughout all semesters. During the second year of their studies, the students learn leadership, mentorship, and nursing quality techniques, and also continue their research work. The descriptions of the study subjects are presented in the Annex 1.

2.3. Rationale of the curriculum

31. Master studies programme in *Clinical Nursing* was the first programme of such type not only in Lithuania, but also in the Baltic States. In 2011, based on the experience of the full-time *Clinical Nursing* programme, a 3-year part-time *Clinical Nursing* programme was developed. The part-time *Clinical Nursing* programme was proposed when taking into consideration the students' needs. Since all students in the Master's programme are employed and live in different parts of Lithuania, combining work and studies in full-time studies was quite complicated for them combining full-time job and full-time studies. The need for this programme is well proven by the large numbers of entrants to this programme (see Table 6.2.). The main structure of the *Clinical Nursing* programme has been stable since 1999. However, some new study subjects (Management and Leadership in Nursing, Patient Safety and Risk Management; Mentorship in Nursing) have been introduced and regularly modifications within study subjects have been implemented. These subjects were introduced in response to the requests of students and employers.

32. The content of the study programme is based on national documents^{15,16} and international requirements for running such programmes. The *Clinical Nursing* programme fully meets requirements, which are set in the International Council of Nurses¹⁷; in the Honour Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International¹⁸.

33. The content of the *Clinical Nursing* programme in general and topics of particular study subjects are directly oriented towards the learning outcomes of the programme. Study subjects and covered topics are comprehensive and complementary to each other, hereby warranting the integrate achievement of learning outcomes. The types and methods employed to provide knowledge and competences depend on the specificity of study subjects. The various forms of lectures, seminars and practical works are supported and accepted if they efficiently assist the achievement of the learning outcomes of the *Clinical Nursing* programme.

2.4. Requirements for a master's thesis

34. The Faculty of Nursing has confirmed the "Regulation for writing and defending theses for Master study programmes"¹⁹, which is available on the web page as well. This document clearly and in details presents preparation and defence procedures of master thesis, which are obligatory to follow by students. Every master student graduates the programme with the preparation and public defence of a master's thesis. The preparation process is supervised by an academic supervisor who is assigned in the first semester. Only teachers with a scientific degree (PhD) may be supervisors of students' master theses. Every student has to prepare a research plan and to present it to the Master's Thesis Qualification Committee. Students may choose the topics for their theses depending on the specificity of their work, or they may choose a research topic proposed by the departments. Information on the proposed research topics and potential supervisors is available in the University intranet *FirstClass*. Members of the Qualification Committee may not be members of the Defence Committee.

¹⁵Law on Higher Education of Lithuanian Republic; Regulations of Integrated Studies; Lithuanian National Health Concept; Lithuanian Health Conception; Lithuanian Health Programme; Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008–2013 (URL: http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_overview/Documents/strategy_wp_en.pdf); WHO (1999) Health 21: the health for all policy framework for the WHO European Region. WHO Regional Office for Europe, Copenhagen.

¹⁶Nursing Midwifery Services Strategic Directions 2011 -2015.WHO

¹⁷<http://www.icn.ch/>

¹⁸<http://www.nursingsociety.org/>

¹⁹Regulation for Writing and Defending Theses for Master Study Programmes. Approved at the meeting of the Nursing Faculty Council on 12 April 2012, protocol No. SF-4-14 http://lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/1283/magistro_baig_reglamentas_spausdinti_2.pdf

35. The Qualification Committee evaluates and approves research plans and also follows the progress of the preparation of thesis. The research must be carried out based on the approved plan. At the end of each semester, students prepare reports on the progress of their research projects. A special book in Lithuanian²⁰, which is accessible to students in the Library, also is recommended for preparation of their thesis.

36. Master students' graduation theses are uploaded to a special folder of the *FirstClass* system to be evaluated by the Defence Committee; only members of the Defence Committee have access to the theses before the defence.

37. The Defence Committee is approved by the order of the Rector and includes researchers from other departments as well as social partners. Prior to the defence, all the theses are checked with the anti-plagiarism system, and after the defence, are stored in the eLAB with public access.

38. The reviewer's evaluation makes 30% of the mark for the graduation thesis, and the evaluation given by the members of the Defence Committee – 70%. If the student disagrees with the evaluation, he or she may apply to the Appeals Commission, created by the order of the Rector.

Summary

39. The analysis showed that the *Clinical Nursing* programme is organised in two different forms (full-time and part-time) based on the same study subjects and involving nearly the same team of teachers. This ensures flexibility of the studies and is adjusted to the needs of working professionals. Academic staff from different departments of the university is engaged in the teaching process, what guarantees the high-level qualifications of teachers involved in delivering particular study subjects in rehabilitation and geriatrics.

3. THE TEACHING STAFF

3.1. Academic staff

40. Academic staff from 5 departments of the Nursing and Public Health Faculties takes part in the teaching process of *Clinical Nursing* programme (full-time and part-time). Staff is employed and certification is performed in accordance with the requirements outlined in the following documents: the Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania²¹, Procedure for the Organisation and Certification of Admission to LSMU Teacher's and Scientific Worker's Positions²², and Principles of LSMU Employees' Recruitment and Assessment²³. The qualifications and suitability of lecturers are assessed every 5 years according to their achievements in academic, scientific and practical areas. If an applicant to be assessed fails to meet the set minimum requirements, his/her academic activities are suspended. An existing system of the assessment ensures the high qualifications of academic staff and its compliance to the formal requirements.

3.2. Validity of the staff structure

41. Appropriate teachers and students ratio is guaranteed at the lectures, seminars, practical work, and based on as study process organised in accordance with the Lithuanian Republic Labour Code²⁴; approved and regularly updated by LSMU Senate' „regulation of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences teachers staff workload and payment"²⁵, where is regulated teacher's workload. There is an optimal ratio between students writing final thesis and their supervisors: is aimed, that one leader shouldn't have more than 3-4 students supervising for final thesis.

²⁰ Pauliukėnas L, Šeškevičius A. Reabilitacijos ir slaugos studijų krypčių mokslinių darbų rengimas (Preparation of Research Papers in Study Fields of Rehabilitation and Nursing). Kaunas: Vitae Literae publishing house. 2008

²¹ Labour Code of the Republic of Lithuania (Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2002, No. 64-2569; Official Gazette Valstybės žinios, 2002, No. 71).

²² Procedure for the Organisation and Certification of Admission to LSMU Teacher's and Scientific Worker's Positions. Approved by the LSMU Senate on 20 Jun 2014, resolution No. 47-03

²³ Principles of LSMU Employees' Recruitment and Assessment. Approved by the LSMU Senate on 30 Jun 2014, resolution No. 47-03.

²⁴ LR Labour code. No. IX-926; 4 Jun 2002

²⁵ Senate resolution No. 48-01 30 Jun 2014 Regulation of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences teachers staff workload and payment

42. Teacher qualifications are high and allow for achieving programme goals and objectives. Teacher workload is distributed in an optimal teaching, scientific, and other activities. There is a sufficient number of teachers in the LSMU *Clinical Nursing* programme, and the Faculty actively participates in research work (78.6% of all teachers in the programme hold a doctor's degree).

43. The LSMU *Clinical Nursing* programme is provided with a sufficient number of technical staff - every LSMU unit (department/ clinic/ institute) has studies administrator responsible for the help in organising the study process; there is a technician responsible for the material department's values, and its care. Also LSMU is an Information technology centre that takes care for computer and hardware maintenance. All teachers and students in case of necessity, have the opportunity to get a support of the technical staff.

44. Teacher turnover is very low; there are main causes - a natural change of the staff (including retirement, maternity leave) and the end of the contract. This staff change does not affect the programme's quality.

45. The list, qualifications and professional activities of all the members of academic staff are presented in the Annex 2. CVs of all the members of academic staff are presented in the Annex 3.

3.3. Personnel competence

Staff experience and operational compliance to the study program

46. The experience of the staff is sufficient. Teachers are not only experienced educators but also competent researchers and experts in nursing practice. Some of them are invited to work groups at the Ministry of Health, the National Health Board, the WHO, the EU Commission and other national and international organisations. Prof. J. Macijauskienė is a State senior specialist for nursing appointed by the Health Care Ministry and a Board member of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Lithuania. Most of the teachers are the members of relevant professional organisations. These practical activities give opportunities to obtain and update practical, methodological and theoretical experience and enable to achieve study programme aims by the unity of studies, research and practice. Research areas of the academic staff are related to the study programme. More detailed information about research areas, competencies, participation in the research projects and the most important publications are presented in the CVs of staff (Annex 3).

47. *Full-time and part time Master of Clinical Nursing programme.* The percentages of the academic personnel with more than 10 years of scientific, pedagogical, and practice experience are 42.9%, 85.7% and 71.4%, respectively (Annex 2). Teachers' research and practical experience contribute to the teaching quality in terms of case studies and evidence-based data presented.

3.4. Participation in projects and research activities

48. The majority of academic staff of the *Clinical Nursing* programme is involved in research activities related to the topics of the taught subjects by academic staff. Five different research projects, such as „Integration of Self-management and Palliation: Implications for Health policy and nursing education“(IMPACT, financed by EU-US Atlantis program); “Supporting innovative learning approaches through Mobile Integration in the workplace Oncology Nursing (SMILEON) (518383-LLP-1-ES-LEONARDO-LMP); „EmpNURS - Empowering of professionalization of nurses through mentorship“ (510111-LLP-1-2010-1-FI-ERASMUS-ECUE);“Create clinical training centres for Public health, Nursing and Physical therapies studies programme students” (ELI) (Nr.Vp1-2.2-ŠMM-07-k-01); “Increasing international studies and renew Nursing, Public Health and Food safety studies programme” (SVEVIT)“ Nr. VP1-2.2-ŠMM-07-K-02-050 and other, were carried out during 2010-2014.

49. Scientific publications of different types were published during 2010-2014: 31 ISI indexed articles, 8 textbooks, 26 educational books, 3 monographs, and other methodological papers (totally 392 publications for all programme teachers).

50. Teachers of the Department of Nursing and Care involved in this programme have published textbooks “Clinical Nursing”, “Dissemination of Research Data in Nursing”, and “Practical teaching of Nursing”, which are necessary

for the teaching of the subjects of the programme. All publications of academic staff are presented in the Table 1, Annex 3.

51. The members of academic staff are also members of editorial or reviewer boards for a number of peer-reviewed journals, such as “Medicina” (IF 0,508), “Nursing education, research and practice – NERP”, published by the Department of Nursing and Care in cooperation with the Faculty of Nursing of LSMU; “Central European Journal of Nursing and Midwifery”; “Clinical Nursing Studies”; “Nursing Education in Practice”, and “Social health”. Moreover, the academic staff is actively involved in carrying out scientific research and presents its results in national and international scientific conferences, seminars and public events.

3.5. Exchange activities of academic staff

52. Teachers working in the programme quite actively participate in teacher mobility activities. According to the signed teacher exchange agreements (*ERASMUS LLP*, of which the Faculty of Nursing has 19) and other bilateral agreements (multi-professional networks financed by NordPlus such as *Trollnet*, *Nordman*, *Rosa Linea*, and *Nordinet*), each year teachers of the *Clinical Nursing* programme travel to other European universities to deliver lectures and enhance their knowledge. Teachers from foreign universities also come to the Faculty of Nursing to deliver lectures and conduct scientific-practical seminars. The dynamics of teacher mobility over the evaluated period is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1. The Number of Teachers Outgoing for Academic Work

Academic year	Number	Percentage of all permanent teachers in the programme	Countries
2010-2011	13	32.5	Finland, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Germany, Holland, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, Scotland
2011-2012	15	37.5	Finland, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Germany, Holland, Italy, Belgium, Sweden, the USA, Canada, Spain, Denmark, Romania, Iceland
2012-2013	10	21.5	Sweden, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Germany, the USA, Denmark, Holland, Romania, Kazakhstan
2013-2014	12	28.8	Sweden, Turkey, Kazakhstan

53. Teachers of the programme actively participate in the activities financed by the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL). Within the framework of the RCL project, the Faculty received visiting teachers Dr. C. Bradbury and Dr. O. Herber from Dundee University, who conducted scientific seminars on research and qualitative studies. There is also active cooperation with universities in the USA. Professor Anne R. Bavier from Connecticut University (USA) visited the Department from 14th May to 14th June in 2014. Her visit was financed by the Fulbright Scholar Programme (USA). Professor Bavier worked assisting our teachers to increase dialogue in the classroom, by using various teaching techniques, explaining theoretical basis, sharing experience with the teachers in transition theoretical knowledge to clinical practice and, finally, working with small groups of hospital employees who must provide clinical instructions (mentorship) for students.

54. The students of the *Clinical Nursing* programme are encouraged to participate in the meetings and lectures delivered by guest lecturers. The University has developed close collaboration with other universities; incoming lectures were from Scotland, Norway, Portugal, England, Netherland, Finland, Czech Republic, America, Sweden, Denmark, and Turkey (see Table 3.2.).

Table 3.2. The Number of Teachers Incoming for Academic Work

Academic Year	Number of incoming teachers	Country
2010 - 2011	8	Finland, Holland, Portugal, the United Kingdom, Scotland, Portugal, the USA
2011 - 2012	4	Sweden, Norway, Turkey
2012 - 2013	4	Holland, Finland
2013 - 2014	8	Turkey, the USA, Sweden

Summary

55. The University has the sufficient resources of academic staff to implement the *Clinical Nursing* programme. An adequate number of academic staff holds a PhD. The majority of academic staff has practical, academic and/or research experience of at least 3 years in the field of the taught subject. Different experience related to the field of the programme is gained by the members of academic staff through their activities outside the university (being national and/or international experts, working in public and private health care and public health institutions). The University provides additional resources to staff mobility and exchange. A low rate of staff turnover assures the stability and continuity of the programme.

4. FACILITIES AND LEARNING RESOURCES

4.1. Quality of classrooms and equipment used for studies

56. Studies of the second-cycle programme *Clinical Nursing* are carried out according to the LSMU general order of the organisation of studies, coordinating the time and the place of the studies with other programmes of the University (this is the responsibility of the LSMU Study Centre).

57. A part of the LSMU Department of Nursing and Care is located in the premises of the Public Establishment Kaunas Clinical Hospital (*address: Laisvės ave. 17*), and has two auditoria with 30 places each, 2 auditoria with 20 places each, 1 auditorium with 10 places, and one room – for student consultation; another part of the Department is located at the Public Establishment Hospital of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences Kauno klinikos (*address: Eivenių str. 2*), the premises of the Clinic of Cardiology, where it has an auditorium with 20 places.

58. All auditoria and the consultation room are equipped with projectors, computers, and internet connection. The Department of Nursing and Care has acquired 15 tablet computers, 4 mini computers, and 4 laptop computers, which are used during seminars. During the defence of Master's theses, each member of the Defence Committee may view the theses on the computer.

59. The LSMU Department of E-Studies (*address: Sukilėlių ave. 17*) organises distance lectures and e-classes. They may also be broadcasted over the internet or recorded and saved in the server. In addition to that, direct video conferences or tele-consultations may be organised as well.

60. The following software is installed in the computers in the LSMU auditoria, the LSMU Library, and the Health Science Information Centre: MS Word, MS Excel, Statistica, Epi Info 2000, and SPSS; Anti-Virus software is used for virus protection, and thus all the computers have a safe access to the internet.

61. The LSMU Department of Nursing and Care has bases for practical training in University and other hospitals, but clinical practice is not included in the second-cycle study programme *Clinical Nursing*.

62. The studies also take place at the Faculty of Public Health (Vydūnas campus, Šiaurės pr. 57, 11 classrooms): 1 classroom for 100 students, 8 classrooms for 20-50 students and 2 classrooms for 50-60 students. Classrooms are equipped with white boards, computers and multimedia projectors and furniture that can be rearranged for work in groups.

63. The strategic aim of the LSMU development includes the renovation of the infrastructure of studies, and an overhaul of the Teaching Laboratory Building (*address: Eivenių str. 4*) is scheduled to be completed in the autumn

of 2015²⁶. The premises of the Department of Nursing and Care are planned to be situated in the renewed Teaching Laboratory Building. The strategic aim of further development of the LSMU also **includes a new study and research base of the Faculty of Nursing** – i.e. a new building with the total area of ca. 5.500 m²; the technical project has already been completed, and construction work is scheduled to begin this year.

4.2. Learning resources

64. In 2007, the LSMU Library and the Health Science Information Centre (*address: Eivenių str. 6*) moved into a new building that meets international standards. On Mondays to Fridays, the LSMU Library is open from 07.30 to 22.30, and on Saturdays and Sundays – from 10.00 to 20.00. The visitors of the Library may use 4 reading rooms with a total of 332 work places, of which 56 are computerised, 3 reading rooms for group learning, a computer training class with 12 places, and seminar and conference halls.

65. The LSMU Library has available main publications required for the programme. Each year, analyses of teachers' and students' needs for books are conducted, and possibilities for acquiring the necessary books are sought based on those needs.

66. The LSMU Library subscribes to Lithuanian biomedical journals and foreign periodicals. All information is provided in the Library's website <http://library.lsmu.lt>. Electronic databases are accessible to the visitors: currently, there are 19 open access databases and 16 subscription-only databases; newly tested databases may also be used regularly. The LSMU Library subscribes to the database "Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition", which contains 550 journals on nursing (Nursing Research; Nursing Ethics; Nursing Education; Nursing Management and other). Employees of the LSMU Library conduct the search of information in databases for full-text articles, and order copies of articles in journals and books from Lithuanian and foreign libraries. The LSMU Interlibrary Loan orders copies of articles as well as various publications from Lithuanian and foreign libraries.

67. Master students may use the *specialised nursing science reading room* located in the premises of the University Hospital (*a subdivision of the LSMU Library; address: Eivenių str. 2*). This reading room is open from 8.00 to 17.00 on Mondays to Thursdays, and from 8.00 to 15.45 – on Fridays. The specialised nursing science reading room has 14 computerised working places, and two equipped rooms can be used for writing research papers. The employees provide consultations concerning search in databases. The reading room has 741 publications (books, journals, etc.). In 2014, the reading room had 16 853 visitors, and lent 35 945 publications.

68. The Department of Nursing and Care issues a scientific peer-reviewed journal NERP (Nursing Education, Research, & Practice) in English. The journal NERP is issued twice yearly. Its purpose is to accumulate the newest data and disseminate the results of scientific research that are important for nursing practice. The first issue of the journal was released in 2011. Its website is <http://nerp.lsmuni.lt/>.

69. In 2012, the intranet system *FirstClass* was introduced in all study cycles and for communication between University subdivisions. This software facilitates cooperation between research personnel, teachers, and students. Students have continuous access to the material of the lectures – they can see all the updates, may have an online discussion with their teachers, and may ask questions on the topic of interest or (to clarify something) to any subdivision of the University. Each user has his or her interactive calendars, which allows for efficient time planning. The address of the University's *FirstClass* system is <http://fc.lsmuni.lt/>

Summary

70. The number of auditoria, laboratories and other facilities at LSMU is sufficient to ensure a successful teaching and learning process. The LSMU library is fully supplied with books, methodical and scientific publications necessary for studies. Scientific literature and databases are continuously updated according to the needs of students and teachers. Teaching and demonstration equipment required for lectures and seminars is provided. There are possibilities to renew the equipment and to rearrange the furniture for students to work in groups.

²⁶Resolution of the Council of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences "On the Approval of the Altered Guidelines of the Strategic Development of the LSMU, their Implementation Plan, and Descriptions of Evaluation Criteria for Projects" No. 6-10. Kaunas, 20 December, 2013.

5. STUDY PROCESS AND STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

5.1. Admission to studies

71. To be admitted to the study programme *Clinical Nursing*, candidates should have *bachelor's degree*, the professional qualification of a general practice nurse or a midwife, and a valid practice licence. Individuals with a vocational bachelor's degree may also be admitted after completing bridging courses.

5.2. Mean competition scores of admitted students

72. The formula of the competition score consists of the sum of the mean evaluation score of subjects listed in the transcript of records, the evaluation of research activity (up to 2 points), and the mean evaluation score of the motivational interview (up to 3 points).

73. During the academic year of 2013-2014, 7 applications for full-time studies and 17 applications for part-time studies in the second-cycle study programme *Clinical Nursing* were received. On the competition basis, 24 students were admitted to studies in this Master degree programme. The mean competition score of students admitted to full-time studies was 9.0 points, the highest score being 9.41 points, and the lowest score – 8.26 points. The mean competition score of students admitted to part-time studies was 8.0 points, the highest competition score being 9.64 points, and the lowest score – 7.5 points (Table 5.1.). All study places are state-financed.

Table 5.1. Mean competition score of students entering Master studies in *Clinical Nursing*

Year	Highest score		Lowest score		Mean score	
	Full-time	Part-time*	Full-time	Part-time*	Full-time	Part-time*
2009-2010	9.4	-	8.3	-	8.9	-
2010-2011	9.4	-	8.0	-	8.62	-
2011-2012	9.0	9.6	8.0	8.0	8.59	8.89
2012-2013	9.6	9.5	8.0	7.5	8.7	8.4
2013-2014	9.41	9.64	8.26	7.5	9	8

* Part – time studies were introduced in 2011

5.3. The ratio of students who were admitted to studies and who successfully completed the study programme

74. Table 5.2 summarises the number of submitted applications, admitted students and graduates in the full-time and part-time study programmes during 2009-2014. There is a trend towards a decrease in the number of students enrolled into the part-time programme in recent years that is caused by the increasing number of state-funded places in the full-time programme

Table 5.2. Total number of submitted applications, admitted students and graduates in the full-time and part-time study programmes during 2009-2014

Year	No. of submitted applications		No. of admitted students		No. of graduates	
	Full-time	Part-time*	Full-time	Part-time*	Full-time	Part-time*
2009-2010	12	-	12	-	12	-
2010- 2011	12	-	12	-	9	-
2011- 2012	20	31	11	11	9	-
2012- 2013	21	31	17	25	14	-
2013- 2014	7	17	7	17	14	10

* Part – time studies were introduced in 2011

5.4. Volume and forms of student participation in scientific, artistic, and applied scientific activities

75. **Scientific activity.** According to the current Regulation for Writing and Defending Theses for Master Study Programmes of the LSMU Medical Academy Faculty of Nursing²⁷, all Master students have to present the results of their research in scientific conferences, and to submit the documented proof to the Qualification Committee. The dissemination of the results of students' research is provided in Table 5.3.

Table 5.3. Scientific conferences where material of graduation theses and publications are presented

No.	Research activity	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
1	International conferences	-	1	1	1	-
2	National conferences	27	16	5	3	-
3	Publications	4	13	2	2	-

76. Students may participate in the activity of the Students' Scientific Society (SSS). SSS is an organisation of young researchers and students striving for research. In addition to that, the University has actively operating research circles that unite like-minded people who are interested in the same field of health care.

77. **Artistic activity.** Students are invited to join the activity of various organisations of the LSMU, including the dance and music ensemble "Ave vita", the choir "Neris", or the association "Gaja" – a branch of the Lithuanian Catholic Federation "Ateitis" ("The Future") where both University students and graduates participate.

78. **Other activity.** After the lectures, students may join a dialog with representatives of the Catholic Church by participating in the activity of the LSMU group "Sielovada" ("Pastoral Care"). They may also spend active leisure time by participating in health promotion sessions or sport aerobics training, or by playing basketball, tennis, table tennis, or badminton. Students have access to health improvement, pool swimming, the sport of athletics, or football training.

79. The University provides an opportunity for *Clinical Nursing* students to participate in students' exchange programmes. *Clinical Nursing* students had a possibility to participate in the Nordinet network activities (founded by Nord Plus programme). This network provided an opportunity for students to study and practise (maximum 4 weeks). Two students were in Sweden and Island.

80. These mobility programmes allow improving English language, clinical and communication skills as well as learning about a new culture and becoming more open-minded.

81. Even though, students' participation in the mobility programmes is rather low due to difficulties combining work and travelling: nearly all *Clinical Nursing* students are employed (very often – head nurses of the departments), and use "study leave time" for studies, thus exchange programmes become challenging because of lack of free from work time. However, more intensive mobility of teachers contributes to adding international perspectives to the teaching process.

²⁷ Regulation for Writing and Defending Theses for Master Study Programmes of the LSMU Faculty of Nursing. Approved at the meeting of the Faculty Council on 12 April 2012, protocol No. SF-4-14

5.5. Academic and social support

5.5.1. Academic support

79. At the beginning of each new subject, Master students of *Clinical Nursing* programme always have introductory lectures, during which they are acquainted with the aims and objectives of the subject, learning materials, subject agenda, assignments, assessment, and the calculation of a final mark.

80. The University provides facilities and support services to assist students in their studies. Students have access to the selected computer labs during working hours. The Library has more than 200 000 different volumes (books, journals, etc.). In addition to this, the Library offers free access to the main journals in the field of nursing (they can be accessed from computers connected to the University network). The Information Centre provides the following services: information services, copying-printing, binding documents, interlibrary loan services, scanning, layout and printing of posters. In addition, students can make reservations of classrooms for studying in groups. All the campuses have coffee shops and canteens.

81. If students have some questions, they are welcome to ask for help from their teachers or administrative staff at any time. Master's students who are also the members of various students' organisations receive support from their senior colleagues.

5.5.2. Social support

82. *Student's loans*. Students can be granted study loans allocated by the State Studies Foundation:

- For living expenses (the amount of loans for living expenses assigned additionally in the spring semester shall not exceed 25 basic social benefits (942 EU).
- State-supported loans for studies in accordance with international (inter-institutional) agreements. This amount during the whole academic year shall not exceed 60 basic social benefits (2261 EU).

83. Students wishing to receive a State loan or a State-supported loan have to fill in an application form on the Foundation website and submit it to the Foundation before the indicated deadline.

84. *Support for disabled students*. The LSMU supports financially disabled students with the following means:

- A monthly targeted benefit for special needs in the amount of 50% of the state social insurance basic pension (currently 180 Lt/52 EUR);
- A targeted benefit to partially pay tuition fees for partially state-funded and non-funded students in the amount of 3.2 basic social benefits per semester (currently 416 Lt).

85. Targeted benefits for students with disabilities are allocated by the LSMU, and their payment is administered by the State Studies Foundation. The amount of a targeted benefit is 4 basic social benefits per month. Targeted benefits are allocated for one study semester including the exam and vacation periods of that semester, but not longer than up to the end of studies. Disabled students who wish to receive financial support have to submit the required documents to the LSMU Study Department.

86. *Social scholarships*. Social scholarships can be awarded to:

- Students whose families (or students themselves) have a right to receive or receives social benefits;
- Students with a 45% (or lower) level of working capacity or severe or moderate disability;
- Students who were under guardianship (care) until adulthood or who have deceased parents (or a single parent).

87. Students meeting the criteria to be awarded memorial scholarship can apply for memorial scholarship of Birutė Petrikas in nursing which was established by Lithuanian National Foundation, Inc (USA) .

5.6. Assessment of achievements

88. The assessment of students' achievements is directly linked to the learning outcomes. The principles of assessment are set in the LSMU Regulations for Studies²⁸, the LSMU Procedure for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes²⁹ and are outlined in the descriptions of every study subject. The grading scale employed is as follows: 10 (excellent), 9 (very good), 8 (good), 7 (enough), 6 (satisfactory), 5 (weak), 4 (bad, not passed) and 3 (not passed). The lowest positive grade is 5 (weak). The requirements of subjects differ slightly; nevertheless, in the majority of subjects, participation in lectures and seminars, performance of individual work, written tests, preparation of group reports and presentation at teaching conferences as well as a written exam are required. For ensuring the objectiveness of the assessment of student's work, all tests and exams are organised in written form using special coding to ensure anonymity. During the presentations of individual reports, special committees of experts are created, and students themselves are involved in the assessment of the projects done by their colleagues. Students must conduct their studies at the University honestly, ethically and in accordance with the accepted standards of academic conduct. Any form of academic conduct that contradicts these standards is academic misconduct and is unacceptable. Some students engage deliberately in academic misconduct with intent to deceive. This conscious, pre-meditated form of cheating is one of the worst forms of fraudulent academic behaviour, for which the University has zero tolerance and for which penalties, including expelling from the University, can be applied.

89. In September 2014, new regulations for studies have been introduced³⁰.

90. Students applying for deferred assessment or special consideration on medical grounds must submit a medical certificate issued by a registered medical or dental practitioner.

91. The assessment of students is described in the documents approved by the LSMU Senate and profiles of each subject. Students are directly informed about their academic achievements and can find them out by logging on the internet database with their own username and password.

92. The procedure of assessment is explained at the beginning of each subject. The LSMU uses a cumulative score method, i.e., the assessment of different type is included in calculating the final mark. Teachers present study methods, activities and weighted percentages of the final evaluation.

93. The list of the defended theses in the *Clinical Nursing* programme in 2013 and 2014 is presented in Annex 4.

5.7. Professional activities of graduates

94. The Career Centre conducted a questionnaire-based survey of the graduates of the *Clinical Nursing* programme who received their Master's degrees in 2010-2014. Out of 70 graduates, 44 participated in the survey. Most students (59%, n=26) became employed while studying, others (n=7) found a job within one month since graduation, and 3 students found a job within per 2-5 months since graduation. Most students became employed in Kaunas (72%, n=32), one female student went to work in Norway, and others started working in the district (n=4) or in another large city (n=3). Currently, 42 students are employed, and two female students are on maternity leave. Thirty students stated that Master studies helped their career and professional activity. Given the chance to choose again, 31 students stated that they would choose the same programme, and one – that she would prefer the same programme, but in another city.

95. In 2014, only one graduate (she graduated in 2009) of the *Clinical Nursing* programme was registered at Kaunas territorial labour exchange office.

Summary

96. Good relationships are established between teachers and students. Students' academic and social support system is well-functioning. The organisation of the study process allows combining studies and work. Students actively participate in scientific activity. The alumni positively evaluate the studies and would recommend them to their friends. All the graduates are employed. The number of students accepted to this programme varies every year.

²⁸LSMU Regulations for Studies <http://lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/4891/06-20-13.pdf>

²⁹LSMU Procedure for the Assessment of Learning Outcomes http://lsmuni.lt/media/dynamic/files/2086/studentu_pasiekimu_vertinimo_reglamentas.pdf

6. PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

6.1. The main documents in the management of the programme and the process of management

100. The main LSMU documents governing the management of the study programme are as follows:

- 1) Statute of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences³⁰;
- 2) Regulations of First-Cycle, Second-Cycle and Integrated Studies at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences³¹;
- 3) Work Regulations of the Senate³²;
- 4) Regulations of the Assessment of Learning Achievements³³;
- 5) Regulations of the Faculty Council at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences³⁴;
- 6) Work Regulations of the Commission of Studies and Science of the Council of the Nursing Faculty at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences³⁵;
- 7) Provisions of Study Programme Committees at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences³⁶;
- 8) Procedure for the Development, Improvement and Management of Study Programmes at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences³⁷;
- 9) Provisions of Study Quality Assurance³⁸;
- 10) Procedure for the Organisation and Certification of Admission to LSMU Teacher's and Scientific Worker's Positions at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences³⁹.

6.2. Programme administration

101. The Study Programme Committee, which is responsible for the contents of the programme and educational quality assurance as well as continuous improvement, is proposed by the Dean and approved by the Order of the Rector.

102. Every five years the Council of the Nursing Faculty is formed of the permanent faculty teachers who have not less than 0.5 of workload, the other teachers involved in teaching and students as it is allowed by the Regulation of the University. Its main purpose is education and research. Currently, the Council of the Nursing Faculty consists of 13 members, the Council works under the Council Regulation⁴⁰. The Council of the Nursing Faculty has a continuous Research and Study Commission which considers and discuss study related regulations and proposals, considers the resolutions and works out the conclusions to be submitted to the Council for further development of plans, programmes and curriculum with regard to quality.

103. *Collegiality and personal responsibility for decision making.* The University has Collegial Administrative Bodies: the University Council, the University Senate, and the university Rector as a sole executive body. The administration of the university is based on the principles of democracy, competence, and self-efficacy⁴¹. The First-Cycle, Second-Cycle and Integrated Studies at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences are organised and coordinated by the University Study Centre. The study related issues (the assessment of study plans, the assessment of learning

³⁰ Statute of the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, 30 June 2010, No. XI-973.

³¹ Regulations of First-Cycle, Second-Cycle and Integrated Studies at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 20 Jun 2014, No. 47-05.

³² Work Regulations of the Senate at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 30 Jun 2014, No. 2-01.

³³ Regulations of the Assessment of Learning Achievements. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 14 December 2012, No. 14-07.

³⁴ Regulations of the Faculty Council at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 28 October 2011, No. 48-01.

³⁵ Work Regulations of the Commission of Studies and Science of the Council of the Faculty of Public Health at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the Council of the Faculty of Nursing, 21 June 2012.

³⁶ Provisions of Study Programme Committees at the LSMU. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 14 December 2012, No. 25-08.

³⁷ Procedure for the Development, Improvement and Management of Study Programmes at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 30 May 2012, No. 21-12.

³⁸ Provisions of Study Quality Assurance at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 20 January 2012, No. 17-01.

³⁹ Procedure for the Organisation and Certification of Admission to LSMU Teacher's and Scientific Worker's Positions at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LSMU Senate, 20 Jun 2014, No. 43-03.

⁴⁰ LSMU Regulation of the Faculty Council. Approved by Senate, October 28, 2011, No. 14-07

⁴¹ LSMU Statute. The LRS decision on June 30, 2010, No. XI-973 (a new version of LR Seimas (Parliament) decision on June 28, 2012, No. 2147

outcomes, the assessment of study quality, and other academic and strategic faculty issues) are presented and discussed at the meetings of the rectorate. The meetings are held twice a month and consist of university administration, key department managers and students' representatives. Senate meetings take place once a month in various issues of academic matters and also include the approval of study plans for students, the establishment of rules and regulations, and other study related issues. There is an Internal Audit Service in the University. In order of appearance of various different questions temporary working groups with responsible persons are created for solving the issues.

104. *Programme information base.* The quality and administration of the Study Programme is regulated by the documents approved in LSMU. These documents can be found in Dean's of the Faculty office, relative departments, and on the University Web site at <http://www.lsmuni.lt>. All the activities which are related to incoming and outgoing documents, the Rector and Senate resolutions and other material, contact information of applicants are stored in the Faculty Dean's office and in the other responsible units. The sequence of decision-making, review of quality assurance and approval of selected is regulated comprehensively and clearly. LSMU implemented the project on "Lithuanian University of Health Sciences for the Enhancement of Performance" (project no. VP1-3.1-MES-07-K-02-062) which is designed for the improvement of document management and administration.

6.3. Study quality assurance

105. As stated in the Berlin Communiqué (2003), even the idea of Higher Education Institution autonomy itself means greater responsibility and accountability for all concerned as regards study quality: students, their parents, graduates, employers, and government institutions.

106. *The Relevance of Programme Quality Assessment.* LSMU has an internal system of quality assurance based on the European Higher Education Quality Assurance provisions and the quality assurance strategy approved by the Higher education Institution that includes operating procedures and measures to guarantee the study quality in Higher Education.

107. LSMU' internal quality assurance system is determined by the University Statute, by the Regulation of studies as well as by other RL legislation. The quality system is ensured in the following levels: 1) on a unit (teaching staff) level; 2) on the subject and module level; 3) on the faculty level; 4) on the university level; 5) on the national level, 6) on the international level. This quality assurance system corresponds to the international quality management system.

108. **At the national level**, the quality of studies is ensured by programme accreditation every 5 years, which aims at evaluating whether the programme complies with the regulations of the quality of studies.

109. **At the university level**, the assessment of the quality of studies is performed every year by evaluating the subjects (content, complexity, examinations and assessment forms). The results of assessment are presented to the academic community in the University newspaper 'Ave Vita', on the website and in the rector's annual report. LUHS service of internal audit performs regular inspections of the use of classrooms and following of timetables of subjects.

110. The Centre of Teachers' Educational Competency was established at LUHS in 2003. The aim of the Centre is to provide the continuous assurance of teachers' educational competency and to guarantee an appropriate level of educational competencies. The Centre has launched the Programme on Teachers' Quality Assurance. This programme was prepared based on the national collaborative project, which involved Kaunas University of Technology, Vilnius University and students' organisations, and was supported by the Open Society Foundation Lithuania.

111. The Commission of Quality Assurance and Monitoring of Studies is responsible for the development of the internal quality assurance system at LUHS (lead by the vice-rector for studies). The aim of this Commission is to assist faculties and the departments in the development of the continuing quality assurance system.

112. The assessment of students' knowledge and skills is considered as an important component in study quality assurance. The assessment procedures of students' academic achievements are described in the Regulations of First-Cycle, Second-Cycle and Integrated Studies at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. According to these

regulations, academic staff, rector, vice-rector and dean have a right to participate in exams as external observers. If the student does not agree with the mark, he/she has a right to lodge an appeal to the dean. In this case, the independent group of examiners is formed for the additional examination of the student.

113. **At the faculty level**, quality assurance is implemented through the activities of the Council of the NF (a more detailed description about the role of the Council in quality assurance is described in the section 'Management of the study programme'). Every year, the dean of the Faculty gives reports, which analyse the annual activities of departments to improve the quality of the *Clinical Nursing* study programme, to the Council. The dean's meetings with students are held at least once a year in order to get feedback on the implementation of various projects for the improvement of study quality and discussions on the effect of implementation. Each year during the autumn semester, the dean meets with the first-year students. Students can discuss different study-related questions, and if problems occur, appropriate departments are informed.

114. Since 2012, the Study Programme Committee of the *Clinical Nursing* programme has been involved in the quality assurance of the study programme. The Committee analyses the content of the programme and study subjects and prepares the recommendations for their improvements.

115. **At the departmental level**, quality assurance is implemented through the accreditation of academic staff (at least once in 5 years) and continuous teachers' professional development at the Centre of Teachers' Educational Competency. Quality of academic staff performance is evaluated by the criteria, which are applied for the accreditation of academic staff at the NF. These criteria describe the following: 1) minimum experience of teaching; 2) number of scientific articles, published during the 5-year period; 3) number of teaching materials prepared for students. Different criteria are applied for professors, associate professors, lecturers and assistant professors. The members of academic staff present research activities carried out by them and the list of publications during the meetings of the departments on an annual basis. The detailed analysis of the performance of the teachers is carried out at the department level before the accreditation of lecturers, which is carried out every 5 years.

116. The Study Programme Committee, which is responsible for the contents of the programme and educational quality assurance as well as continuous improvement, is proposed by the Dean and approved by the Order of the Rector Order. The chairman of the committee is assoc.prof. A.Blaževičienė, members – prof. S.Saliūnė, prof. L.Bagdonienė (Kaunas University of Technology); assoc. prof. O. Riklikienė, L.Urbietė (the Director of Nursing of the Republican Hospital of Kaunas), and student I.Žemaitaitytė.

117. The Study Programme Committee analyses information on the adequacy of learning outcomes to current achievements, evaluates the shortcomings of outcomes and recommends ways to eliminate them. Social partners are invited to present their opinion about the graduates' knowledge and practical abilities. The same questions are addressed to the graduates, aiming at indication of the possible ways for improvement of the programme and its outcomes. Activities are divided by the period of implementation: carried out on a month, regular, semester, or annual basis.

118. The Study Programme Committee is responsible for the quality of the studies. The *Clinical Nursing* Programme Committee develops and regularly updates the plan of activities, involving the objectives and implementations of teaching and evaluation methods. This Committee periodically carries out students' interviews about study quality, as well as meets students' representatives and discusses the issues of the organisation of the study programme. The study plan and the achieved outcomes of the programme as well as the necessary changes are reviewed after these meetings. Also, the Programme Committee systematically monitors the *First Class* uploaded lectures, compositions, the schedules of subjects studied and organizes meetings with programme teachers and students.

119. Regular assessment of the quality of studies is conducted by the Senate as approved by the Study Quality Assurance provisions at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences⁴² and Lithuanian University of Health Sciences curriculum development, improvement and management⁴³ is administered at the university level. Each year, a commission is composed regularly and delivered subjects in units are assessed (content, complexity, reporting and

⁴² Provisions of Study Quality Assurance at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LUHS Senate, 20 January 2012, No. 17-01.

⁴³ Procedure for the Development, Improvement and Management of Study Programmes at the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences. Approved by the LUHS Senate, 30 May 2012, No. 21-12.

evaluation forms), the results are analysed and presented at Rector meetings that ensure the elimination of shortcomings.

120. The precise quantitative and qualitative information (for example, the annual reports of the Rector) is announced publicly and constantly in the LSMU Website and in the local newspaper "Ave Vita" which deals with the programmes of study, with a higher education qualification, students' views on the quality of higher education, students' views on the quality of higher education that are considered by the authorities of the University related to operational assessments graduates for career performance. Other data needed to inform the society about ongoing studies can be published.

121. The Rector, the Vice-Rector and the Dean of the Faculty have the right to participate in the exams as external evaluators as it is determined by the LSMU study regulation.

122. Regular rising of teachers' professional and educational competence is ensured in quality of education on the international level as well as the participation in the international trainings and student exchange programmes.

123. *The Use of the Evaluation Results.* All the assessment results are used to improve the quality of the programme: the students' oral remarks and formal evaluations are taken into account.

124. *The Dissemination of the Quality Improvement Results.* Quality improvement in Study assessment of the programme is performed on periodic student surveys and meetings with students. The Study Quality Commission of LSMU annually presents the outcomes and assesses the changes in academic society.

125. *Student Participation in Quality Assessment and Improvement.* Students take a significant role in the management of the *Clinical Nursing* programme. Students' representatives are authorized to make proposals on different issues and to take personal responsibility for the implementation of such proposals. The students' representative is a member of the Study Programme Committee of the *Clinical Nursing* programme and holds the same rights as any other member in this Committee. In addition, the students' representative is a member of Commission for recruitment of academic staff at the NF and has the same voting rights as other members of this Commission. University students participate in the programme administration and quality improvement: students' representatives are in the Senate, in the Rectorate, in the Faculty Council, in the Study Programme Committees the Commission on Appeal as well as in other working groups where various issues are analysed. The students may refer to the departments, which are responsible for the curriculum management implementation, and to the Dean. Students can express themselves independently by expressing their points of view in the Students Union Website, by organising discussion forums, going directly to the departments and to the Dean's office, as well as participating in joint working groups or committees (the Faculty Council) together with the academic staff.

126. *Stakeholder Participation in Assessment.* The social partners are actively involved in improvement of the study programme (they are involved in the Study Programme Committee), in assessment of final works, and in participation of Career Days.

127. Social partners are involved in the management of the programme. Two representatives (the Director of Nursing of the Republican Hospital of Kaunas and the Professor at Kaunas Technology University) are the members of the Study Programme Committee of the *Clinical Nursing* programme. They have the same rights as other members of the Committee. More social partners are involved in the strategic planning meetings of the Study Programme Committee of the Clinical Nursing programme, which are held once a year.

127. The LSMU Senate approved "The Procedure of Student, Teacher and Stakeholder Opinion Research"⁴⁴ which regulates the internal degree of quality assurance testing procedures, techniques and tools for Lithuanian University of Health Sciences in connection with the study participants (teachers and students) and the social partners (employers, graduates and others) survey.

⁴⁴LSMU. Students', teachers', and social partners' (employers') opinion research order. Approved by Senate on October 11, 2013, resolution No. 37-11

Summary

The management system of Nursing study program is clear and effective. University identifies processes and key structures and persons responsible for program implementation and management. The LSMU operates monitoring system of study quality, the work of Programme Committees has justified expectations improving the quality of the programme; questionnaires registered a minimum number of complaints about the violations of pedagogical ethics. It is believed that effective functioning of Study Programme Committee enables to foster collaboration of whole academic community, students and social partners in program management.

7. CHANGES IN THE PROGRAMME AND ACTION PLAN

As a result of a detailed self-evaluation of the second-cycle study programme *Clinical Nursing*, its strengths and weaknesses as well as opportunities and threats have been identified. They are presented in Table 7.1. The further programme development will be based on opportunities identified and minimizing the weaknesses.

7.1 Table. SWOT analysis

Strengths	Opportunities
A flexible form of studies (full-time and part-time) provides a possibility to study for all willing individuals.	To transfer most subjects to distance teaching and learning.
Students with professional qualification of nursing or midwifery may study in the programme, which ensures the potential of future teachers of these specialities.	Increase student mobility via ERASMUS and other bilateral agreements.
A multidisciplinary and highly qualified team of teachers.	Introduce specialisations such as Nursing Administration or Nursing Educology into the study programme.
Subjects in the study programme meet the challenges of the modern health care system.	
Weaknesses	Threats
Insufficient student mobility.	A decrease in the population number will result in reduced numbers of entrants.
A relatively small number of students.	