

Vytautas Magnus
University
in 2021



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MCMXXII

VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY

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Rector's foreword

2021 was a special year for Vytautas Magnus University. Having begun to implement the University's new, ambitious strategy, we faced the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenge of organising online studies, and disruptions to the University's internationality and to its other activities. Solving the challenges has once again shown that the University community and its ability to work together has the most important role to play. Thus, it is not surprising that a large part of the University's efforts was devoted to recognising each person's value and their personal dignity, worth and uniqueness. Every member of the community is encouraged to cultivate their ideas, to seek opportunities to realise their potential and to fully express themselves. There is good reason to celebrate. The excellent results achieved in internationality, teaching and learning, science, sports and the arts in 2021 demonstrate clear progress, despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, good results were achieved in the area of teaching and learning: Vytautas Magnus University remained second largest in the country in terms of the number of enrolled students and strengthened its leading position in the training of teachers, where it continues to have the largest number of students studying education. The University also worked to further implement its concept of a comprehensive university and, with the accreditation of sports studies, has gained the distinction of being the Lithuanian university offering the largest number of degree programmes. The strengthening of the University's position and its leading position in the country are the result of setting well-defined strategic goals, continuously improving the quality of studies and building trust in the University by cultivating the academic values of *artes liberales* education.

Over 300 international and national projects involving science and business were carried out last year. And they did not go unnoticed: members of the University community have been entrusted with responsible duties at the national and international level, and significant awards have been received.

Our efforts have been recognised. In 2021, Vytautas Magnus University for the first time made it into the rankings of "QS World University Rankings by Subject", in which the best universities in the world are ranked by subject. In the international ranking of emerging universities in Europe and Central Asia, "QS EECA University Rankings", Vytautas Magnus University was ranked 61st among 451 ranked institutions of higher education; VMU ranked among the top 13.5 percent in the region.

We actively move forward today, even as we draw on our rich history. In 2021, the University organised more than fifty outstanding international events, including conferences, congresses, forums, exhibitions and scientific projects. We prepared our cultural contribution to "Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022", and we prepared for an especially important anniversary: the 100th anniversary of the University of Lithuania, in 2022. It is important to properly observe this anniversary, to remind the community and the general public of this achievement, one of the most important works performed by the interwar Government, which had a tremendous influence and significance to the society of that time as well as to the academic community of today. It is the origin of Vytautas Magnus University, a history of which we are proud and which we continue to cherish today.

We continue to explore frontiers and make progress in new areas. VMU has become the 50th university in the world to implement the International Baccalaureate Teacher Programme and the first such university in northern and central Europe. The university has been named a member of the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC) and has become the first university in Kaunas to join the network.

Last year, the pace of work accelerated on Transform4Europe, an alliance of seven European universities: Vytautas Magnus (Lithuania), Saarland (Germany), Alicante (Spain), Trieste (Italy), Sofia St. Kliment Ohridski (Bulgaria), University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland) and Estonian Academy of Arts. The alliance involved the University community in systematically implementing changes and fully and innovatively transforming its activities in key areas.

The understanding of the multifaceted Lithuanian identity was further strengthened in 2021 in the forums organised by VMU World Lithuanian University. The co-existence of Lithuanians from Lithuania and from the diaspora was highlighted during a visit by the world-renowned scientist of Lithuanian heritage, the anthropologist, primatologist, and prominent orangutan researcher, the recipient of an honorary doctorate degree from VMU, Professor Birutė Galdikas.

In 2021, Vytautas Magnus University aimed to continue improving favourable conditions for teaching and learning as well as for scientific and artistic activities, by developing an attractive and modern infrastructure at the University. The VMU President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre was opened; at present, it is the largest university sports complex in the country, designed for various sports and to meet the needs of various users. Works to protect a cultural heritage site, Aukštoji Freda Manor, have been completed. Living conditions in dormitories have been improved, and a variety of distance learning and communication tools have been updated.

The works and achievements of 2021 demonstrate that the mission of the University of Lithuania, established in Kaunas in 1922, continues today. Vytautas Magnus University creates the conditions necessary for a person's liberal education, develops partnerships, actively participates in the life of Lithuania, creates its future and contributes to the development of world culture and science.

In 2022, we have taken new, ambitious strides. Together, as a community, we have created a plan for where we are going and what we are seeking. We are following the new strategic plan for 2021–2027 and the guidelines for its implementation. It remains only to wish the community of Vytautas Magnus University to maintain its persistence and commitment, so that its work proceeds and achieves the results it seeks.

It is my great honour, together with VMU community, to create for Kaunas, for Lithuania, and for the world.

VMU Rector

prof. Juozas Augustis

Vytautas Magnus University: cohesive, creative, community-minded

Vytautas Magnus University's 2021 Annual Report has been prepared in accordance with VMU Strategic Plan for 2021–2027.

Vision

We are one of the strongest comprehensive universities in the Baltic region, operating according to the principles of *artes liberales*, bringing together the community to create for the future of Lithuania and Europe.

Mission

To be a community-minded institution for science, the arts, and teaching and learning, to continue the mission of the University of Lithuania, founded in Kaunas in 1922, to create the conditions necessary for a person's liberal education, to develop partnerships, to actively participate in the life of Lithuania, to create its future and to contribute to the development of world culture and science.

Values

Personal and academic freedom, democracy, openness, responsibility, creativity, community-mindedness, harmony, academic excellence.

Strategic objectives are objectives that ensure the implementation of the University's vision and express the prerequisites for the implementation of strategic goals:

- a cohesive and focused University community
- an international research University
- “Education 360”
- a harmonious balance between self-governance and responsibility
- the University's role in the development of society.

Founding authority

The founding authority of the University is the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of Resolution No. 1832 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania of 22 December 2010 on the investment of State assets, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania is entrusted with the implementation of the property and non-property rights and obligations of the State as the owner (shareholder) of the public institution Vytautas Magnus University. The equity value of the shareholders as of 31 December 2021 was EUR 24,277,900 (EUR 24,277,900 as of 31 December 2020).

Highlights in the governance of the university in 2021

At the meeting of VMU Senate held on 27 January, in accordance with the provision of Article 30(10) of VMU Statute, the deans of the University faculties and the heads of other academic subdivisions were approved by secret ballot on the recommendation of the Rector.

The following persons were approved as deans and heads of academic subdivisions until the end of the Rector's term of office:

- Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management – Assoc. Prof. Rita Bendaravičienė
- Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences – Prof. Saulius Mickevičius
- Dean of the Faculty of Humanities – Assoc. Prof. Rūta Eidukevičienė
- Dean of the Faculty of Informatics – Prof. Tomas Krilavičius
- Dean of the Faculty of Catholic Theology – Assoc. Prof. Benas Ulevičius
- Dean of the Faculty of Arts – Prof. Jurgita Staniškytė
- Dean of the Music Academy – Assoc. Prof. Saulius Gerulis
- Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy – Prof. Šarūnas Liekis
- Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences – Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Stelmokienė
- Dean of the Faculty of Law – Prof. Dainius Žalimas
- Director of the Botanical Garden of VMU – Dr. Nerijus Jurkonis
- Director of the Institute of Innovative Studies of the Education Academy – Prof. Airina Volungevičienė
- Director of the Education Research Institute of the Education Academy – Prof. Vilma Žydžiūnaitė

Prof. Lina Kaminskienė, Chancellor of VMU Education Academy, and Prof. Astrida Miceikienė, Chancellor of VMU Agriculture Academy, were approved by the University Council at a meeting held on 25 November 2020.

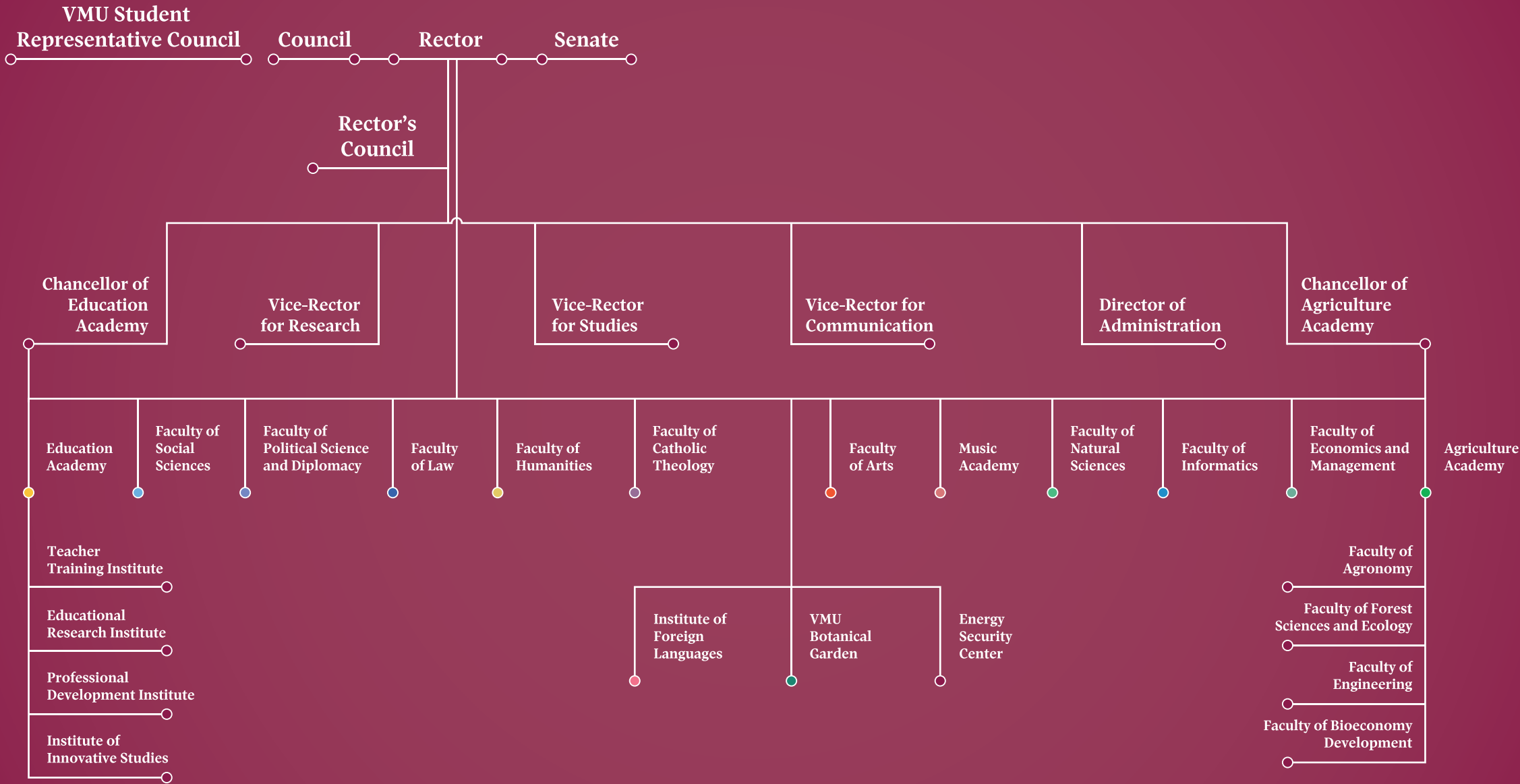
Following changes in the academic subdivisions of the VMU Agriculture Academy and the merging of the Faculties of Water and Land Management and Agricultural Engineering, scientific activity and the process of teaching and learning at the VMU Agriculture Academy have been carried out since 1 September 2021 in four faculties: Agronomy, Bioeconomy Development, Forest Sciences and Ecology, and Engineering.

The Deans of the faculties of the Agriculture Academy:

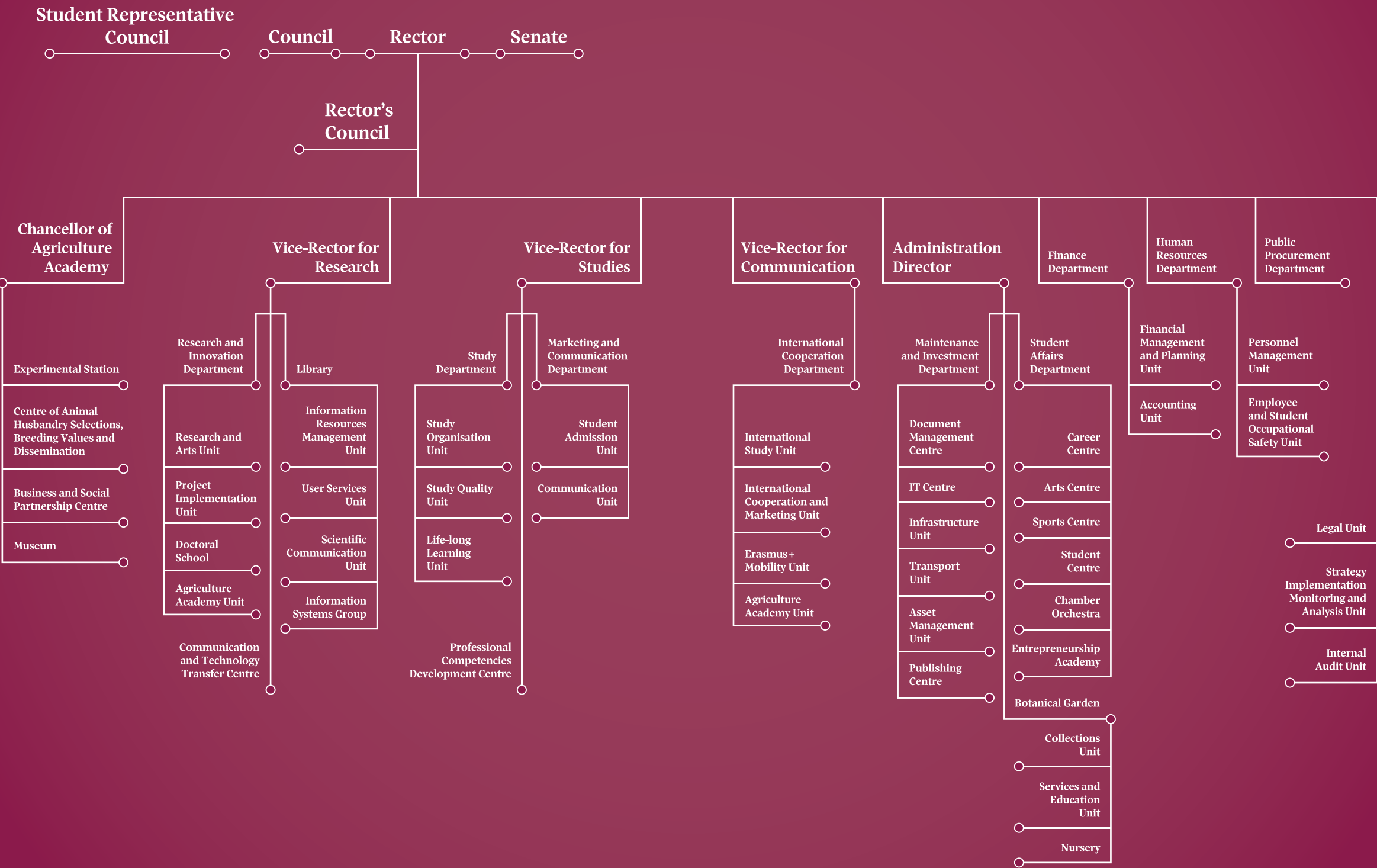
- Faculty of Agronomy – Assoc. Prof. Aida Adamavičienė
- Faculty of Bioeconomy Development – Assoc. Prof. Bernardas Vazonis
- Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology – Prof. Vitas Marozas
- Faculty of Engineering – Assoc. Prof. Rolandas Domeika

On 18–20 October 2021, VMU repeated the election to the VMU Labor Council. After counting the ballots, it was determined that 499 employees had participated in the elections, representing 28.83 percent of the total number of eligible voters (1731 employees). In accordance with paragraph 23 of the Description of the Procedure for Conducting the VMU Labor Council elections, as approved by Order No. 536 of the VMU Rector of 29 December 2017 (hereinafter referred to as the Description), the repeated election of the VMU Labor Council was declared to have taken place on 18–20 October 2021, because more than a quarter of the eligible employees had participated. Eleven members of the Labour Council were elected.

Structure of academic subdivisions of Vytautas Magnus University



Structure of non-academic subdivisions of Vytautas Magnus University



Main indicators for the VMU strategic plan for 2021–2027



Key indicators of the VMU strategic plan for 2021–2027*	Baseline value of the indicator (or 2020 value)	Actual value of the indicator in 2021	Indicator value achieved in 2021
I. COHESIVE AND FOCUSED UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY			
1. A positive change of 2 percent over 2 years in the indicators of staff well-being, as measured by survey.	67.2%	N/A**	N/A
2. Annual salary growth of not less than 5 percent for academic staff.	EUR 2,028	EUR 2,137	+ 5.4%
3. Annual growth of not less than 3 percent in the Fund of financial support provided by sponsors and supporters.	EUR 32,860	EUR 69,786	+ 112%
II. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY			
4. Five-year average annual increase of 5 percent in the number of articles in international scientific journals with a citation rate (natural sciences 1–2 Q CA WOS citation rate), per scientist.	2,258	2,526	+ 11.9%
5. An annual average budget increase of 3 percent for funded project applications.	EUR 35,741,300***	EUR 56,457,500	+ 53%
6. An average annual growth of 3 percent in the share of state budget R&D funds in the University's budget, per scientist/position.	EUR 9,900.84	EUR 10,407.60	+ 5%
7. An annual increase of not less than 5 percent in research funding, per researcher.	EUR 1,727.59	EUR 2,008.56	+ 16.26%
III. EDUCATION 360			
8. A total annual number of university students of not less than 7,000.	7,000	8,210	+ 17%
9. Eighty-five percent student satisfaction with study resources, each year.	85%	90 %	90%
10. Total annual employment rate of not less than 90 percent for graduates, 1 year after graduation (according to the Employment Service of the Republic of Lithuania).	90%	97 %	97%
11. Annual student dropout rate of not more than 15 percent.	15%	12.4%	12.4%
12. An annual rate of admission for foreign students of not less than 10 percent.	10%	13.1%	13.1 %
13. An annual rate of departing teachers for teaching of 15 percent.	15%	4.7%	4.7%
14. Annual number of teachers participating in professional development activities: not less than 25 percent.	25%	17.9%	17.9%
IV. HARMONIOUS BALANCE BETWEEN SELF-GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY			
15. A positive change of 2 percent over 2 years in the indicators for staff well-being, as measured by a survey.	67.2	N/A**	N/A
16. Infrastructure utilisation index of not less than 80 percent.	80%	82%	82%
V. THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF SOCIETY			
17. An annual number of international and national public projects of not less than 5.	5	10	10

* Approved in Resolution No. 4 of the VMU Council on 27 May 2021.

** Research on the psychological well-being of university staff is carried out every two years. Not carried out in 2021.

*** The share of implemented project budgets allocated to VMU.

The University's role in the development of society

Various activities of Vytautas Magnus University focus attention on the person, their personal dignity, worth and uniqueness, and every person is encouraged to look for opportunities to realise themselves through various activities, to uncover their creative potential.

Highlights, events, cooperative activities and socially responsible activities in 2021

Highlights and events

- VMU President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre opened its doors. At present, it is the largest university sports complex adapted to various sports and needs in the country. The sports complex, serving the needs of the University community, consists of a building with spectator stands (bleachers), a multi-use gymnasium suitable for basketball, futsal (indoor soccer), volleyball, and other sports, a soccer (football) field surrounded by running tracks and horizontal-jump runways, outdoor basketball courts, an outdoor tennis court, an artificial-grass tennis court, a beach volleyball court, and an all-purpose court. There is seating for 1,000 spectators in the outdoor stands (bleachers). The Lithuanian Paralympic Committee has awarded the VMU Sports Centre the "Acorn" symbol. This symbol of the country's Paralympic National Team indicates that the site is designed for use by persons with disabilities. VMU is the first institution of higher education in Lithuania to have a division receive this recognition, and it is also the first site in Kaunas to receive such recognition.
- To establish sustainable partnerships and to ensure the dissemination of University scientific research on a global scale, the VMU Communication and Technology Transfer Centre became a member of the University Industry Innovation Network in 2021. This network will ensure professional partnerships not only in the context of science-business cooperation, but also in the context of the development of the research community.
- Valdas Adamkus, the former President of the Republic of Lithuania and recipient of an honorary doctorate from VMU, turned 95, and on that noteworthy occasion the biography *Adamkus*, authored by VMU Prof. Egidijus Aleksandravičius and published by "Tyto alba" in 2021, was presented.
- VMU, together with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, Dalia Asanavičiūtė, Member of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania, the Education Commission of the Lithuanian World Community, and the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to Ireland organised the first virtual (online) Lithuanian Education Forum. The main topics of the discussion were the preservation of Lithuanian identity, the challenges of bilingualism and issues in Lithuanian-language education.
- In 2021, the Romas Sakadolskis International Academic Forum on Journalism was organised by VMU, the first such forum among professional journalists to be held after the restoration of Lithuanian independence. To highlight the genres of contemporary journalism, awards were presented for outstanding fact-based journalism, opinion-based journalism, entertainment journalism and investigative journalism.
- The World Lithuanian Communities Forum, organised by the Lithuanian World Community together with VMU and the Association for Getting to Know World Lithuanians, was attended by Prof. Birutė Galdikas, Prof. Algirdas Avizienis, Member of the Seimas (Parliament) Dalia Asanavičiūtė, Lithuanian World Community Chairwoman Dalia Henke, Lithuanian World Community Sports Affairs Commission Chairman Laurynas Misevičius (who was a member of one of the first classes to graduate from VMU), Prof. Gediminas Karoblis from the Department of Music at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, and many other distinguished guests. The event was hosted by the Speaker of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania, Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen.
- The Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania hosted the forum "Lithuania in Diaspora: Improving, Growing, Promoting, Knowing, and Being Known". The VMU Education Academy event was for teachers working in Lithuanian-language schools abroad, educational experts, teachers, and students. Its objectives were to improve Lithuanian-language education abroad and to strive for the preservation of Lithuanian identity abroad as a national priority.
- The VMU Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development organised a conference to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Russia. Nearly thirty high-level politicians, diplomats, and political scientists from Lithuania and abroad attended the conference, held under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, to discuss the past, present, and, most importantly, the future of Lithuania.
- Lectures were delivered at VMU by a world-renowned scientist of Lithuanian origin, the anthropologist, primatologist, prominent researcher of orangutans, recipient of an honorary doctorate from VMU, Prof. Birutė Galdikas. VMU Rector Juozas Augutis ceremoniously congratulated her on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of her scientific activity. During her meeting with President Gitanas Nausėda, the

prominent scientist spoke about the latest environmental challenges, and gave a public lecture, meeting with members of the University community and participating in the World Lithuanian Communities Forum. The researcher received a great deal of attention from the Lithuanian media.

- On Human Rights Day, the fourth National Human Rights Forum was organised by VMU together with partners and held at the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania as well as online. In 2021, the organisers devoted the Forum to the tenth anniversary of the signing of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (the Istanbul Convention).
- A bronze plaque given by Latvian students returned to VMU. The bronze plaque had originally been presented on February 16, 1932, when Vytautas Magnus University was marking its first decade.
- Marking the fifth anniversary of the death of Lithuanian philosopher, essayist, educator and public figure Leonidas Donskis, the Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development, founded in 2017 at VMU, organised an international conference, "Complicated Dilemmas: The Role of Museums and Public Spaces in Remembering the Past". Representatives of prominent museums in Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, South Africa, and Ireland delivered presentations.
- VMU, together with the GLocalEAST consortium, organised an international conference on border, migration, and diaspora studies. During the conference, Lithuanian and international researchers and experts discussed the current challenges in this field, and Prof. Krzysztof Czyżewski delivered a lecture, "I am with You. Practicing the Borderland".
- Commemorating the 100th anniversary of the birth of Nobel Peace Prize laureate, human rights activist and physicist Andrei Sakharov, the Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development organised six events in Vilnius: an exhibition at Vilnius Town Hall, a scientific conference, screenings of two films, a birthday concert, and an exhibition of caricatures.
- The exhibition *Sharing Our Stories* was presented at the Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum, describing how Baltic people (Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians) fled their homelands at the end of the Second World War, later settling in Canada even as they sought to preserve their culture and traditions.
- VMU Agriculture Academy hosted the 25th agricultural exhibition *What you Sow*. The 2021 exhibition highlighted precision and digitalisation. The largest event of this kind in the Baltics impressed visitors with its inspiring opportunities and design technology, exceptional technological solutions and innovations.
- The specialised agricultural innovation exhibition *Inno panorama 2021* took place at VMU Agriculture Academy. The exhibition is one of the two most important exhibitions organised in the country for representatives of agribusiness and related sectors. The event focused on digital solutions.
- VMU hosted the forum "The French Language: For Work and Career", organised jointly by the French Institute in Lithuania and VMU. Since 2017, the forum for pupils, students, educational staff and businesspeople has been dedicated to discussing changes in the job market related to language competence and the need for French-speaking workers.
- VMU Agriculture Academy organised the first virtual (online) "Forum on the Future of Regions". In this event, researchers and experts who specialise in regional development publicly presented their latest internationally-recognised research.
- An international academic conference dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuanian diplomatic relations, "(Un)seen World Lithuanian Support for the Reborn Lithuania", was held at the Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum.
- VMU hosted the International Congress of Belarusian Researchers. One of the main objectives of the Congress was to encourage more effective cooperation among researchers and experts in political science, the social sciences, and the humanities.
- The interinstitutional cooperation agreement of the CLARIN-LT consortium was updated. After Lithuania became a member of the international research infrastructure CLARIN ERIC, in 2015 VMU, KTU and VU established the CLARIN-LT consortium. MRU and the Baltic Institute of Advanced Technology joined the CLARIN-LT consortium in 2020, and the Institute of Baltic Region History and Archaeology at Klaipėda University joined in 2021. The activities of the consortium of six institutions are coordinated by the CLARIN-LT Centre at VMU.
- The Institute of Foreign Languages at VMU and the Lithuanian Association of Language Teachers organised their sixth international conference, "Sustainable Multilingualism", in which 180 education and language specialists, researchers, and teachers from 30 countries delivered virtual (online) presentations in English, Spanish, Italian, Latvian, Lithuanian, French, Russian, and German on the preservation of languages, linguistic human rights, less-used and less-taught languages, contemporary studies of the Lithuanian language, problems of interpretation and translation, virtual (online) language teaching and learning, language-sensitive teaching, intercultural communication, and other topics.

- In December, the Vth Spanish Language Forum (*Foro de español en Kaunas*) was held, for Spanish-language specialists, teachers, and translators. Its goal was to highlight the importance of the Spanish language and the language's ever-growing popularity in Lithuania, to provide an opportunity for Spanish-language professionals to share the results of the latest research as well as ideas, and to discuss innovative methods for language-learning.
- VMU hosted a school-network conference, sharing best practices and presenting distinctive features of the schools in the network in terms of innovations in education.
- Peter Lang International Publishing published a 380-page monograph by VMU researchers about atomic/nuclear tourism, *Learning the Nuclear: Educational Tourism in (Post)Industrial Sites* (part of the series "Baltische Studien zur Erziehungs und Sozialwissenschaft"). The editor of the publication was Prof. Natalija Mažeikienė.
- Teacher and doctoral student Gytis Dovydaitis founded the first online art and internet studies platform in Lithuania, *On:real*, launching with the event *Internet-connected art*.
- Prof. Romualdas Požerskis organised international photography exhibitions *On the Way to Freedom* at Primitivo de Albacete Kazino (Albacete, Spain) and at the Valencia Public Library (Valencia, Spain), and presented his books of photographic works at the *Paris Photo Festival* (Paris, France).
- In January, wintertime courses in Lithuanian language and culture began, with more than 70 foreign citizens from 13 countries taking part. VMU has offered such courses in Lithuanian language and culture for 22 years.
- Inga Černiuk, Chancellor of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and VMU Rector Juozas Augutis signed an agreement on cooperation between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and VMU. The Ministry will increase its systematic cooperation with Lithuanian universities, implementing such cooperation in various forms, including student internships, exhibitions, expert insights, master's thesis competitions, and historical research.
- VMU signed a cooperation agreement with the Kaunas Biennial, the largest contemporary art festival in Lithuania. Under the agreement, the parties undertake to promote mutual cooperation in the fields of education and professional development.
- On International Mother Earth Day, the winner of the Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library and the Dana Gedvilienė Foundation's environmental protection prize was announced: naturalist and film director Mindaugas Survila, for the film *Sengirė*, in which he drew the general public's attention to the need to preserve yet-untouched forests. The director also delivered a public lecture to VMU students.
- For the first time, almost forty deans and vice-rectors from the universities located in Kaunas met to explore the potential for joint activity, creating a unified academic zone in the city of Kaunas. The opportunities created would open up even greater prospects for students choosing to study in Kaunas.

Recognition, awards

- Members of the VMU community were invited to join the State Progress Council, helping to devise Lithuania's national strategy: Diana Vilytė, VMU Council member and Director of Services Management at State Enterprise Centre of Registers; Rytis Zemkauskas and Rimvydas Valatka, journalists and associate professors in the Department of Public Communications at VMU; Prof. Gintautas Mažeikis, philosopher and professor in the Department of Philosophy at VMU; Prof. Aušra Maslauskaitė, professor in the Department of Sociology at VMU.
- Prof. Aušra Maslauskaitė, professor in the Department of Sociology at VMU and head of second cycle programme in Social Demography, was elected a full member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences. Dr. Giedrė Samuolienė was elected a full member to the division of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences, having graduated from VMU, later studying in a doctoral programme, and successfully performing research and leading a laboratory at the Institute of Horticulture at the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agricultural and Forestry Sciences.
- Prof. Lina Kaminskienė, Chancellor of VMU Education Academy, was elected Chair of the Council at the National Agency for Education. Prof. Kaminskienė represents VMU and the Lithuanian Educational Research Association on the NAE Council.
- President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda appointed Mindaugas Jurkynas, political scientist and professor in the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, as a member of the Council at Lithuanian Radio and Television.
- VMU Rector Juozas Augutis was awarded the Santaka Municipal Emblem of Honour (2nd degree) by Kaunas City Mayor Visvaldas Matijošaitis. This award was given to recognise outstanding achievements for Kaunas, long-standing and significant scientific activities, and meaningful contributions to education, honest work and social activities.

- Antanas Jonušas, a graduate of the Education Academy at VMU, was selected to receive the Meilė Lukšienė Prize at the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania. He teaches History and Citizen Rights and Responsibilities at the Vilnius Waldorf School as well as History in the International Baccalaureate class at the Queen Morta School, and in addition conducts sexuality education classes at the NGO “House of Diversity and Education”.
- Dr. Mindaugas Norkevičius, Vice-Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy at VMU, recipient of a master's degree in Education Management from the VMU Education Academy, Deputy Director of Juozas Urbšys Progymnasium in Kaunas, and teacher of history and geography, was selected as the most innovative social studies teacher of the year. Vaida Ambrasaitė, a graduate in Lithuanian philology of the VMU Education Academy and a Lithuanian-language teacher at Vilnius Grand Duke Gediminas Progymnasium, was selected as the most innovative language teacher of the year. Sonata Drazdevičienė, a member of the Council of the VMU Education Academy and Director of “Saulė” Gymnasium in Kaunas (a VMU social partner) was included in the top-three most innovative school leaders of the year.
- The VMU Rector was awarded the Kaunas District Municipal Emblem of Honour (1st degree), its highest award, to recognise his contributions to science and education.
- Prof. Habil. Dr. Regina Gražulevičienė and Prof. Audrius Dėdelė, scientists in the Department of Environmental Sciences of the Faculty of Natural Sciences at VMU, were awarded the Lithuanian Science Prize. The Prize was awarded for their work “The health effects of the urban environment, psychosocial and epigenetic factors from infancy to maturity (2005–2019)” in the field of Biomedical and Agricultural Sciences.
- Representatives of the VMU Agriculture Academy were among the winners of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences competition for young scientists: Dr. Erika Besusparienė, Lecturer in Bioeconomy Development (in the category of Humanities and Social Sciences) and a second cycle student Diana Sidabrienė (in the category of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences).
- The Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts presented its “Emblem of Gratitude” to VMU Rector, Prof. Juozas Augutis.
- During the VI Educational Forum “Educology for Lithuania. Toward Research-Based Education”, a team of researchers at VMU Education Academy and the team leader, Prof. Alvyra Galkienė, were recognised for the timely and relevant implementation of a universal design model for learning in Lithuanian schools and for their presentation of results to the educational community.
- Prof. Egidijus Aleksandravičius, professor in the Department of History at VMU, head of “Academia cum laude”, historian, habilitated doctor of the humanities, director of the Lithuanian Emigration Institute, publicist, active public figure, and author of many books, was awarded the Researcher's Prize established by Kaunas City Municipality, for his contributions in the field of the humanities and social sciences.
- Assoc. Prof. Ina Pukelytė was awarded the national Grigorijus Kanovičius Literature Prize for the novel *Panelės iš Laisvės alėjos*.
- Prof. Auksė Balčytienė, professor in the Department of Public Communications at VMU, was nominated and invited to become a member of the Academy of Europe (Academia Europaea). The professor was recognised for scientific achievements in researching journalism and media in Lithuania and abroad.
- Prof. Dainius Žalimas, Dean of the Faculty of Law, was recognised as Lithuania's most influential legal figure.
- Two VMU alumnae were recognised by the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers as being among the authors of the year's 10 best theses; their works were in the humanities and social sciences. Viktorija Grigaliūnaitė was recognised for her work on the topic “Modelling the Influence on consumer behaviour of visual advertising elements for fast-moving consumer goods” (management); the thesis advisor was Prof. Lina Pilelienė. Ramunė Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė was recognised for her work on the topic “A grounded theory of “a pendulum” of spontaneous learning: the experience of families caring for a child who is not a relative” (educology); the thesis advisor was Prof. Vilma Žydyūnaitė.
- In the VMU Botanical Garden, the first two Lithuanian varieties of guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus* L.) were cultivated after more than two decades of thorough and painstaking work in the largest collection of guelder roses in Lithuania. The developers of the new varieties are VMU Botanical Garden researchers Habil. Dr. Remigijus Daubaras and Dr. Laima Česonienė. Detailed biochemical research has confirmed that the fruit of both varieties are a source of especially valuable biologically active substances.
- The Board of the Lithuanian Museum Association named Assoc. Prof. Aušra Vasiliauskienė of the Department of History and Theory of Arts at VMU and Head of the Graphics Sector at the M.K. Čiurlionis National Museum of Art as Museologist of the Year in 2020. The professional award was given to recognise her contributions to the development of Lithuanian museology and to the exhibition and promotion of material and spiritual values.

- Arvydas Sabonis, President of the Lithuanian Basketball Federation, and Vaidas Jurgilas, President of the Regional Basketball League, expressed their gratitude to Vidas Juknevičius, the head of VMU Sports Centre, and to Airidas Nutautas, the coach and head of the VMU mens' basketball team, for their contributions to developing youth basketball in Lithuania and for their close cooperation in developing students' basketball.
- The Lithuanian Baseball Association named VMU its 2021 Partner of the Year.

International cooperation

- The consistent development of strategic directions strengthens the University's identity, especially its visibility in a global world. VMU is increasingly recognised at the international level, which allows it to establish strong cooperative relationships with partners in various countries and fields. VMU has signed cooperation agreements with partners in 81 countries (32 EU/EEA countries and 49 non-EU/EEA countries; in 2020, agreements had been signed with partners in 77 countries).
- The Agriculture Academy has begun to provide expertise to the European Commission. After an Agriculture Academy project won a tender announced by the European Commission, the Academy became a member of a consortium uniting 18 competent partners in the implementation of the Common Agricultural Policy.
- In 2021, VMU signed 234 (in 2020, 210 had been signed) bilateral cooperation agreements, that is, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), with institutions of higher education in 44 countries around the world. Twenty-seven new agreements were signed with universities in Israel, Japan, the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Taiwan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nepal, Georgia, Uzbekistan, India, and other countries.
- In a ceremony held at the Embassy of the United Kingdom in Vilnius, cooperation agreements between VMU and universities in the United Kingdom, Royal Agricultural University (RAU) and University of Strathclyde, were signed. This relationship provides an opportunity to acquire a combination of a British and a Lithuanian education, which will increase students' competencies and professionalism at an international level.
- VMU became the 50th International Baccalaureate Teacher Programme in the world and the first such university in northern and central Europe. From now on, students enrolled in the Primary Educational Pedagogy and Early Foreign Language Education Programme at VMU Education Academy in Kaunas or Vilnius will be able to seek International Baccalaureate Primary Years Programme (IB PYP) certification.
- A project coordinated by VMU, “Connecting Theory and Practical Issues of Migration and Religious Diversity”, became the second project coordinated by a Lithuanian educational institution to have won in the European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST). The head of the project is Prof. Milda Ališauskienė, a professor in the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy and in the Faculty of Social Sciences at VMU. Nineteen countries participate in the consortium.
- A cooperation agreement between VMU and Tashkent State Agrarian University (TSAU), located in the capital of Uzbekistan, was ceremoniously signed. The agreement was signed by VMU Rector Prof. Juozas Augutis and TSAU Rector Academician Batridžon Suleimonov.
- VMU became a member of the University Network of the European Capitals of Culture (UNeECC), the first university in Kaunas to join the network. Universities contributing to the cultural and scientific programme play a particularly important role in the events organised by European Capitals of Culture, so the network of universities of the European Capitals of Culture organises annual conferences at the universities of these capitals.
- An educational Centre for talented children, “Gifted”, was opened at the VMU Education Academy in Vilnius. It is the second Centre in an Israeli-Lithuanian programme; the first such Centre opened a year ago at VMU in Kaunas.
- The Baltic Studies Centre was ceremoniously opened at Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv. The new Centre was established on the basis of a memorandum of cooperation signed between VMU and Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, with assistance provided by the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to Ukraine and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania.
- In 2021, VMU began to update its network of Erasmus+ higher education partners; the inter-institutional cooperation of prior years has been analysed, non-performing relationships have been abandoned, and in their place new relationships have been initiated and agreements have been signed. The total number of partner institutions has changed over the last three years from 516 agreements in 2019 to 471 in 2020 to 484 in 2021. Cooperation under Erasmus+ with institutions of higher education in (non-EU/EEA) countries was started in 2015. In 2021, VMU cooperated with universities in 40 partner countries, and the number of cooperation agreements increased to 119 (in 2020, there had been 113).

- In 2021, the University successfully joined the International Indonesian Student Mobility Award (IISMA) programme, organised by the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia. Work was started to engage VMU in programmes such as the USA Study Abroad programme for USA university students to take part in short-term studies and internships abroad, the Taiwan State Scholarship Programme for those wishing to study Mandarin, and an initiative together with the Royal Agricultural University (UK) to co-found an agricultural university in Uzbekistan was launched.

Scholarships and student achievements

- Taking into account the effects of the pandemic on the country's education system and economy, VMU invited school-leavers to remain in Lithuania, setting up a fund to cover the cost of first-year students' studies. In 2021, VMU awarded 300 scholarships to cover the cost of study for entering freshmen (first-year students) in non-state-subsidised bachelor's degree and full-time programmes.
- The Lithuanian Student Union (LSU) elected a new head of the organisation: Vytautas Kučinskas, a member of the LSU board and a VMU second cycle student in Applied Informatics.
- The 2020–2021 reports on the activities and finances of the VMU Student Union (Representation) were approved during the conference called to review the reports and hold elections. A new president, audit committee and board for the VMU Student Union (Representation) were elected. Student Ieva Vengrovskaja became president of the VMU Student Union (Representation).
- In the annual awards of the Lithuanian Student Union (LSU), the statuette for Innovation of the Year was awarded to the VMU Student Union (Representation) for the revitalised project "Enlightenment", and Ieva Vengrovskaja was selected as Student Leader of the Year.
- The Viktoras Kuprevičius Scholarship was awarded to Milda Gineikaitė, a second-year master's degree student in the Faculty of Arts at VMU.
- The company UAB "Intermedix Lietuva" awarded seven EUR 200 scholarships to VMU final-course full-time students in the first and second cycle study programmes as well as to full-time students with good academic performance, prioritizing those with a higher average and outstanding performance in scientific (artistic) activities at the University and beyond, according to the study programme for the entire length of their studies.
- Scholarships sponsored by the Lithuanian Foundation (USA) in memory of Prof. Zenonas Rekašius and Alina and Ignas Skrupskelis were ceremoniously awarded to senior (fourth-year student) Urtė Alksninytė, studying for a bachelor's degree in Public Communications at VMU. A scholarship in memory of Alina and Ignas Skrupskelis was awarded to Rugilė Matusevičiūtė, a journalist studying Future Media and Journalism in the second cycle study programme.
- Scholarships from the Alumni Association of the Faculty of Informatics at VMU were awarded to three alumni of the Faculty: Denas Kinderis, a graduate of the Informatics programme; Otilija Vonžudaitė, a graduate of the Mathematics and its application programme; and Kiprus Bielinskas, a graduate of the Multimedia and internet technologies programme.
- VMU students participated in the Best Lithuanian Student Business Competition, organised by Junior Achievement Lietuva and Minded VDU. Unique student start-ups impressed the jury enough to win the top three prize spots in the competition, and one team, having created a game adapted for use by the blind, won the opportunity to present its idea at the European Start-Up programme.
- "Minded VMU" students, having begun to develop their start-up Kondigno and having presented their idea to the European Start-up Programme committee, represented Lithuania at the finals of the European Start-up Championship, Gen-E 2021: European Entrepreneurship Festival.
- The VMU Agriculture Academy alumni club "ŽŪA Alumni" has established the Support and Charity Fund "Support for Regional Youth Studies", with its funds intended to help young people in the regions, who see their future working in the agro sector, receive a VMU Agriculture Academy education.
- The President of the Republic of Lithuania Algirdas Brazauskas Scholarship (in the fields of social sciences and educational sciences, law, business, and public administration) was awarded to Saulė Balsytė, a junior (third-year student) studying in the bachelor's degree programme at the VMU Education Academy, and to Greta Šadeikytė, a second-year student in the second cycle study programme in Music Education at the VMU Education Academy.
- Scholarships in memory of signers of the Act of Independence of the Republic of Lithuania were awarded to first cycle students at VMU Education Academy: Saulė Balsytė, Eglė Motiekaitė, Ieva Nemiraitė, Agnė Staupelytė, Dominykas Šimonis, Orinta Šlušnytė, and Arnoldas Voznialis.
- In 2021, honorary VMU scholarships were awarded to the following students for scientific, educational, musical, artistic, creative, or social activity: first cycle student Indrė Baltakytė in the Faculty of Arts,

second cycle student Rokas Jasikas in the Music Academy, second cycle student Islanda Kaušiuūtė in the Music Academy, second cycle student Agnė Taliūtė in the Faculty of Arts, and second cycle student Ugnė Pundzaitė in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

- Paulina Okunytė, a second cycle student in Creative Industries at the VMU Faculty of Arts, was awarded the fourth scholarship, in the amount of EUR 1,100, named for a signer of the Act of Independence of the Republic of Lithuania, Solomon Banaitis.
- The Jonas Smilgevičius Scholarships were awarded to students in the Faculty of Economics and Management: Agnė Vabalaitė, Matas Mileris, and Smiltė Sederskytė.
- The following students in the Faculty of Agronomy at the VMU Agriculture Academy received the following named scholarships: the Agronomist Jonas Tallat-Kelpša Scholarship went to a fourth-year student Meda Mačiutytė; the Vydūnas Youth Fund Stasė Cukuraitė and Vaclovas Tallat-Kelpša Scholarship went to a third-year student Vilys Juodzevičius; the UAB "East West Agro" Scholarships went to a third-year student Greta Vitkutė and a fourth-year student Gabija Baltramaitytė; the Lithuanian Foundation's Kazimiera Varnaytė Masiokienė Scholarship went to a fourth-year student Ilona Černovaitė.
- Dovydas Rutkauskas, a fourth-year student in the Agricultural Mechanical Engineering programme of the Faculty of Engineering at the VMU Agriculture Academy, was awarded a named one-time scholarship from the Ignas Kaunelis Fund.
- The Professor Bronius Vaškelis Scholarship was awarded to Agnė Cesiulė, a doctoral student in the Department of Lithuanian Language at the Faculty of Humanities, and to Tomas Genevičius, a third-year student in the bachelor's degree programme in Art History, Criticism and Media at the Faculty of Arts.
- The competition to win the Viktoras Kuprevičius Scholarship was won by the first-year master's degree student Samanta Kalpokaitė Kazickė, studying in the Faculty of Arts.
- Five first-year students in the Faculty of Engineering at the VMU Agriculture Academy were awarded monthly grants in the amount of EUR 100. The sponsors of the scholarships, coming together in the first study cluster for agricultural engineering in Lithuania, are the agri-engineering companies AB "Lytagra", UAB "Baltic Agro Machinery", UAB "Agrokoncernas", UAB "Dojus agro", UAB "Dotnuva Baltic", all of which have recently experienced difficulty hiring young specialists with a modern engineering education.
- Two one-time scholarships of EUR 500 were established by Ignas Bielevičius, a graduate of the Faculty of Informatics, and awarded to Gustė Žukauskaitė, a second-year student of Primary Education Pedagogy and Early Foreign Language Education, and to Tomas Genevičius, a third-year student in the Arts History, Criticism and Media Programme of the Faculty of Arts.
- To celebrate International Volunteer Day, VMU showed its appreciation for volunteers by awarding selected volunteers who distinguished themselves through their activities at the University. In 2021, the Volunteer of the Year award was given to Severina Šeštokaitė; the Above and Beyond award for the most active foreign student(s) who is (are) engaged in volunteering at the University was given to the student Lital Emma Lev; the Newcomer of the Year award went to Emilija Bagdonaitė; the Mentor Showing the Most Initiative award went to Viktorija Vasiliauskaitė; the Mentor of the Year award was given to Paulina Andriuškevičiūtė; the Brightest Lodestar award went to Barbora Krinicinaite.
- The agreement for the award of the Prof. Birutė Cipliauskaitė Scholarship was renewed. The scholarship is awarded to a VMU student studying the Spanish language who has also achieved outstanding academic results and actively participates in students' social and cultural activities.

University external communication

In 2021, based on the University's communications strategy, a new campaign to attract applicants, "VMU | broader perspectives", was created and launched. The campaign features selected text and attractive illustrations to reveal how the University increases a student's opportunities to transform existing personal qualities into a professional career in the future. This campaign in social networks was expanded and supplemented by the stories of VMU graduates, who shared their experience and revealed the benefits gained during their studies at VMU. The campaign also aims to consolidate the University's identity: VMU is the most comprehensive university in Lithuania, carrying out research and studies in the humanities, social, physical, arts, biomedical, technological and agricultural sciences in Kaunas and Vilnius.

In response to research data, surveys that identify the media platforms most commonly used by and visible to young people aged 18–25, their parents, businesses and the general public, as well as the circumstances of the coronavirus pandemic in the country, the focus was placed on digital advertising and its channels: the broad possibilities offered by *Google Ads* have been used, adverts are ordered on *Facebook* and *Instagram*, YouTube, and the most-visited portals *delfi.lt* and *15 min.lt*. Large-format outdoor advertising has not been ignored, either. On selected channels, the content was adapted, modified and segmented according to audiences and platforms, and the content was engaging and reaching the defined target audiences. As in previous years, this

year too the VMU campaigns in the portals *15 min.lt* and *delfi.lt* achieved some of the highest numbers of readability and advertising clicks (the overall and mobile version click-through rate and number of ad clicks were measured).

According to a quantitative and qualitative analysis performed by *Mediaskopas*, VMU maintains a strong second position in the media among the major universities of the country. Although the market share of universities in the general media declined (3.9 percent in 2020 and 3.6 percent in 2021), VMU, as a player in the university market, strengthened its position and became more visible (21.68 percent in 2020 and 23.63 percent in 2021).

In 2021, as in previous years, the University was presented mainly in the media through commentary made by experts, increasing by almost five hundred such comments (2021: 2,447; 2021: 2,931). A significant leap forward was made in terms of the topics of culture and events in which VMU was mentioned (604 in 2020; 1,223 in 2021). Special attention was paid by the media to the topics of popularisation of science proposed by VMU as well as topics on higher education policy and funding, as well as the events *Literature Week*, the National Human Rights Forum, the visit of Prof. Birutė Galdikas to Lithuania, the Romas Sakadolskis International Academic Journalism Forum, information about best practices in VMU distance (online) studies, the opening of VMU's President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre, the activities of the Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development, the President Valdas Adamkus Prize for achievements in the field of environmental protection, etc.

Developing the potential of Transform4Europe – T4E

Transform4Europe, an initiative bringing together an alliance of European universities, launched at the end of 2020 and accelerated in 2021 to become one of the University's priority areas of activity. Due to the wide range of activities of this initiative, many academic and non-academic subdivisions of the University are now involved in the implementation of international activities. During the first year of operation of the Transform4Europe alliance of European universities, a number of strategy-related tasks had to be carried out. To harmonise the governance and organisation of activities among the partners of the alliance, the experiences and practices of all seven participating universities were analysed in different fields, including management, quality assurance, study organisation, employee professional development, entrepreneurship education, mobility, multilingualism, communication, etc. A comparative analysis of national higher education legislation and accreditation systems was also carried out. This analysis is particularly important for the development of certified undergraduate programmes, joint master's degree programmes in the fields of social, environmental and digital transformation, and for the accreditation of joint programmes. Thus, the development and implementation of joint study programmes is one of the key objectives of the alliance, which also relates to the strategic objectives of VMU.

The first joint events of the alliance were organised in 2021. It was an animation summer school for students in the Transform4Europe network, the European Day of Languages for participating university communities and social partners of the initiative, schools, etc. The first scientific conference for third cycle students was also successfully organised. In addition, in September, the first partner meeting was held at VMU with the participation of delegations from the University of Silesia in Katowice and from the Estonian Academy of Arts. During the visit, new common mobility and research models and joint study programmes were discussed. Although this was the very first visit involving the entire alliance, it was followed by several visits of VMU representatives to the University of Silesia in Katowice, the Estonian Academy of Arts and the University of Trieste. In addition to strengthening inter-institutional partnerships, this type of visit facilitates the implementation of Transform4Europe activities.

One of the key points of Transform4Europe is the development of internationalisation and the development and implementation of new forms of mobility. To implement the joint activities of the consortium and VMU, interdisciplinary agreements of a wide-ranging Erasmus+ programme among partner universities are initiated and signed, mobility of teachers, researchers and non-academic staff is strengthened, and, most importantly, new mobility opportunities are being created: certified bachelor's degree programmes, other short-term mobility initiatives for students, which will become one of the main tools for internationalisation, and will increase the innovativeness, flexibility and accessibility of studies on an alliance-wide scale. The concept of a unique "Chair Exchange" programme for teaching visits has been developed. On the basis of this programme, the teachers of the entire alliance will soon be able to leave for a semester-long teaching visit to partner universities, and the teaching visit itself will be implemented by combining virtual (online) and physical mobility.

To implement the activities of the Transform4Europe alliance that are related to multilingualism, a non-traditional concept of foreign-language learning opportunities has been developed, allowing various foreign languages to be learned in an innovative, flexible and attractive way, involving different target groups: both students and university staff. As mentioned earlier, based on the experience and assistance of the VMU Institute of Foreign Languages, the European Day of Languages for the entire alliance community was organised. More than 400 participants took part in the international event.

Professional development of employees is also one of the priority areas of the alliance and VMU. In 2021, the Transform4Europe partners developed guidelines for innovative teaching and teaching methods and the professional development of lecturers and non-academic staff. The guidelines are already being applied in practice and will allow the raising of the quality of higher education in Lithuania and other European countries. A concept for an upskilling (professional development) programme for academic staff has been developed. A similar concept will be developed for non-academic staff in the near future, and staff qualifications will be improved on the basis of international distance (online) trainings-seminars.

By extending the activities of the Transform4Europe alliance, three new projects have been won in this international network (T4ERI: Transform 4 European Research and Innovation; Horizon, Activating Students in Online Classes, and CROCODILE: Cross-disciplinary Academic Offer – KA2), with the active participation of several VMU departments and academic subdivisions. Several new applications are currently being prepared, so Transform4Europe's activities and opportunities will expand and grow in the near future.

WLU (World Lithuanian University): activities for the diaspora

The mission of VMU World Lithuanian University (WLU; in Lithuanian, PLU) is to bring together the active Lithuanian academic diaspora, to develop the practical imagination and intellectual capacity of Lithuanians around the world, to foster the fellowship of Lithuanians in Lithuania and Lithuanians in the diaspora by strengthening a multifaceted understanding of Lithuanian identity.

In pursuit of these objectives, in 2021 the WLU together with partners organised two forums, on Lithuanian-language education and for the Lithuanian World Communities. Prof. Birutė Galdikas, the world-renowned scientist of Lithuanian ancestry, attended the latter.

The month of October was declared Lithuanian Diaspora Month at VMU. The month's events focused attention on the history of the Lithuanian diaspora, the activities of the world's Lithuanian communities, Lithuanian-language schools and studies at VMU relevant to the world's Lithuanian youth. A virtual (online) academic fair was organised for the Lithuanian diaspora.

In order to strengthen the interdisciplinary approach in the academic programmes, the exchange of intellectual capital between Lithuania and the diaspora, and links with the Lithuanian diaspora's academic community, the Vytautas Kavolis programme of interdisciplinary teaching visits was established in 2021, with support from the Dana Gedvilienė Foundation.

As part of the WLU diaspora education programme, the aim of which is to strengthen Lithuanian identity and to cultivate the understanding of Lithuanians as a diaspora nation, for the third year in a row the non-formal subject of the challenges of Lithuanian identity and family stories has been offered for study. 22 teachers from Lithuanian-language schools in the USA, Canada, Colombia, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Poland, Lithuania, Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden, Norway, Iceland, and Greece have studied the subject.

An important step in WLU's activities is to strengthen cooperation between the diaspora and Lithuanian organisations and public figures: the Lithuanian World Community, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, the Seimas (parliamentary) representatives of Lithuanians from around the world, the Embassy of the Republic of Lithuania to Ireland, the Gintarėlis Lithuanian-language school in Cavan (Ireland), the Lithuanian Youth Unions of the World and of the USA, the Association for Getting to Know World Lithuanians, and the Club of Lithuanian Students from Abroad.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, VMU Vice-Rector for Communication Vilma Bijeikienė and WLU coordinator Ingrida Dačioliienė participated in a working group organised by the Ministry for implementation of the Lithuanian diaspora policy, and the WLU coordinator is participating in a campaign to publicize Lithuanian-language education, targeted at parents and youth, in 2021–2024.

Strengthening the reputation of the University

VMU was ranked for the first time in "QS World University Rankings by Subject", where the best universities in the world are ranked according to individual subjects. VMU's best results were in agriculture and forestry; in this subject category, the University placed highly, in the 301–350 range among the world's universities. In total, the QS ranking evaluated 23 subject areas in which VMU carries out research, teaching, and learning. Most of the evaluated areas with offerings by the University were evaluated with a score of more than 40 points. In addition to the above-mentioned field of agriculture and forestry (53.5 points), VMU received good assessments in the fields of performance arts (60.8), environmental sciences (57.2), social sciences and management (55.3), education (52.6), and arts and the humanities (52.1).

In the international ranking of emerging universities in Europe and Central Asia, "QS EECA University Rankings", VMU was ranked 61st among 451 ranked institutions of higher education; VMU ranked in the top 13.5 percent in the region. As it was last year, the University's internationality was highly rated: according to this criterion, VMU was ranked first among the ranked Lithuanian universities and placed 43rd in the overall

ranking. VMU has been the most successful rated Lithuanian university in improving its position, rising by four places from 65 to 61. The University succeeded in improving its position both in its overall ranking (having been in 65th place among 400 universities in 2020) as well as in individual categories. VMU placed in a higher position according to four indicators: reputation among employers (51st place), number of employees with a degree (73rd place), published scientific articles (data from the SCOPUS database) (68th place), and internationality (43rd place).

In 2021, VMU was ranked by *Reitingai* magazine as the leader among state universities in Lithuania in terms of academic staff and ranked second in terms of scientific excellence. In the overall ranking, VMU also significantly improved its results and rose from fourth to third in the country. In terms of current and future academic staff, VMU scored the highest among all Lithuanian universities with a score of 7.3. This ranking criterion assesses the ratio of academic staff to students, the ratio of teachers up to 35 years old and the ratio of doctoral degree holders in the sciences or the arts to all teachers, etc. According to scientific, artistic, and/or sports activities and the highest achievements of its academic staff, VMU scored 11.9 points and ranked second in Lithuania, as in the previous year.

The latest ranking of universities in emerging economies ("Emerging Economies"), published by *Times Higher Education* (THE), included VMU for the first time, placing the University in the 401-500 range. Among the four Lithuanian universities in the ranking, VMU ranked first in terms of internationality, with a score of 68.5 points in this rating category. In the overall global rating of THE, VMU received higher scores in all categories than it did last year. The university was ranked 311th in the international perspective category. VMU earned high rankings in THE in particular fields of study: pedagogy, life sciences, and social sciences.

In the QS World University Rankings, VMU continues to improve its position; compared to last year, it further improved its rankings in four out of six categories. VMU's biggest advantage in the ranking continues to be internationality; in the category of international employees, the University ranked 486th in the world and was unrivalled among all rated Lithuanian universities. In the category evaluating international students, VMU placed 502nd in the world, that is, 58 places higher than last year. The University has also improved its position in the categories of employers' assessment of the potential of graduates and the relationship between students and staff.

In the ranking of universities published by *Reitingai* magazine, VMU was awarded first place in Lithuania in 17 fields of study, that is, three more than last year. VMU ranked in the top three in a total of 65 fields of study. In the ranking of bachelor's degree fields of study, VMU was ranked first for nine programmes: agronomy, environmental science, accounting, ecology, food science, forestry, pedagogy, religious studies, and agriculture. In the ranking of master's degree fields of study, VMU was ranked by *Reitingai* magazine as the best in the country in eight fields of study: agronomy, anthropology, education, ecology, cultural studies, food science, forestry, and theology (religious studies). The University was ranked in the top three in almost all fields of study in which programmes are offered by VMU: 31 bachelor's degree fields of study and 34 master's degree fields of study.

For the second year in a row, VMU was listed in World's Universities with Real Impact (WURI), in which the University was placed in the 51–100 range in the entrepreneurship category.

The programme "Create Lithuania" presented an overview of the teaching and learning of foreign languages in 28 Lithuanian institutions of higher education. The overview noted that the largest selection of foreign languages among Lithuanian institutions of higher education in 2020–2021 was at VMU; that year, students studied 24 languages at VMU. In addition, the largest number of students learning languages are found at VMU.

The University's role/leadership in shaping and implementing the bioeconomy, the European Green Deal, and policies on climate change and rural development

As part of the mission of the VMU Agriculture Academy, *to develop and to disseminate knowledge of agrobiotechnology, ecosystems, engineering, and social sciences for the sustainable development of the bioeconomy (land, food, forestry, and water) and of rural areas, for a fully-satisfying living environment in harmony with nature, scientific research is carried out at the Academy in priority areas: the bioeconomy; biosystem engineering; sustainability of agro-, forest and aquatic ecosystems; climate change.* The volume of scientific research in these directions grows every year. In 2021, more than 150 articles were published in publications referenced and having a citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* database; of these, 70 publications were in indexed scientific publications which ranked at the time of publication in the first quartile of their respective journal group. In 2021, 72 R&D projects related to the implementation of the EU Green Deal policy were carried out. The total estimated value of these projects allocated to VMU Agriculture Academy was EUR 6.8 million. These projects are often associated with providing a basis for innovative solutions in agriculture, the use of precision technologies in agriculture, soil protection, the circular economy, improvement in the efficiency and competitiveness of agribusiness

entities, protection of biodiversity, reduction of environmental pollution, and so on. In addition, 6 strategic partnership cooperation projects (related to the EU Green Deal and the bioeconomy) were carried out at the VMU Agriculture Academy in 2021, with a total estimated value allocated to VMU of EUR 210,000.

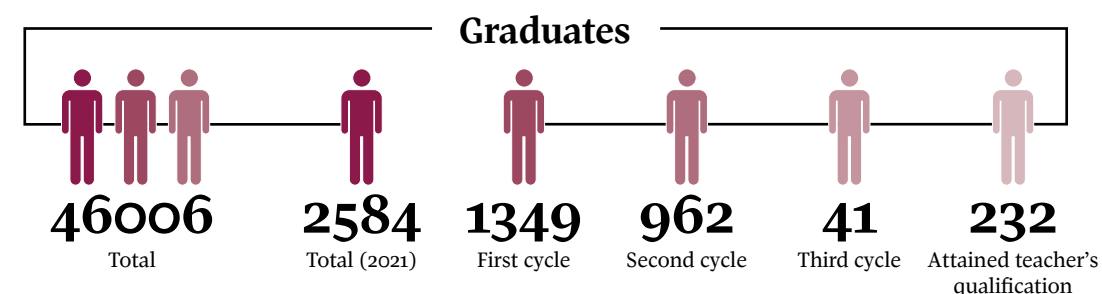
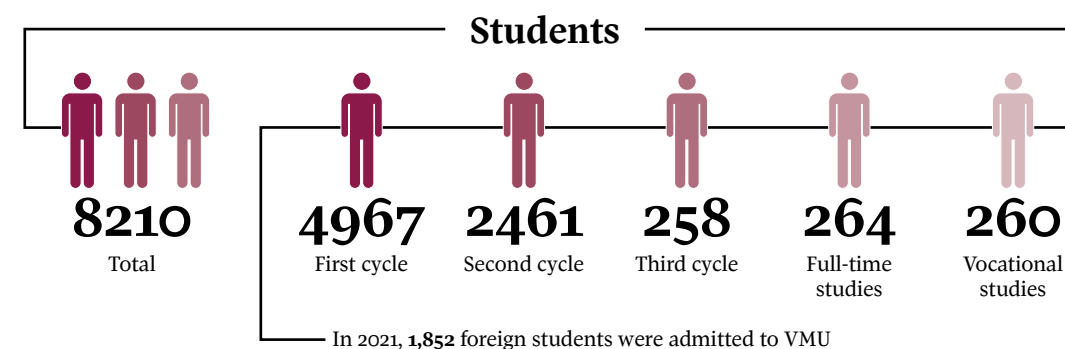
VMU scientists are actively involved in shaping policy on the bioeconomy, the European Green Deal, climate change, and rural development. They participate in the activities of the Central and Eastern European BIOEAST initiative "Promoting a sustainable circular bioeconomy in Central and Eastern European countries". They are members of the alliance "Towards an Agriculture without Chemical Pesticides", the BiodivERsA-FACCE research fund, the strategic working group SCAR SWG AKIS on agriculture knowledge and innovation systems, the International Cooperative Programme on Integrated Monitoring of Air Pollution Effects on Ecosystems (ICP IM), and other working groups.

In line with the priorities of Lithuania and the European Union in the areas of bioeconomy, European Green Deal, climate change, and rural development policies, two bachelor's degree programmes at the VMU Agriculture Academy were updated in 2021: Bio-system Management and Smart Engineering. A new first cycle study programme, Bioeconomy Business Management, was prepared and received positive evaluations from external experts. Although many study programmes relate to these policy priorities, the continuing demand for specialists indicates a shortage of specialists in land, water, and forestry, which in turn causes concern about the prospects for implementation of the EU Green Deal policy in Lithuania.

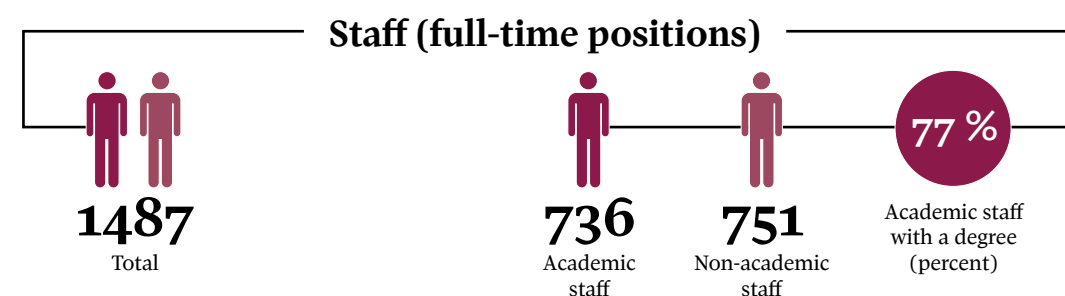
Further development of activities:

- Cultivating the University's historical memory, revitalizing and creating traditions when organising national and international events that embody the University's identity;
- To create added value for the University by publicizing ongoing research, projects, and studies, and discussing current and future events, phenomena, and environments in the country and in the world, thereby consolidating the VMU identity;
- To develop joint VMU and diaspora projects, to publicize WLU activities involving diaspora youth and encouraging them to choose studies at VMU, to establish international partnerships embodying the University's identity, to strengthen leadership in Lithuanian-language educational activities;
- To strengthen the University's international recognition in order to achieve high-quality, sustainable, and productive international cooperation;
- To develop digital and social progress, to implement sustainable environmental and societal transformations and T4E activities;
- To increase the visibility and recognition of the University's experts in the public, national, and international media, to improve cooperation with information partners;
- To actively cooperate with research organisations and enterprises on climate change, sustainable energy, smart, environmentally-friendly transport by establishing start-ups and promoting the use and development of Green Deal innovations;
- Promoting cooperation with business organisations to increase the use of scientific potential and innovations and of innovative business creation, and the dissemination of scientific information;
- To seek clear feedback, to monitor and to evaluate the impact and results of marketing and communication projects, and to anticipate the possibilities for further development;
- To strengthen cooperation among universities in Kaunas in order to increase students' opportunities to choose fields of study.

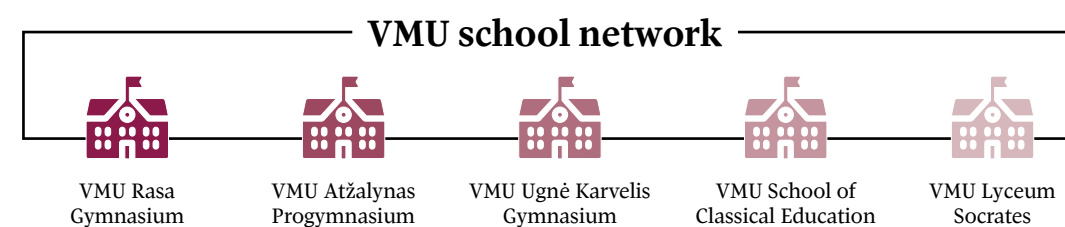
A cohesive and focused university community



Academia cum laude students	15
Members of the Lithuanian World Community who are involved in WLU activities	130
Diaspora students	32



In 2021, 154 foreign teachers visited VMU



A cohesive and focused university community

In the face of ever-growing individualisation, interconnectedness and sincere communication are nevertheless the doors that open up various experiences and encounters that liberate one from the trap of a limited, sometimes even monotonous life. VMU focuses on the fundamental aspects of human rights, dignity, non-discrimination, equal opportunity, and diversity of gender, age, ethnic identity, religion, language, culture, and ability or disability, in the interests of community harmony and focus. The University aims to foster the unique identity and organisational culture of VMU by promoting tolerance and a sense of connectedness, closer cooperation among staff and students, and trust.

Community coherence and synergy

Gender equality plan, development of equal opportunity and diversity. The VMU Strategic Plan for 2021–2027 includes measures to ensure diversity, equal opportunity and gender equality. The first point of the Strategic Plan foresees the pursuit of community coherence and synergy by cherishing the diversity of the community and the personal autonomy of its members. One of the tasks within this objective is to guarantee human rights, dignity, non-discrimination, equal opportunity and diversity in gender, age, race, religion, language, and culture, as well as in terms of ability or disability and socio-economic aspects.

A working group established in 2021 prepared the Gender Equality Plan for 2021–2025, presenting actions and measures to maintain and to improve gender balance at decision-making and other levels, to pursue equal opportunity. The Gender Equality Plan was discussed with the community and external partners, and approved by the VMU Senate. As of April 2021, a new regulation has entered into force in Lithuania: the average salaries of companies, broken down by gender, have become public information. According to data from a national pay-gap study published by the State Social Insurance Fund (in Lithuanian, *Sodra*) in 2021, the pay gap between genders at VMU is not large (EUR 157), and in fact favours women. VMU is one of 16 organisations where on average women's salaries are higher than those of men.

The diversity of the University community in cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic, and racial terms is associated with a high level of internationality. In 2021, VMU employed 74 teachers from abroad, while the number of students from abroad (together with visiting students) accounted for almost 20 percent, that is, 1,852 of the total number of 9,302 students. The number of foreign students in 2021 is the highest it has ever been. The high number of representatives of other cultures in the VMU community helps to develop intercultural knowledge and familiarity, and encourages the organisation to be even more culturally and institutionally sensitive to otherness.

VMU positions itself as an institution defending human rights, cooperating with national and international human rights organisations. Members of the VMU community actively provide their expertise, participating in the activities of prominent organisations. Prof. Dalia Leinartė is a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Prof. Jonas Ruškus is Vice-Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. VMU is one of the main organisers of the National Human Rights Forum (NHRF). In accordance with the Gender Equality Plan, Vice-Rector for Communication Vilma Bijeikienė, representing the highest level of the University's administration, and the SPEAR project team, led by Prof. Natalija Mažeikienė, began to implement the Plan's activities in 2021.

Disability, the policy of inclusive opportunities, and its implementation. In 2021, 148 students with disabilities (individual needs) studied at VMU (114 in 2020, 108 in 2019), accounting for 1.8 percent (1.3 percent in 2020, 1.1 percent in 2019) of all students studying at the University. The largest single group of students with disabilities (individual needs) had moderate disabilities (individual needs), in which case their working capacity was rated at between 30 percent and 45 percent (71 such students).

In 2021, the Department for the Affairs of Persons with Disabilities under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour allocated EUR 63,115 to support students with disabilities (individual needs): *special needs allowances* for 86 students (114 in 2019, 99 in 2020) in the amount of EUR 57,506; *partial allowances for compensation of study-related expenses* for 35 students (48 in 2019, 42 in 2020) in the amount of EUR 5,609.

The State Studies Foundation, implementing measure VP1-2.3-ŠMM-07-V ("Ensuring accessibility of studies to students with special needs") of Priority 2 ("Lifelong Learning") of the Human Resources Development Action Programme of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, enabled 6 VMU employees to raise their level of qualification in the training "Ensuring accessibility of studies to students with special needs". O total of 124 VMU students with disabilities (individual needs) (187 in 2019; 176 in 2020) received targeted benefits from the European Social Fund and the Lithuanian national budget (EUR 135,840).

In 2021, 20 students with disabilities (individual needs) were granted tax incentives, using University funds (33 in 2019; 26 in 2020), of which 4 students were offered a reduced tuition (8 in 2019; 6 in 2020) and 16 students were offered a reduced fee for their residential living space (25 in 2019; 20 in 2020).

Activities for students with disabilities (individual needs) were organised in 2021 to respond to the vision of a University of Inclusive Opportunities:

- regular participation in meetings of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania, where issues of education and higher education related to the needs of persons with disabilities are discussed;
- an application was submitted to join the European Network of Inclusive Universities (EUni4All-Network) within the Erasmus+ programme. The main objective of this initiative is to facilitate the mobility of students with disabilities and, at the same time, to bring together a network of European universities seeking greater inclusion;
- improved infrastructure for people with disabilities: in the VMU Sports Centre, installing an automated access system, equipped with automated gates adapted for wheelchair users; in the VMU Great Hall, a wheelchair lift installed to meet the needs of people with reduced mobility, to go from the second-floor lobby into the hall; in the central building of the Academy campus, clearer signage has been installed to indicate access paths for those with disabilities; the VMU library's Education Academy branch has redesigned the workspace for those with disabilities, adding equipment and facilitating access;
- an accessibility assessment of the VMU Sports Centre from the perspective of people with disabilities was initiated. The Lithuanian Paralympic Committee awarded the VMU Sports Centre the "Acorn" symbol. The symbol indicates that the site has been designed for use by persons with disabilities. VMU is the first institution of higher education in Lithuania with a division to have received this recognition, and it is also the first site in Kaunas to have received such recognition;
- at a meeting organised together with the VMU Institute of Foreign Languages, Vaida Lukošūtė, a teacher in sign language, presented to VMU staff the available virtual (online) sign language translation services, and gave a practical demonstration of the possibilities for using these services;
- a cooperation agreement signed with the company "Social Taxi" aims to develop closer cooperation in the field of social initiatives and partnerships, to facilitate the provision of services to persons with disabilities (individual needs) together; the University participated in a campaign organised by "Social Taxi", during which, for a period of 3 months, every member of the VMU community (student or employee) with disabilities (individual needs) was provided by "Social Taxi" with a free trip within the Kaunas city limits;
- together with the International Communication Department, the University organised a presentation, *Erasmus Days 21*, on opportunities for international mobility available to VMU students with disabilities (individual needs); a virtual (online) meeting was organised to discuss how VMU students with disabilities (individual needs) are doing in studying at the University, and to hear first-hand the challenges those with disabilities (individual needs) face;
- VMU joined a campaign initiated by the Department for the Affairs of the Disabled under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour, "Work here. No difference, with or without disability", as did other major employers in Lithuania. The aim of the campaign is to encourage employers to attract people with disabilities (individual needs) into the Labour market and to show that there is no difference whether a person has or doesn't have a disability; employees are hired according to their talents and competencies;
- on December 3, marking World Disability Day, the article "VMU disability policy: a university culture based on human rights" was released, presenting the final text of the VMU disability policy document "A University of Inclusive Opportunities" in Lithuanian and English.

Volunteer activity. In 2021, 206 student volunteers participated in the University's Volunteer Programme (194 in 2019; 184 in 2020), having signed *voluntary activity agreements*. In 2021, student volunteers contributed to making 20 different events or activities happen at the University. As a result of the restrictions announced by the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, which remained in force throughout the spring semester, events became virtual (online) and volunteer activities were temporarily suspended.

Thirty-seven student volunteers were designated as first-year student mentors in 2021 (33 in 2019; 36 in 2020). The mentors helped VMU first-year students successfully integrate into the University and on campus.

In 2021, for the third year in a row, the volunteer-mentorship project "Lodestar" took place, involving two schools: VMU "Atžalynas" Progymnasium and VMU Ugnė Karvelis Gymnasium. Due to the unfavourable epidemiological situation in Lithuania, it was planned to carry out the project on a smaller scale, to ensure minimal contact. 6 students and 6 pupils participated in the project (15 students and 15 pupils in 2019; 12 students and 12 pupils in 2020).

On December 6, 2021, the University celebrated *International Volunteer Day* for the fourth time in a row, hosting the *VMU Volunteer Awards evening* and inviting and recognizing the most active student volunteers and mentors. In 2021, the University allocated EUR 2,800 to encourage volunteer activity (EUR 3,300 in 2019; EUR 5,400 in 2020).

Fostering multilingualism. As part of its mission to encourage internationality, the VMU Institute of Foreign Languages contributes to putting into practice VMU's fundamental *artes liberales* principles: fosters humanitarian values, develops students' intercultural-dialogue competencies, conveys the distinctiveness of Lithuanian culture through foreign languages, taking into account global educational trends, applies the latest active methods of language teaching and learning as well as a flexible, technology-based language teaching system, provides opportunities for students from all VMU faculties and levels, for the academic and the non-academic community, for the general public to learn languages, and ensures opportunities for language learning throughout life.

In 2021, a competent, multilingual, and multicultural team of 57 teachers, 31 in English and 26 in other languages, of whom 14 taught their native language, ensured the quality of language teaching. Students chose to study a total of 21 foreign languages.

As part of VMU's language policy and in response to the University's mission of fostering a tradition of multilingualism, in 2021 the Institute of Foreign Languages sought to help students to successfully integrate into the contemporary global Labour market and the international world of science, where especially high English-language competence is required, while competence in other languages provides a great competitive advantage. A total of 4,703 students, pupils, and other learners studied various languages at the Institute of Foreign Languages in 2021 (4,437 in 2020). The high percentage of students studying languages that was achieved in the 2019–2021 period was maintained (26 percent in the spring semester of 2021; 28 percent in the autumn semester of 2021), reflecting the high motivation of VMU students to learn languages.

Compared to the last three years, 3,266 studied English in 2021, the largest number over three years (2,886 in 2020; 2,658 in 2019). In contrast, the number of those studying other languages slightly decreased in 2021 (1,277 in 2021; 1,283 in 2020; 1,430 in 2019), likely due to the rise of virtual (online) language learning and the need for very strong competence in English.

To ensure the high-quality development of English-language competencies among students at high levels, the offering of subjects taught at the C1 and C1/C2 levels is constantly being expanded, where particular attention is paid to the orientation of the content of these subjects toward linguistic preparation for university studies and the development of academic language and subject competencies.

Emotional and physical well-being of the community

Strengthening psychological well-being. In line with the objectives of the VMU Strategic Plan for 2021–2027, a strong focus was put on enhancing the emotional and physical well-being of staff and students in 2021. At the VMU Psychology Clinic, 798 individual consultations with a psychologist were provided, 7 seminars were conducted to strengthen psychological well-being, 8 students participated in a computer-based programme, "Personal Changes". The University monitors the psychological well-being of members of the community as well as factors significant to such well-being. At the initiative of scientists in the Department of Psychology, a periodic study of the psychological well-being of employees and a survey of the psychological well-being of students are performed. Considering the needs of the growing international community at VMU, a specialist providing consultations in English was hired at the VMU Psychology Clinic in 2021, and to increase the availability of services, the clinic's website is being improved and it is being made more interactive.

Health promotion and physical activity. On 18 November 2021, the multifunctional President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre (Studentų g. 9a, Kaunas District, Akademija) was opened. Athletes from various sports train and work out there. High-level sports competitions can be held there, and members of the VMU community can exercise there, either through available leisure-time training sessions or independently.

Since 2017, VMU has been a member of the Health Promotion Universities Network (in Lithuanian, SSU). This organisation fosters ideas propagated by the World Health Organisation (WHO), to promote people's health through the SSU network, which currently consists of three universities in Lithuania: VMU, Lithuanian Sports University, and Klaipėda University. VMU, working toward the objectives of a Health Promotion University, acted in 2021 in accordance with the programme "Health-friendly environment in the cultivation of a healthy person", approved in 2017–2021. In accordance with the guidelines of the SSU Network, the SSU Network Coordination Council, renewed on 15 November 2021, prepared a new programme of action for the period 2022–2027. The implementation of the SSU action programme is coordinated by the above-mentioned Council and the physical-education trainer at the Sports Centre, Assoc. Prof. Asta Mockienė, an expert on healthy lifestyles.

Leisure sports activity:

- In total, 553 students enrolled in the leisure sports activities offered by VMU in 2021 (825 in 2020; 1,240 in 2019) and were able to choose from 12 available leisure sports;
- In June 2021, the Sports Centre organised a children's weekly summer sports camp for the first time, with the aim of occupying children during their summer vacation, introducing them to various sports (basketball, soccer (football), volleyball, badminton, judo, chess), and helping them to spend their vacation in a productive way. The camp took place at the VMU Sports Centre, with 14 children (boys and girls) participating in the camp.
- In 2021, the University community, students, and staff actively engaged in wellness events and health promotion activities organised by the University or Sports Centre partners, although due to the pandemic there was reduced participation in physical activity and sports events.

Effectiveness of internal communication

In 2021, the University's internal communication was improved. Forty-seven regular newsletters were sent to the University staff and 23 were sent to students. Critical news and information about events were sent through separate special newsletters. In addition, in September 2021, a half-time position for a translator was created in the Marketing and Communication Department, leading to an increase in the dissemination of information in English (121 news items in English in 2020; 185 news items in English in 2021).

University alumni community

From 1993 to 2021, 46,006 graduates received a degree at VMU, of whom 398 graduates completed their studies with honours. In 2021, 629 new graduates joined the alumni community.

To achieve the strategic aspirations of the University's alumni community for 2021–2027, the position of coordinator of VMU graduates was established. After an open hiring competition was conducted, Samanta Ėringė, a graduate of the Creative Industries and Entrepreneurship Academy in the VMU Faculty of Arts, was selected to be Chief Coordinator at the Career Centre.

The University's activities for alumni were organised and carried out directly or through the VMU Alumni Club, with which the Department of Student Affairs cooperates closely.

University-sponsored activities and events for alumni:

- In 2021, newsletters were periodically sent to all VMU graduates and especially to VMU Alumni Club members. In addition, an initiative was launched, sending congratulations to VMU graduates who reach a milestone of one kind or another in their careers;
- bringing together the University's alumni community, the VMU Career Centre created a separate section at *vdv.lt*, called "VMU graduates". Its purpose is to publicize the experiences and success stories of VMU alumni;
- to create an opportunity for graduates to continue to feel part of the community after graduation, in 2021 the University created, made public, and applied a basket of benefits and opportunities for all VMU graduates, differentiated into two categories: new graduates in the first year after their graduation (offering language studies; consultations on how to more effectively enter the job market; the opportunity to continue participating in the University's artistic or sporting activities and to continue living in the University's dormitory), and for all other graduates (providing the opportunity to obtain certificates and documents; duplicates of diplomas and annexes to the diploma; career consultations free of charge; to engage in career mentoring activities; to offer jobs, internships, traineeships, or volunteer positions in a company or organisation; to participate in public events at VMU free of charge; to subscribe to the newsletter and to receive the most important University news or to use *Outlook* mail as University graduates);
- carrying on the tradition, on 8–12 November 2021, the University together with the Alumni Club organised an Alumni Day, "Return to the University" (Homecoming). A week of virtual (online) lectures was organised especially for this event; VMU alumni were invited to take part directly in virtual (online) lectures. On November 11, bringing together VMU graduates scattered around the world, a virtual (online) meeting was organised, a discussion (conducted in English) for VMU's international alumni. On November 18, traditional meetings took place in the faculties, and the main event, "Return to the University" (Homecoming) was held. Its aim was to bring together the VMU community, classmates, and all alumni, back at the University, to see each other again in person;
- VMU's "Flagbearer" initiative continued in 2021. On 12 November 2021, the third flag in the series was awarded to Rima Norvilienė, a graduate in German Philology studies, who has shown great initiative in the Šilalė area with her civic activities;

- the VMU Alumni Club's Board elected a new President, Džiugas Juknys, a VMU graduate. To facilitate closer cooperation, the VMU Alumni Club proposed the "Six Steps+" programme. To increase VMU community activity and alumni engagement, on October 18 the Club organised a discussion at the University, "The Code of Artes Liberales and VMU alumni identity". The Board of the VMU Alumni Club held three meetings, generating ideas and planning the communication strategy. In 2021, 55 new members joined the VMU Alumni Club, bringing the overall annual growth in club membership to 7.1 percent (9 percent in 2019; 10 percent in 2020).

Community participation in organisations

In 2021, 35 registered student organisations were active at VMU. In 2021, the VMU Student Society *Šauksmas* (The Call) joined the group of registered organisations. Its goal is to propagate the ideas of solidarity, civic-mindedness and progressiveness among students, and to seek changes in the life of the University and in the Lithuanian educational system.

In 2021, the University's student organisations focused their activities on the creation of a socially responsible University when applying for project funding. In 2021, 9 applications in a first round (8 in 2019, 14 in 2020) and 2 applications during a second round were submitted to the VMU Commission that decides on funding for student organisations, for a total of 11 projects.

Distribution (by project area) of funded VMU student organisation projects in 2021: Creation of a socially responsible University (5 projects); Promoting internationality (1 project); Initiation of activities related to science, the arts, and studies (3 projects); Maintaining and developing relations with members of the University community (1 project); Coordination of activities related to the interests of students and their representation (1 project).

VMU has provided targeted support to student organisations (EUR 15,000) aimed at promoting and fostering student initiatives and activities that expand cooperation and the potential of human resources, and that create or develop scientific, artistic, study organisation, cultural, social, sports, civic, and other initiatives promoting the University.

Activities of the VMU Student Representative Council. The VMU Student Representative Council is the only non-profit, non-governmental organisation representing the University's students. Its activities are based on transparency, self-governance, equality, and other democratic values. Last year, the Student Representative Council actively contributed to the well-being of the University's students in the following ways:

- As part of the Scholarship Working Group, contributed to increasing the funding of scholarships and reducing the minimum threshold of points necessary for newly-accepted students to receive scholarships, with the decision coming into force in September 2021.
- The *Enlightenment* project was carried out, producing videos that educated students about the importance of academic integrity.
- Regulations governing the activities of student-coordinators were approved, in an effort to improve the academic and social well-being of students.
- Regulations governing the functioning of the Study Programme committees were approved, to regulate the procedure for election of student representatives and to define their rights and obligations.
- In cooperation with the VMU disability affairs coordinator, a survey of students with individual needs was carried out, in an effort to learn more about the level of accessibility of the University to those with disabilities, in the academic, infrastructure, and psychosocial areas.
- An amended description of the regulations for self-governance of dormitories was approved, and changes concerning the composition of the Dormitory Council and the election of dormitory chairpersons entered into force.
- Contributed to the editing of the Code of Academic Ethics.
- Involved in preparing the VMU Gender Equality and Disability Policy documents and Health Promotion University guidelines.
- The educational discussion cycle "Dynamic Dialogues" continued.

VMU Chamber Orchestra Concert Activities. In 2021, the VMU Chamber Orchestra remained the only professional chamber orchestra in Kaunas, which, even during the difficult period of the COVID-19 pandemic, prepared and presented new programmes, representing the University in Kaunas and in other Lithuanian cities with 18 concerts. Articles about the chamber orchestra were published in the daily newspaper *Kauno diena*,

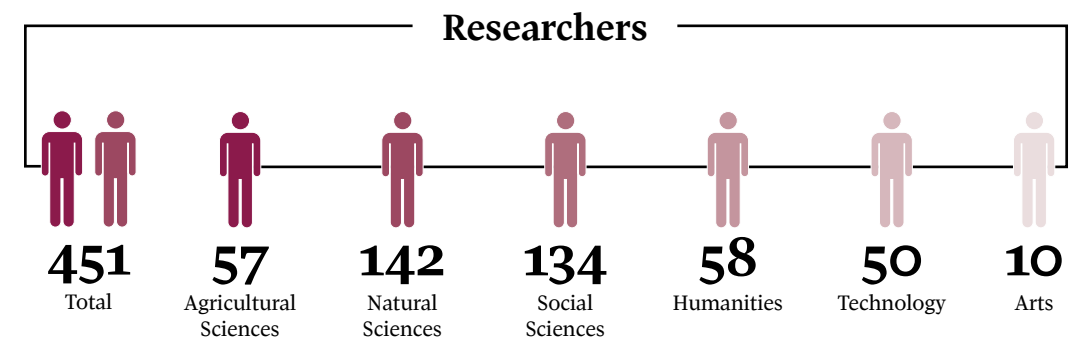
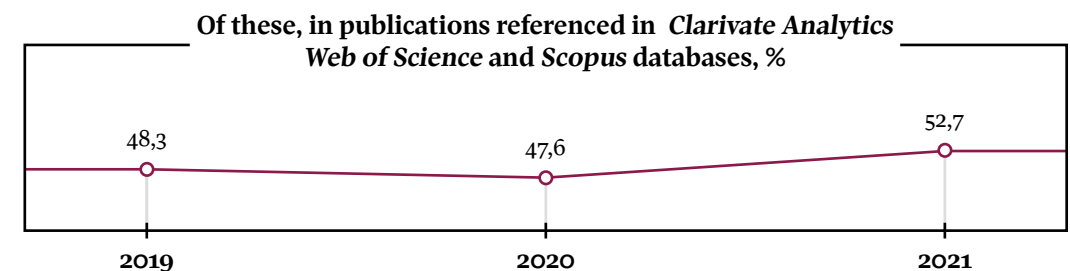
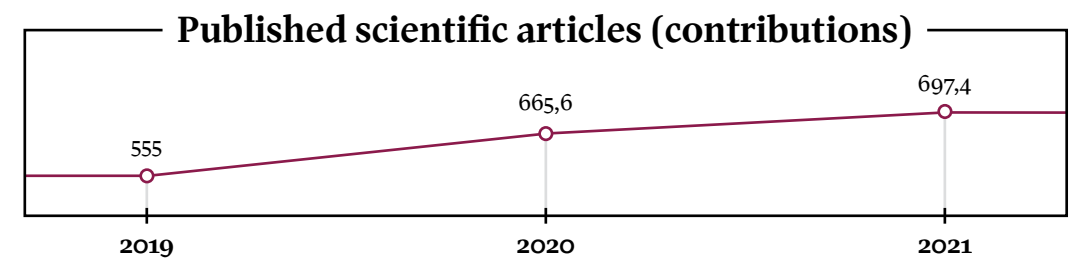
the portals *lrt.lt*, *m.diena.lt*, *kaunas.kasvyksta.lt*, *bernardinai.lt*, and others, professional concert recordings were uploaded to the orchestra's *YouTube* channel and to *Facebook*. The chamber orchestra recorded and uploaded to its YouTube channel and to Facebook the concert performance of the album *Fractalas*, marking the start of its 10th anniversary season, and in December celebrated the birthday of the X Orchestra with the concert *Opera Gala*.

Further development of activities:

- Strive for harmonious diversity and synergies in the community, ensuring the principles of equal opportunity, gender equality, non-discrimination, dignity, self-realisation and autonomy, maintaining and fostering the unique VMU value-based organisational culture.
- Supporting the emotional well-being of staff and students, monitoring and researching the factors relevant to the community's well-being, addressing the needs of the community through educational activities and advice.
- Encourage community volunteering, initiate and implement volunteering projects, develop favourable conditions for expressing individuality and talents, provide an opportunity for any member of the University community to offer their ideas, express their views, and create the University of the future.
- Develop relationships with business and non-governmental organisations, create joint social projects, organise events relevant to the whole of Lithuania, thus seeking recognition of VMU as a reliable social partner.
- Promote more efficient internal communication and the exchange of information between various subdivisions of the University.
- Implement the University's programme of activities to promote health, establishing leadership in the network of health-promoting universities, expand physical activity and health promotion opportunities for members of the community.
- Develop measures to support VMU-based organisations and create favourable operating conditions by encouraging greater community involvement.
- Implement VMU disability policy, responding to the needs of people with disabilities, improve the environment for study and work, and improve educational activities.
- Mobilise and strengthen the alumni community in Lithuania and abroad, promote the involvement of alumni in the activities of the VMU Alumni Club or other VMU alumni communities, increase participation in the community and academic life of the University, improve the offer of benefits and opportunities.

International research University

Published monographs	21
Science and art prizes, other significant awards	18
Number of priority clusters for scientific and artistic research	60
Funds allocated to the University's Research Fund, in thousands of EUR	366
Number of ongoing scientific projects	325
Value of contracts for ongoing scientific projects, in millions of EUR	259 (VMU portion: 56)
Number of third cycle study fields	24
Number of third cycle students, as of 1 October 2021	258
Number of third cycle students defending dissertations	41
Theses defended since the establishment of third cycle studies	827
Registration of plant varieties that have passed international examination (units)	2



International research University

In 2021, the University's teachers, artists, and researchers achieved excellent scientific and artistic results.

Over 300 projects, international and national, in science and in business, have been carried out. Project activities in 2021 focused on international scientific and educational projects. The University's researchers submitted 25 *Horizon 2020* applications and launched five new projects. VMU's participation in the Transform4Europe European University Alliance has directly led to two successful projects: the Horizon project "Transform 4 European Research and Innovation (T4ERI)" and the Erasmus+ project Transform4Europe (T4E), which started in 2020. A total of 14 *Horizon 2020* projects were in progress in 2021.

Scientists and teachers were encouraged to seek ambitious goals, in particular to publish articles in recognised international publications. In 2021, partnerships between science and business and industry as well as closer cooperation with international organisations were sought. R&D, innovation orders and contracts with businesses were encouraged, and the scientific contribution to innovation was publicised, emphasising VMU's leadership. In 2021, the value of contracts for R&D projects signed with businesses amounted to EUR 1.945 million. The University is becoming an increasingly important business partner or service provider in R&D projects, and the University's expertise and experience helps to create innovations for the Lithuanian and world markets. In 2021, support for more than 60 R&D projects and contracts was requested. The University participated in more than 40 public tenders with a value of more than EUR 5 million. More than 50 meetings with businesses were held, during which commercial proposals were submitted. Most of these efforts in public procurement and commercial proposals had a successful outcome; 40 contracts with a value of EUR 920,000 were signed, and projects worth EUR 1,025,000 were agreed.

Important indicators of scientific and artistic activity include priority research areas, participation in international and national scientific programmes, scientific projects and performance of outsourced research services, monographs, articles and citations referenced in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases, patents registered with the state and international patent bureaus, presentations at conferences, the number of conferences and seminars organised, the alignment of such events with the University's mission and strategic objectives, concerts and exhibitions, and cultural awards received. In 2021, the aim was to increase internationality, the social, economic, and cultural impact of the University on the country's development in a global context, and to focus more on unique projects with higher added value in science and art. Particular attention was devoted to the search for synergies between research groups working in different subdivisions, carrying out existing projects and initiating new ones.

Research and artistic performance

In 2021, teachers and researchers published more than 697 scientific articles (665.6 in 2020), including 368 (317 in 2020) in publications referenced in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases, 247 in publications referenced in other international databases, and more than 80 in other peer-reviewed publications. A total of 21 monographs and more than 900 other scientific works (articles and summaries, conference materials, translations of texts, publications of research sources, compiled works, etc.) were published.

In the fields of natural sciences, technology, and agricultural sciences, 283 scientific articles were published, of which 201 were published in publications referenced in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases; of these, 169 have a non-zero citation index.

Teachers and researchers in the humanities and social sciences published 21 monographs (9 of them through international publishing houses), 5 research studies, 2 textbooks for students in institutions of higher education, more than 50 book chapters and other applied and compiled works, and 414 scientific articles. These teachers and researchers also published 167 scientific articles (148 in 2020) in publications referenced in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases, including 125 having a non-zero citation index. A total of 177 articles (147 in 2020) were in publications referenced in other international databases and/or published by international publishing houses, and more than 70 articles were in other peer-reviewed scientific periodicals or in one-off publications in Lithuania and abroad. More than 600 articles and summaries were published in professional publications and in Lithuanian, foreign, and international conference materials.

In 2021, 388 works of artistic production (273 in 2020) were registered at the University: 312 concerts and musical performances (271 in Lithuania, 41 abroad: Estonia, Italy, the USA, Latvia, Poland, France, Russia, Ukraine, Switzerland, Germany), 6 drama performances (3 in Lithuania, 3 abroad: Germany, Russia), 57 art exhibitions (42 in Lithuania, 15 abroad: Iran, Spain, Italy, Latvia, Poland, Turkey, Ukraine, Hungary), 9 photo exhibitions (8 in Lithuania, 1 in Poland), 2 CDs were released, 2 design works were created.

Artistic activity

In 2021, Romualdas Požerskis, professor in the Faculty of Arts, published the photo album *Menininkai ir mūzos* ("Artists and Muses") and held the exhibition *Kauno menininkai ir mūzos* ("Kaunas Artists and Muses") at the Kaunas Picture Gallery. Among the many other exhibitions organised by the professor, it is especially worth mentioning the exhibition *Atlaidai* ("Feast") in Clermont (France) at the art space *Espace Culturel Séraphine Louis*. The professor's works were also displayed in Vilnius at a major exhibition of the MO Museum, *Permainų šventė* ("Celebration of Change"), which was curated by Associate Prof. Tomas Pabedinskas of the Faculty of Arts.

The creative work of Prof. Rimantas Plungė was exhibited in the USA at the Noyes Museum of Art in the group exhibition "Borderless: Digital Practices in Changing Times".

Associate Prof. Adas Toleikis designed the newly-opened Square of the Righteous among the Nations (in Šiauliai) and its primary artistic-sculptural accent, Jungtis (project architect: Ilona Vazonienė).

Assoc. Prof. Birutė Marija Sodaitytė and Prof. Jonas Janulevičius of the Music Academy were awarded the Santaka municipal emblem of honour (3rd degree) by Kaunas Municipality, for their achievements in the field of culture.

Teacher Kostas Smoriginas performs the role of Giorgio Germont in Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La traviata* at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre (premiere on November 17, 2021). The composer of the children's opera *Mamulė Mū* (premiere on December 5, 2021) is Associate Prof. Sigitas Mickis.

The following VMU teachers perform roles in Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La traviata* at the Kaunas State Musical Theatre (premiere on December 26, 2021): Gabrielė Bukinė (Violetta), Egidijus Bavikinas (Giorgio Germont), Gabrielė Kuzmickaitė (Flora Bervoix), Mindaugas Zimkus (Gastone de Letorières), and Giedrius Prunskus (Dottore Grenvil), as well as student Martynas Stankevičius (Giuseppe).

Assoc. Prof. Virgilijus Visockis is the music director and conductor for the children's opera *Gulliver's Travels* (by Jonathan Swift) at the Kaunas State Musical Theatre (premiere on September 19, 2021). The following teachers perform in the opera: Giedrius Prunskus (the Captain), Mindaugas Zimkus (King of Lilliput), and Nomeda Kukulskienė (Queen of Lilliput), as well as students Kazimieras Ivanovas (the Captain), Povilas Strikaitis (the Giant), Karolina Činikaitė, Patricija Gadliauskienė, Agnė Čepaitytė, Vasarė Gritenaitė, Rugilė Balčiūnaitė, Viktorija Zeilikovičiūtė, Vygantas Bemovas and Martynas Stankevičius (Lilliputians).

Prof. Jonas Janulevičius is the conductor for Gioachino Rossini's two-part opera *Il Turco in Italia* (premiere on September 8, 2021) at the Kaunas State Musical Theatre. VMU teachers Giedrius Prunskus (Selim) and Gabrielė Bukinė (Fiorilla) perform roles in the opera.

Assoc. Prof. Povilas Velikis of the Music Academy, together with the group U'Elements, released a CD, *Warm White*.

The VMU Art Gallery 101 is an inter-academic space that promotes interconnected contemporary art processes and applies different curatorial strategies to explore various topics. In 2021, some ideas were implemented virtually (online), such as the Office podcasts, streamed experimental performances, and a curatorial programme to explore topics of love and care. Seven physical (in-person) exhibitions were organised in the 101 space and the basement gallery: Milda Gineikaitė's experimental photography exhibition *Būtis promočiutės kambaryje* ("Being in Great-grandma's room"), the exhibition *Belaukiant krypties* ("Waiting for direction") at the Kaunas Artists House (curator Agnė Bagdžiūnaitė), Josip Zanki's artistic exploration and exhibition "Grand Tour: Age of Pyramid and Postcolonial Pilgrimage", an exhibition of thesis works by pupils of the Kaunas Art Gymnasium (curator Gintautas Vaičys), the exhibition *Natūra* of photographic works by students in the VMU New Media Art Programme (curators Rimgaudas Barauskis and Milda Gineikaitė), and the photography event-exhibition *Dirbtinės gėlės* ("Artificial Flowers") by Fabrizio Fortini (Raphael Baldaya) (curator Tomas Pabedinskas). One of the greatest achievements of art gallery 101 in 2021 was cooperation with the Kaunas Biennial, carrying out the Kaunas Biennial project *Nemiga* ("Insomnia") (curators Artūras Raila and European Humanities University students from Belarus). The gallery also started to work together with the cultural promotion project *Kultūros dokas* ("Culture Dock"), which is part of the "Kaunas: European Capital of Culture 2022" programme.

The VMU Theatre in Kaunas operates as an alternative to classical theatre, a place for educational events, and an innovative, courageous, and exceptional environment for young people to create. In 2021, the creative works of students and alumni of the Faculty of Arts and the Education Academy were presented at the Theater:

- Alumni of the Acting programme of the Faculty of Arts and students at the Faculty of Arts created the short film *Super normalus* and participated in the International Filmmaking Festival *Odisėja 72*, a preview of which was held at the VMU Theatre;
- Alumni of the Acting programme of the Faculty of Arts prepared and presented the sensory performance *Anykščių šilelio takais* ("Along the paths of Anykščiai Forest") (R. Tamošauskaitė, an alumna of the Acting programme and the initiator and director of the performance) and *FREAKEN*, based on August Strindberg's play *Fröken Julie* ("Miss Julie") (director M. Naudžiūnas, P.A.R.A.K.A.S./VMU Theater);

- Students of the Education Academy presented a performance as part of the international project “European Youth Engagement Network: EYE.net”, the director of which was Rokas Lažaunykas, a graduate of the Acting Programme. From November 17 to 20, 2021, the work was performed in Slovenia;
- Students of the Education Academy and alumni of the Acting programme prepared and presented educational programmes for the Drama LAB event (Kaunas Chamber Theater/VMU Theater), educational programmes for the youth festival *Problema (NE) BĖDA* (“Problem is (no) problem”) (Kaunas Chamber Theater/VMU Theater), the play *Isilaužėlis* (Raudondvaris Manor Arts Incubator/VMU Theater), and the play *Dievų miškas* (“Forest of the Gods”) (Kaunas Ninth Fort Museum/VMU Theater), prepared the sketch *Gedulas* (“Mourning”) for a sketch competition (Kaunas Chamber Theater/VMU Theater), and participated in the international interactive theatre festival *Nerk į teatrą* (“Dive into theater”) (National Kaunas Drama Theater/VMU Theater).

Registration, collection and dissemination of research and artistic results

Carrying out the tasks and moving toward the objectives related to the collection and dissemination of results of research and artistic activities and implementation of the open research policy set out in the University’s strategic plan, the University’s Research Management System, VMU CRIS (<https://www.vdu.lt/cris>), was further developed and expanded (having been established in 2019). VMU CRIS has accumulated more than 109,000 University publications, journal articles, thesis works, doctoral dissertations, and other publications with metadata. The Publications Database (PDB) has accumulated a total of more than 69,000 (in 2021, 3,800) scientific publications and peer-reviewed journal articles, more than 13,000 (in 2021, 3,200) books, and more than 21,000 (in 2021, 2,600) thesis works and doctoral dissertations (electronic theses and dissertations).

The VMU CRIS archive is enriched each year with full-text documents. In total, almost 35,000 full-text documents have already been accumulated in the archive (in 2021, 30,000) (621 e-books, 51 e-journals (of which 23 are currently published by VMU), more than 12,000 articles, more than 21,000 electronic theses and dissertations, and 724 other documents and 11 datasets).

More than 1,500 profiles of active researchers have been created in VMU CRIS, 44 percent of which contain detailed information on professional, scientific, and teaching qualifications, recognitions, awards, participation in organisations, guest lectures, subjects taught, and other activities.

An upgraded version of the VMU CRIS platform was under preparation in 2021.

Funding and promotion of research and artistic activity

Salaries for academic staff rose between 10 percent and 30 percent in 2019, 10 percent since autumn 2020, and up to 10 percent since February 2021.

According to the current flexible methodology for calculating bonuses to the base salary, teachers and researchers are rewarded for high research output and scientific and teaching performance with monthly bonus payments (for research output and for other academic and teaching activity), in addition to the payment for their teacher or researcher duties, ranging from 0.9 to 13.8 times the monthly base pay for a full-time position (in Lithuanian, *BMA*).

The competition-based University fund to encourage research amounted in 2021 to EUR 366,000. The funds were allocated to development of the University’s cluster activities, trips by third cycle students to competitions, promotion of academic production at the highest level, dissemination of research and publicising of priority areas, and promotion of third cycle students’ research activities.

A total of 372 teachers, academic staff, researchers, and third cycle students received almost EUR 193,000 for academic production at the highest level, performance of R&D orders from businesses and the most significant scientific projects. The funds intended for staff and third cycle students were channelled through scientific clusters and institutes. These funds can be used in various ways: scientific trips and other research-related purposes, bonuses, and scholarships, and can be included in the teaching load.

An incentive rate of 5 percent and, under the updated calculation procedure, one-off bonus payments in one month of 1.5 to 2 times the size of the monthly base pay (in Lithuanian, *BMA*) were paid for 35 original articles promoting science.

The development of science clusters was allocated funding of EUR 126,000. These funds were used by the clusters to cover the expenses of organising and participating in scientific conferences, publishing scientific publications, publishing scientific works in recognised scientific journals referenced in the *Scopus* and *CA WoS* databases, and performing research.

Funding of EUR 35,000 was allocated to state- and EU-funded doctoral students in the full-time first- and second-year courses and non-full-time first-, second-, and third-year courses. This funding was intended to improve the qualifications of doctoral students, the dissemination of research results, and to increase regional and international mobility. In 2019, following the updating of the regulations for the promotion of doctoral student research activity, the amount of funds allocated to doctoral students over the entire period of doctoral

studies increased from EUR 400 to EUR 600 in the humanities and social sciences and from EUR 1,200 to EUR 1,500 in the natural sciences, agricultural sciences, and technology. The doctoral trip competition was allocated EUR 10,000.

National and international projects

Although the global pandemic impacted the preparation and implementation of international and national projects, the total number of VMU projects in 2021 nevertheless remains similar to that in 2020. More than 300 projects, international and national, in science and in business, were carried out in 2021.

Project activities in 2021 focused on international scientific and educational projects. The University’s researchers submitted 25 *Horizon 2020* applications and launched five new projects. In total, 14 *Horizon 2020* projects were proceeding in 2021.

The University’s active participation in European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) activities continued in 2021, in 22 thematic projects of the COST programme. The project “Connecting Theory and Practical Issues of Migration and Religious Diversity” (CA20107), initiated by VMU Prof. Milda Ališauskienė, was approved. The project involves researchers from European Union countries, the USA, South Africa, Norway, Serbia, and North Macedonia. The number of countries on the Steering Committee, currently 27, is constantly growing. The network aims to bring researchers together to acquire new scientific knowledge, to share it, and to build capabilities, engaging a new generation of researchers, in order to analyse the increased migration to Europe and its role in religious diversity. In 2021, VMU scholars (Aistė Lazauskienė and Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė) joined the ongoing COST programme activity “Intergovernmental coordination: from local to European governance” (CA20123).

The University’s scientists actively participated in other international projects: 13 Erasmus+ projects were launched in 2021. In total, 68 Erasmus+ projects are on-going.

In 2021, the University carried out more than 150 projects administered by the Research Council of Lithuania (in Lithuanian, *LMT*). As in prior years, scientists actively participated in the calls for proposals announced by the Research Council. 23 applications were submitted by VMU scientists, and two projects were approved (a total of 366 applications were submitted to the Research Council). In the call for high-level R&D (SMART) proposals, VMU scientists submitted seven applications, and two of them were approved and have started. Another SMART project is being implemented with VMU as a partner. The Research Council funded two short-term (immediate) research projects related to the COVID-19. In the second call for the competitive priority research programme “Welfare State” (or Welfare Society), one VMU project received funding.

As in prior years, VMU scientists participated in the calls of the State Lithuanian-Language Research and Dissemination Programme for 2016–2024. One VMU project received funding. Two VMU applications were funded under the Baltic Research Programme. One project was approved under the Lithuania-Japan Projects (LJB) programme.

In 2021, six new doctoral degree holders started their scientific careers at VMU according to the activity “Promotion of training after receiving the doctoral degree”, funded by the 2014–2020 Operational Programme for Investments of EU funds “Development of scientific competences of scientists, other researchers and students through practical research activities” (No. 09.3.3-LMT-K-712).

In 2021, eight VMU projects were successful in the Research Council competition for research during the semester. Four projects received funding from the sub-activity “Student capability-building through scientific (artistic) summer internships”.

The VMU Agriculture Academy submitted applications to the Eureka programme, and in 2021 started one new project, “Research of substances for reducing the risk of downwind dispersal of plant protection products and development of a new formulation” (project leader: Prof. Dainius Steponavičius).

Six projects that won the 2021 call for the measure “Support for applied research” of the Programme for the Promotion of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development received funding. Two projects won calls from the National Paying Agency in 2021. An EIP-AGRI project (European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability) was launched in 2021.

Commercialisation of R&D

The Communication and Technology Transfer Centre (hereinafter referred to as the CTTC) commercialises scientific activities, develops R&D services, and promotes partnerships between science and business. In 2021, in addition to strengthening cooperative links, more emphasis was placed on the creation of new businesses and the exploitation of existing scientific potential to generate innovation. The activities of the CTTC team, such as training events, meetings of working groups creating innovation potential, ongoing consultations on intellectual property, the search for funding sources, marketing and communication, as well as consultations on technology transfer and commercialisation of innovation, continue. The existing experience of cooperation with business has stimulated the growth of revenue from new products, innovative technologies, and methods developed at the University.

The CTTC team and scientists actively presented the University's innovations and services to Lithuanian and foreign business in meetings, international events, and exhibitions, which took place both virtually (online) and in-person. Virtual (online) meetings helped reach an even wider range of target groups in Lithuania and in various global markets. As a result, VMU CTTC became a member of the Lithuanian Social Innovation Cluster, the University Industry Innovation Network, the Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals (ASTP), and the Technology Innovation International network.

In 2021, the ever-challenging situation due to the COVID-19 impacted the planning for visits, meetings, and events, leading to the majority of events being held virtually (online). Hybrid and in-person contact have also been used. CTTC Week, organised for the first time, attracted the community's attention and engaged students, scholars, and business representatives in creative workshops organised by CTTC together with colleagues from other subdivisions of the University. Key events included getting to know R&D, generation of start-up ideas, exchanges of contacts between science and business, intellectual property, the hunt for research funding, and success stories in collaboration between researchers and business. More than 200 participants attended the event.

In 2021, VMU allocated EUR 30,000 for joint projects with other educational institutions to promote greater cooperation and to develop the competencies of young researchers as well as for participation in R&D activities. As in 2020, there was strong interest in the initiative: 11 applications were received, of which the three most highly-rated by experts were funded.

Seeking to achieve one of the University's priorities, the commercialisation of research and the development of R&D activities together with business, the initiatives implemented at the University and the funding for researchers gave positive results. In 2021, the value of R&D projects and contracts signed with business was EUR 1,945,000, but the total number of R&D contracts signed with business decreased, compared to 2020. This was due to two main reasons. Firstly, the difficult economic and political situation had an effect. Secondly, 2021 was a transition year, when the new EU structural funding period (2021–2027) started, and therefore there were no (or few) new funding measures announced to promote cooperation with business. Fourteen percent growth in R&D contracts with business was seen in the case of direct orders from business or state institutions, but there was a more than 40 percent drop in R&D contracts signed with business using EU structural funds measures. There was a particular lack of public investment in the most complex R&D projects, which require a large budget (in 2021, the "Experimentas" measure was not announced, having amounted to EUR 1–1.3 million in the University's R&D revenue structure annually in the last two years). The CTTC team actively worked on projects to develop new products with business, but for many such projects the company's own funds are insufficient, therefore the calls for R&D projects to develop products that are planned to be announced in 2022 will help to realise such projects.

Despite the unfavourable situation, 2021 was productive for the University in terms of implementing R&D activity with business: applications were submitted to MITA, the University participated in public procurement, and service contracts were signed with business. In 2021, funding for more than 60 R&D projects and contracts was requested, and the University participated in more than 40 public procurement tenders worth more than EUR 5 million. More than 50 meetings were organised with representatives of business, during which commercial proposals were submitted. The majority of the public procurement and commercial proposals were successful, with 40 contracts signed for EUR 920,000. Some proposals remain in the process of being evaluated.

It is worth noting that the University received its first revenue for the licensing of intellectual property (EUR 12,100 from UAB "Trust guru"). This demonstrates a new way of developing a use for scientific potential and creating products and services at the University.

Doctoral (third cycle) studies

The University has the right to grant doctoral degrees in 24 academic fields, and the University cooperates with 18 Lithuanian institutions of higher education and research. In 2021, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport granted to VMU together with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University the right to award the PhD in the field of Communication and Information Science.

In 2021, 38 state-financed doctoral study slots were allocated to the University. Three first-year doctoral students from Lithuania and abroad pay for their doctoral study at their own expense.

A total of 258 doctoral students were enrolled in the autumn semester.

In 2021, 34 doctoral students participated in internships, virtual (online) seminars, conferences, and other scientific events at universities and research institutions abroad. In 2021, the University accepted 8 doctoral students to study as visiting doctoral students. In 2021, eight doctoral students travelled to four countries under the Erasmus+ student exchange programme.

A total of 41 doctoral dissertations were defended at the University: 11 in the natural sciences, 7 in the humanities, 16 in the social sciences, 3 in technology, and 4 in the agricultural sciences. In terms of effectiveness, the doctoral studies in theology, psychology, and law were excellent, with a success rate of 100 percent in the defence of the dissertations in those fields.

Since the establishment of doctoral studies, the University has prepared 827 scholars.

Since 2012, when the procedure for granting the status of visiting professor was established and approved, 25 foreign scholars have been granted this status. In 2021, five researchers were granted the status of visiting professor: Suvi Lakkala from the University of Lapland (Finland), Jordi Linares-Pellicer from the University of Valencia (Spain), Ka Lok Man from Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (China), Lucio Tommaso De Paolis from the University of Salento (Italy), and Robert E. Gutsche, Jr. from Lancaster University (United Kingdom).

Partnerships

The University is constantly strengthening its partnerships. VMU has strong partners, and participates in various international scientific infrastructure arrangements, science-business cooperative agreements and other associations. Key new partnerships and initiatives in 2021:

- the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, VMU, the Lithuanian Innovation Centre, the Science and Technology Park of the Institute of Physics, the Lithuanian Energy Institute, the agrifood technology company ART21, and the SMART IT Cluster, coordinating the digital innovation Centre "AgriFood Lithuania", signed a contract and established a consortium that will mobilise forces in the implementation of the initiative "Digital Transformation of Industry, Agriculture and Energy in Lithuania" (in short, EDIH4IAE.LT). This is the first consortium bringing together the largest Centres in these fields in Lithuania, which provides for the creation of a European-level digital innovation hub.
- VMU became a member of the open platform Crowdhelix (<https://www.crowdhelix.com>). Crowdhelix is an open innovation platform that builds international networks between scientists and innovative companies to initiate pioneering projects, particularly in the EU's *Horizon Europe* programme.
- VMU became a member of the Lithuanian Social Innovation Cluster. The cluster creates an open and constructive dialogue among state institutions, non-governmental organisations, academic and research institutions, social and socially responsible business, and society.
- VMU became a member of the University Industry Innovation Network. UIIN is an international leader in university-industry engagement, entrepreneurship, and knowledge transfer among university members, always ready to support the global community of university-industry professionals. Its main activities are focused on conducting research, organising events, and providing training and consulting services to a community with more than 80 organisations and more than 500 individual members.
- VMU became a member of the Association of European Science and Technology Transfer Professionals (ASTP), a European leader bringing together knowledge and technology transfer professionals with over 20 years of experience in training, consulting, and commercialising of innovations.
- VMU has become a member of the Technology Innovation International network. The global network offers its expertise and experience to universities and businesses, to commercialise the innovations and new technologies they have developed.
- The University cooperates with Lithuanian and foreign institutions of higher education and other institutions in the publication of scholarly journals. Together with partners (Eesti Maaülikool/ Estonian University of Life Sciences, Latvijas Lauksaimniecības universitāte/Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvijas Valsts mežzinātnes institūts "Silava"/Latvian State Forest Research Institute "Silava", Universitat Oberta de Catalunya/Open University of Catalonia, Universidad de los Andes/University of Los Andes, Dublin City University, Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics and Lithuanian Energy Institute, Kaunas University of Technology, and Šiauliai University), the following scientific journals referenced and indexed in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases are published: *Agronomy Research*, *Baltic Forestry*, *Environmental Research*, *Engineering, and Management*, *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, *Management Theory and Studies for Rural Business and Infrastructure Development*, and *Žemdirbystė (Farming)*. In publishing other publications (*Archivum Lithuanicum*, *Journal of Water Security*, *Lithuanian Energy Security: Annual Review*, *Lithuanian Annual Strategic Review*, *Miškininkystė (Forestry)*, and *Sporto mokslas (Sports Science)*), the University also cooperates with partners: Rīgas tehniskā universitāte/Riga Technical University, the University of Illinois at Chicago, Vilnius University, Kaunas University of Technology, Klaipėda University, Šiauliai University, the Military Academy of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Olympic Academy, the Lithuanian Institute of History, the Institute of the Lithuanian Language, the Lithuanian Energy Institute, the Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics, the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, the Institute of Forestry.
- VMU Agriculture Academy researchers participate in the Infrastructure for Analysis and Experimentation on Ecosystems (AnaEE). Assoc. Prof. Zita Kriaučiūnienė is a member of the board and the representative of Lithuania. Prof. Vaclovas Bogužas, of the Department of Agroecosystems and Soil Sciences at the Faculty of Agronomy, also participates. The Faculty of Agronomy has successfully engaged in the AnaEE research infrastructure and is conducting two international projects (*Horizon Europe* (AgroServ) and *Horizon 2020* (Smartforsoil)).

- VMU participates in the CLARIN-LT research infrastructure network, a research infrastructure for various digital language resources and technologies for researchers, teachers and students of social sciences and the humanities. CLARIN-LT activities include conducting applied and interdisciplinary research, promoting international mobility of researchers, and raising awareness of language data and tools maintained by CLARIN; organising high-level national and international scientific events, advising researchers; collection of Lithuanian-language resources and language research tools.
- VMU researchers also participate in the European Innovation, Partnership ‘Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability’ (EIP-AGRI) innovation network set up by the European Commission to promote innovation in the agricultural and forestry sectors as well as to bring research and practice closer together. EIP-AGRI was designed as a new way to help the agricultural and forestry sectors become more productive, sustainable, and able to address existing challenges such as tougher competition, volatile market prices, climate change, and stricter environmental protection rules. Within the EIP-AGRI network, VMU carries out a project funded by the European Commission.
- VMU participates in European Social Research in the European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESR ERIC) and is carrying out the project “Implementation of the plan for Lithuanian membership in European Social Research in the European Research Infrastructure Consortium” (No. VS-3).
- VMU scholar-experts serve on *Horizon Europe* committees: Prof. Audrius Sigitas Maruška, Assoc. Prof. Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė, Prof. Rūta Petrauskaitė, and Assoc. Prof. Zita Kriaučiūnienė.

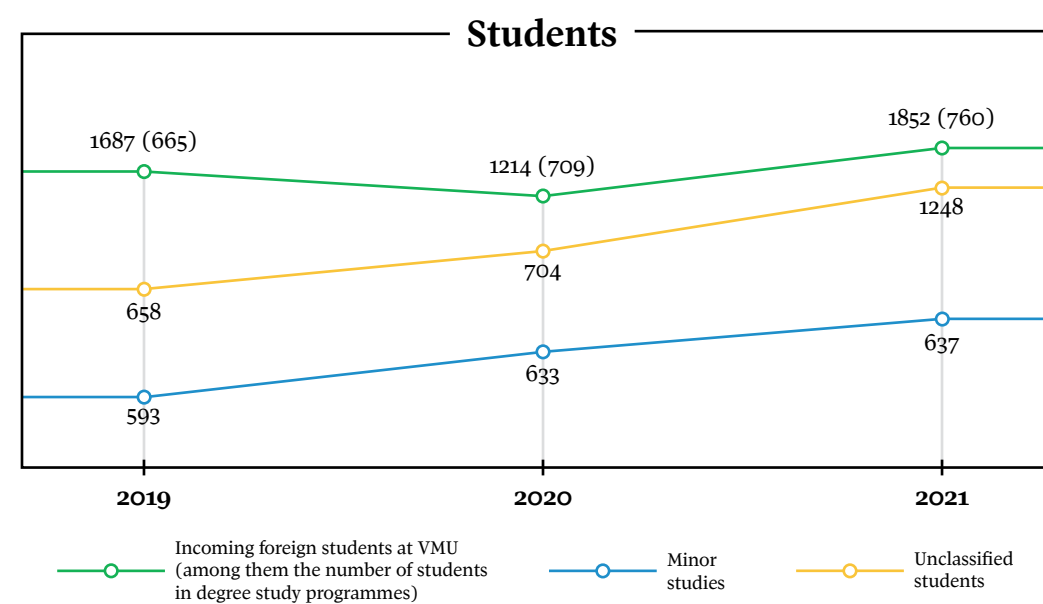
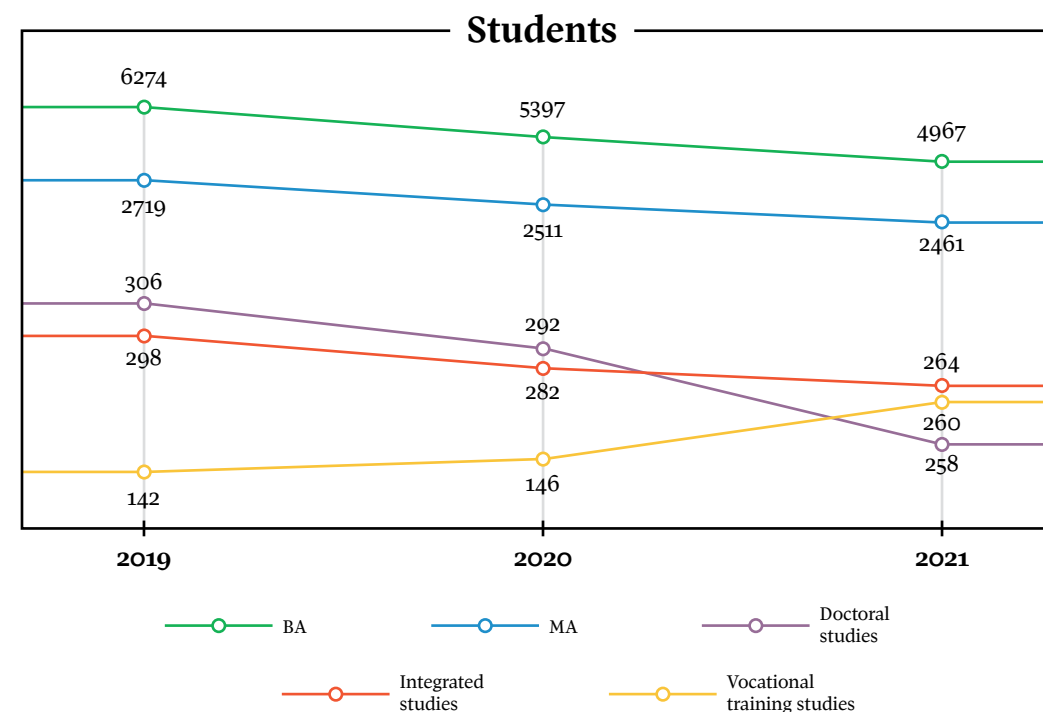
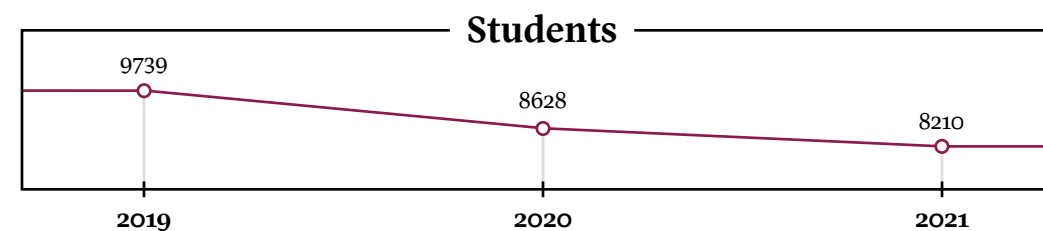
In addition, VMU actively participates in Lithuanian business-cooperation organisations: the Sustainable Business Association of Lithuania, the Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Crafts, the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists, association INFOBALT, the Energy Digital Innovation Centre, the Lithuanian Biotechnology Association, the Lithuanian Food Exporters Association, etc. Another important part of the scientific partnerships is participation in scientific infrastructure, which grows each year, with some of the most important at present being *Slėnis Nemunas* (“Nemunas Valley”), *Santakos slėnis* (“Santaka Valley”), Kaunas Science and Technology Park, Centre for Business and Social Partnership at the Agriculture Academy, Transform4Europe, and CLARIN-LT.

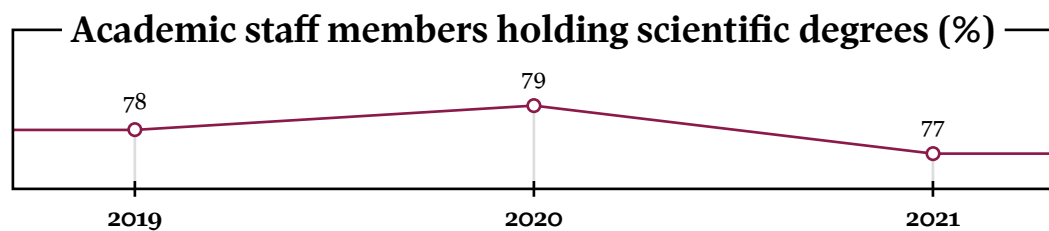
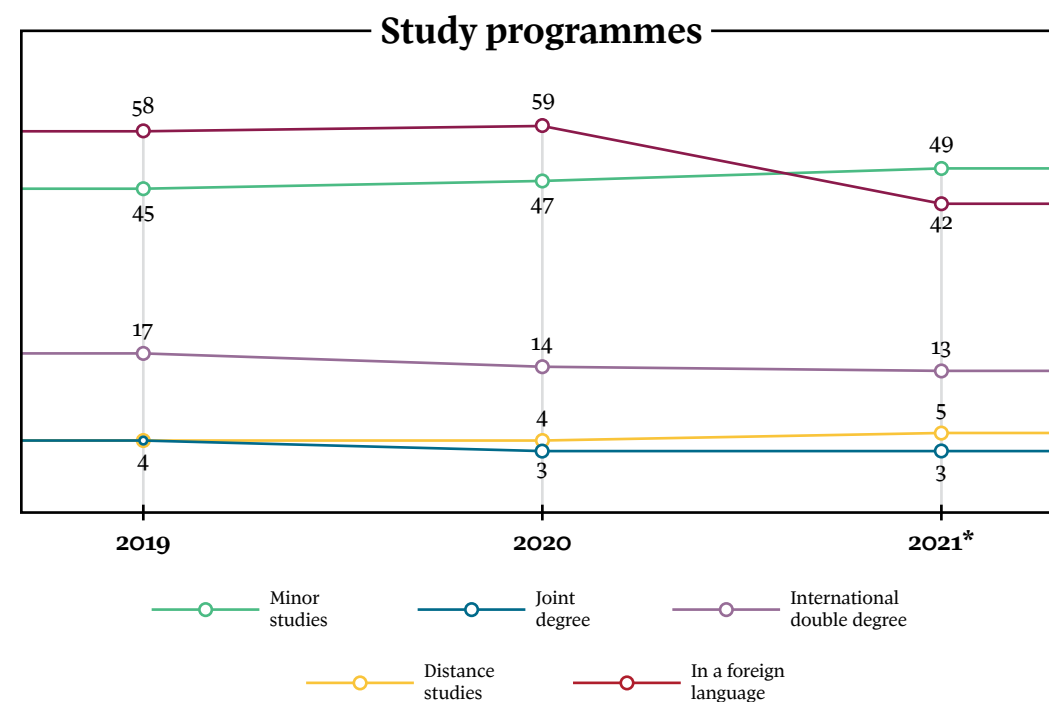
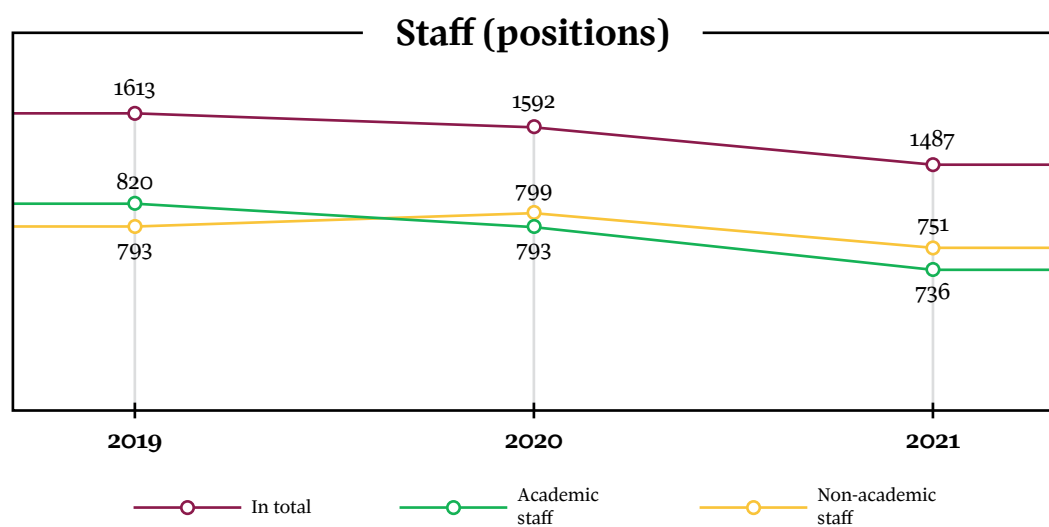
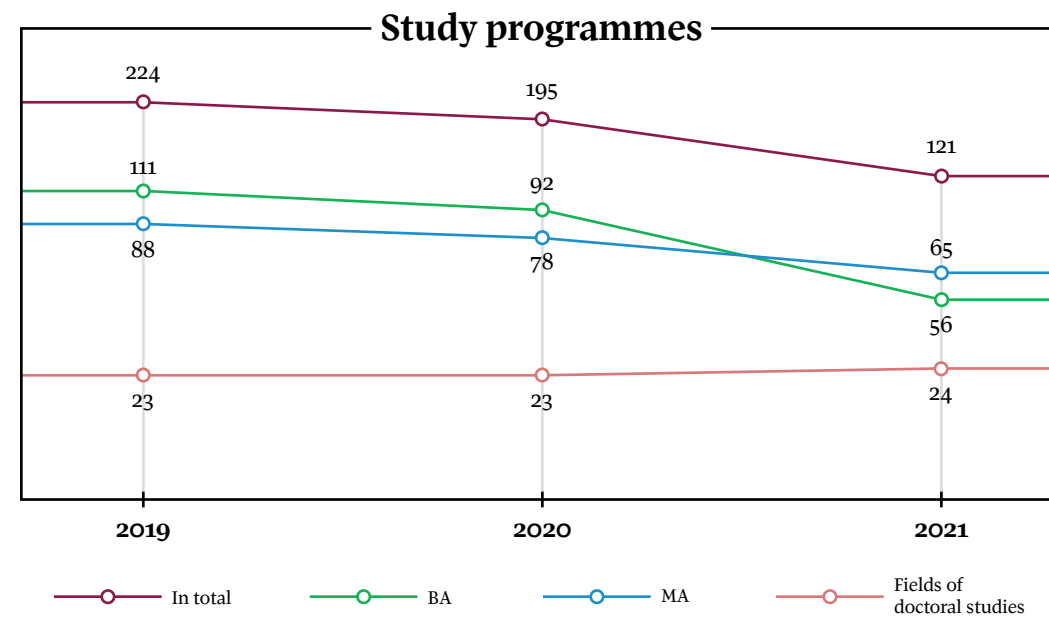
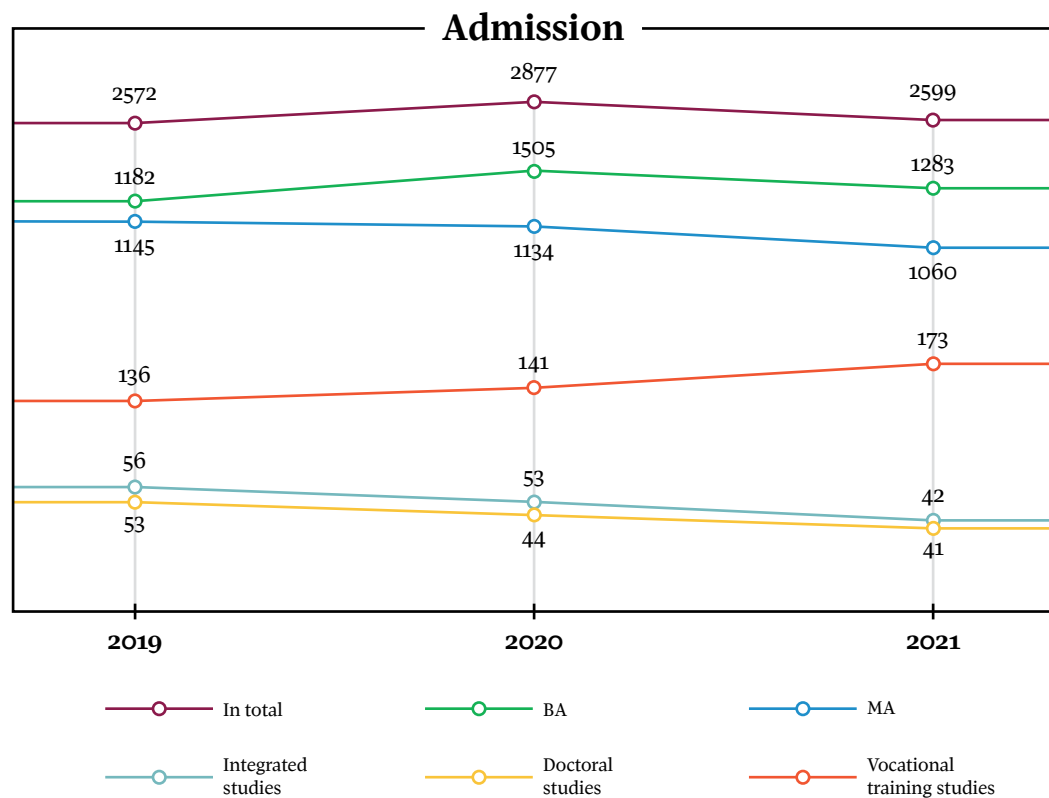
Further development of activities:

- To exploit the potential of the Transform4Europe - T4E partnership by promoting the development of joint doctoral studies with universities in Europe and beyond, to develop entrepreneurial, open-science knowledge and innovation with regions and for regions, in cooperation with various non-university stakeholders, and to strengthen inter-institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation and networking, links with business associations and businesses, non-governmental organisations, public sector institutions, and schools.
- To promote the preparation of scientific projects and the engagement of VMU scholars in consortiums being formed in the Horizon Europe programme.
- To develop potentially patentable research based on the concept of open innovation by encouraging active participation in international open innovation platforms, thereby engaging in research activities and the development of new technologies or products in cooperation with international companies.
- To promote orders for R&D and innovation and the making of contracts with Lithuanian businesses along with closer cooperation with non-governmental and other organisations.
- Actively seek to commercialise the products created at the University by establishing new companies or licensing the created products to young start-ups.
- Actively participate, together with partners, in the European Digital Innovation Hub EDIH4IAE.LT to enhance the digital transformation of the industry, agriculture, and energy sectors by prioritising: 1) businesses and entities using public procurement procedures that are operating in the Western and Central Lithuania regions; 2) the deployment of key digital technologies (high-performance computers, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity).
- To optimise resources by identifying major prestigious events and paying more attention to unique projects having greater artistic added value and significance.
- To promote the internationality of doctoral studies through the mobility of doctoral students in long-term internships, by awarding European Doctoral Certificates.
- To encourage researchers, teachers, and students to seek the highest scholarly achievements, especially by preparing and publishing articles in publications referenced in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* (CA WoS) and *Scopus* databases.
- To optimise the activities of artistic collectives, taking into account their purpose and representativeness, without duplicating activities, to create the proper conditions for the expression of amateur artistic activities in the University community.



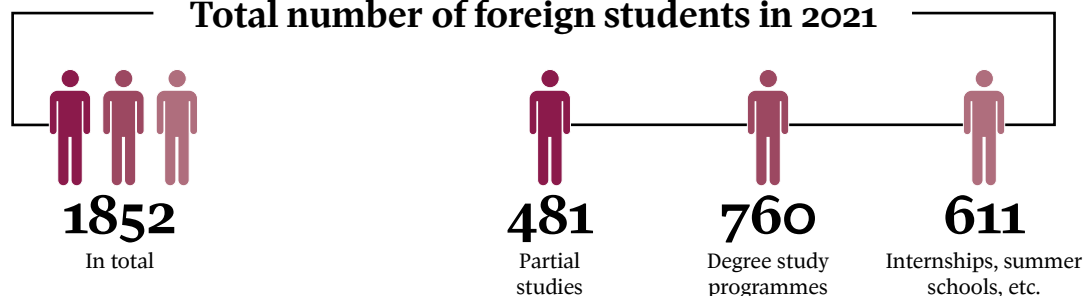
Studies 360





*In 2021, 1 integrated study programme and 1 vocational training study programme were carried out.

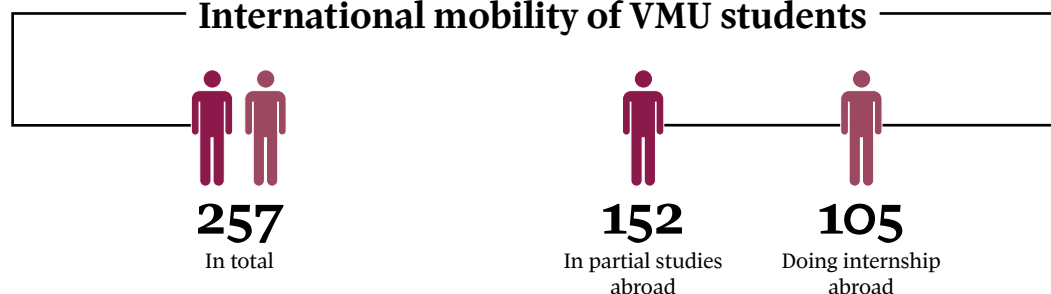
Total number of foreign students in 2021



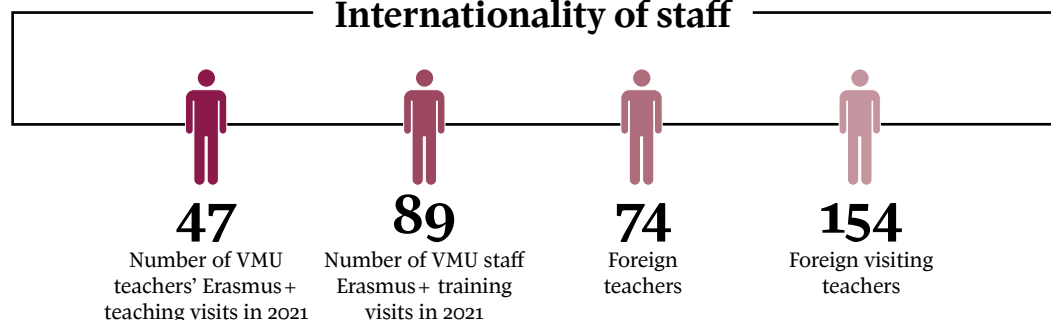
Degree study programmes in English that carry out admissions



International mobility of VMU students



Internationality of staff



Studies 360

Studying at VMU means obtaining a well-rounded education for future developers: broader horizons, the ability to critically evaluate an issue from different perspectives, and capability to adapt to new knowledge, make independent and competent decisions, and reveal one's leadership skills. The university follows the western tradition of *artes liberales* studies, educating intellectual, critically thinking, and morally responsible students. The university promotes the freedom to choose and decide and to develop confidence and unrestricted creativity by making use of the possibilities offered by minor studies, Academia cum laude, foreign language courses, entrepreneurship competence development programmes, teacher qualification possibilities, self-realisation possibilities offered by student organisations, as well as volunteering, mentoring, Arts Centre, sports and other activities.

The ongoing pandemic in 2021 did not change the values of the University, but only reinforced them. By sharing experience and mutual trust, students and teachers have successfully overcome the challenges they have faced and achieved results that have exceeded expectations.

Innovativeness, flexibility and accessibility of studies

Admission to studies. In 2021, 2,599 students were admitted to studies at Vytautas Magnus University (9.6 percent less than in 2020, with 2,877 students admitted). The decrease in the number of students was caused by a 23% reduction of state-funded places (16.4 thousand places allocated in 2020 and 12.4 thousand places in 2021) and an increase in the cost of studies (more than 35%), especially studies in Social Sciences, which account for as much as 40% of all university studies.

Admission was carried out to 45 first cycle and integrated study programmes; 1325 students were admitted, 1212 of which were Lithuanian citizens and 113 foreign citizens (in 2020, 1459 were Lithuanian and 99 foreign citizens). Compared to 2020, the admission of persons who have received their education in foreign institutions increased by 14%. The largest number of students admitted to state-funded studies were enrolled in the following study programmes: Subject Pedagogy (95), Psychology (90), Public Communication (53), Early Childhood and Pre-primary Pedagogy (48), Cultures and Languages of East Asian Countries (37), Agronomy (33), Creative Industries (35), Law (27) and Pedagogy of Primary Education and Early Foreign Language Teaching (31).

In 2021, admission to 61 Master study programmes was carried out, admitting 1,060 students (6.5 percent less than in 2020). 721 students were admitted to full-time studies (434 to state-funded studies and 287 to non-state-funded studies). The largest number of students enrolled in Performance Art (62), Educational Management (57), Marketing and International Commerce (31) and Diplomacy and International Relations (26) study programmes. 121 foreign citizens were admitted to Master studies (the same number as in 2020). The majority enrolled in the Music Academy (33), the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy (25), and the Faculty of Humanities (15).

Vytautas Magnus University has strengthened its leadership position in teacher training and is the leader in Lithuania in terms of the number of students in vocational pedagogy studies, with 260 students studying at the University. Compared to 2020, the number of students in vocational pedagogy studies increased by more than 78%. In 2021, 173 students were admitted to full-time vocational pedagogy studies (22.7 percent more than in 2020): 65 were admitted to state-funded studies and 108 to non-state-funded studies.

In 2021, 214 students studied in supplementary studies, which are intended to prepare graduates who have obtained their Bachelor degree in universities of applied sciences or other university study fields for Master studies. Compared to 2020, the number increased by 2.4%.

Internationality of studies. Although 2021 was full of challenges due to the protracted COVID-19 pandemic, the number of foreign students arriving for various study activities in 2021 increased by as much as 52% compared to the previous year (1241 in 2020 and 1852 in 2021). This was due to sustainable relations with foreign partners, the image of the University as a reliable institution ensuring the quality of studies, timely decisions and investments that allowed safe entry to the University, ensuring vaccination and provision of services during self-isolation.

In 2021, 238 foreign students were admitted to first, second and third cycle studies, with a total of 760 foreign citizens from 72 countries studying in degree study programmes, which is 6.7% more compared to the previous year (709 students from 69 countries in 2020).

In 2021, 317 students from 20 different countries came to the University to study under the Erasmus+ programme, which is 32% more than in 2020 (214 students). The majority of Erasmus+ students came from

Spain (83 students), France (52 students), Italy (50 students) and Turkey (41 students). During the spring and autumn semesters of 2021, 42 students (22 in 2020) came to participate in the VMU Erasmus+ studies.

After the University established a support fund in 2020 granting 50 scholarships to Belarusian students affected by the regime and expelled from their universities, 16 Belarusian students in 2021 were supported by covering their tuition fees and accommodation in dormitories, and by granting a one-time social scholarship.

In 2021, 11 University students (in 2020 – 4 students) from Belarus received support from the Republic of Lithuania for full-time first cycle studies at the University.

Due to the pandemic and restrictions applied by other countries with regard to in-person studies, in 2021 the total number of outgoing exchange students was 152, slightly lower than in 2020 (154 students).

In 2021, 52 students went on an Erasmus+ internship (13 students more than in 2020), and 49 University graduates went on an Erasmus+ graduate internship (50 in 2020).

Stability of student numbers. The university remained the second largest university in the country in terms of the number of students, having the largest number of students in pedagogy studies, and became the university with the largest number of study fields. According to the data obtained on 1 October 2021, there were 8,210 students studying at the University. Decisions on student support and the relatively successful meeting of the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic have led to a slight decline in student numbers. Taking into account the significant decrease in state-funded places, compared to 2020, the number of students decreased by 4.84%.

In 2021, 4967 students were enrolled in first cycle studies (8% less than in 2020), of which the number of students in full-time first cycle studies decreased by 5.12%. In the same year, 2,461 students studied in second cycle studies; compared to 2020, the number of students decreased by less than 2%.

In 2021, as in previous years, minor study programmes remained popular among students. Compared to 2020, the number of students who chose these studies in 2021 remained stable. Minor studies in pedagogy remained popular, with 98 students enrolled, while 121 students were enrolled in entrepreneurship studies. Moreover, interest in studies of individual study subjects or modules increased. Compared to 2020, the number of unclassified students of such studies increased by 77.27%. The most popular modules offered by Education Academy include the following: Pre-school and Pre-primary Education (109 unclassified students in Vilnius and 56 in Kaunas), Physical and Health Education (128 unclassified students in Vilnius), Primary and Pre-Primary Education (59 unclassified students in Vilnius and 38 in Kaunas) and Speech Therapy (67 unclassified students in Kaunas).

In 2021, 2584 diplomas conferring degrees were awarded: 1349 Bachelor's degree and 962 Master's degree diplomas. 232 study certificates conferring teacher qualification were also awarded.

Development of distance studies at the University. Due to the ongoing pandemic, in the first half of 2021 studies were carried out remotely and in the second half of the year students returned to in-person studies; however, due to the limitation of the number of students, part of studies continued to be carried out remotely, leading to a strong focus on the development and quality of distance studies. In 2021, 4096 study courses were taught remotely, 745 of which are certified for blended and distance learning.

In 2021, 4 study programmes certified for distance learning were carried out: Education and Information Technologies, Business Administration, Comparative Cultural Studies, and Sports Business Management. In 2021, 87 students were enrolled in these study programmes. In 2021, the Open Study portal openstudies.vdu. It offered 79 non-formal distance learning courses to the public. 1051 people were enrolled in these courses.

Much attention was given to the modernisation of the distance learning environment: tools for the analysis of study content and the preparation of reports were introduced, enabling teachers to assess which learning resources are most effective, to offer a plan for improving the study content and to change the presentation of learning materials. Possibilities for the assessment of study achievements and the provision of feedback have been expanded. The integration of the learning outcomes of the study course with tasks being created and their assessment has started to be widely used in the environment.

Lifelong learning activities. The University engaged in in-service training, retraining, informative and other activities by sharing knowledge, research results and experience with the public.

In 2021, 240 non-formal adult education activities were carried out (214 in 2020): 37 lectures on informatics, mathematics, religion, Lithuanian language, programming and other topics were delivered; 107 courses/trainings on foreign languages, musical skills, digital literacy, agricultural finance and accounting, and other topics were organised; specialists from various faculties conducted 62 seminars on informatics, biology, religion, language competences and other topics of professional development; 5 competitions and exhibitions were organised; University subdivisions have mobilised hundreds of professionals organising as many as

28 conferences on multilingualism, agriculture, social issues and other relevant topics. The number of non-formal adult education activities in 2021 increased by 10% compared to 2020.

Most of the activities were organised by the Agriculture Academy (58), Education Academy (52), Faculty of Informatics (38), and the Institute of Foreign Languages (30). In total, 12,903 persons participated in non-formal adult education activities, including 6,308 teachers and 6,595 representatives of other professions.

In 2021, 34 persons participated in the procedure for the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal education (65% more than in 2020). 32 participants of the assessment successfully acquired competences through non-formal and informal education and obtained academic certificates. 1,060 credits were allocated in total, which is 66 percent more than in 2020. 22 persons were recognised as having competence in general didactics, and 21 as having competences in pedagogical psychology.

Internal and external evaluation of study quality. In 2021, an external evaluation of study fields was conducted, during which 11 University study fields were evaluated: 9 out of 11 were accredited for a period of 7 years (82%): Energy Engineering, Literary Science, Mechanical Engineering, History and Theory of Art, Music, Religious Studies, Sociology, Regional Studies, and Theology. Two study fields – History and Transport Engineering – have been accredited for 3 years. International experts gave the best rating to the material resources of studies (4 out of 5 points), while areas for improvement include study goals, outcomes and content (3.6 points out of 5).

In 2021, the development of the internal study quality assurance system was focused on the review of study quality assurance processes and responsibilities: the objectives of study quality assurance processes were updated, the participants of the processes were indicated more clearly, the University legal acts regulating the processes were systematised, and detailed processes and quality indicators were specified. The focus on continuous and systematic improvement of the quality of studies has been strengthened, basing it on 4 consecutive stages – planning, implementation, assessment, and improvement.

The internal study quality assessment was based on the feedback from social stakeholders. The results of the survey of graduates revealed that 87% of respondents were satisfied with the quality of the study programme.

In the survey of graduates, students noted that the University has competent teachers, that studies are flexible, communication and collaboration between students and teachers is effective, and that additional activities are immersive and useful. Students also identified areas for improvement, such as the lack of feedback and discussion of the practical tasks performed and the insufficient amount of necessary literature in the library and organisation of additional activities for students studying in Vilnius.

The results of the survey of first-year students once again confirmed the tendencies of the most significant reasons for choosing studies at the University. The main reason students choose to study at the University is interest in a particular study programme. More than 30% of first year students identified this as the most important reason when choosing studies. Another reason for choosing to study at VMU is the *artes liberales* study model, which enables students themselves to design a study schedule. This shows that the studies are chosen by students who are already familiar with the uniqueness of the study programme and the University.

The results of the student survey on the quality of teaching and learning show that students rate the quality of teaching particularly well. The average teaching scores have been increasing since 2019 and reached about 9.2 on a ten-point scale in 2021, with students identifying the following advantages: interesting study content, relevant examples, good organisation of distance learning, respectful communication, and improved provision of feedback.

While carrying out consistent monitoring of study quality improvement activities, the University prepares and analyzes study programme improvement plans. In 2021, 121 out of 125 (96.8%) improvement plans were submitted, and 441 improvement actions were planned. In these plans, the dominant area for the improvement of study programmes includes study goals, outcomes and content (31.3%). Study programme committees pay a lot of attention to improving the professional development and mobility of teachers (18%).

Student support

Student career planning and monitoring of graduates. According to the data of the Employment Service, the number of persons registered with the Employment Service one year after graduation, taking into account the completed study programmes, accounted for 2.72% (78) of all graduates (2870).

According to the annual survey of graduates, 47% of graduates work in an area related to the completed study programme; the area of work of final year integrated study students is related to the study programme the most – 73%, vocational training study students – 64%, and Master studies students – 52%. Evaluating VMU's conditions for students with disabilities, 55 percent of respondents indicated that for them, the conditions for studying at the University are "good" or "more good than bad".

According to the graduate survey, the majority worked in the following areas: Education/Training, Agriculture, Sales/Trade, Forestry and Health. Compared to the data of the 2020 survey, the opinions of the respondents when evaluating the knowledge acquired at the University seem to be changing; there is a positive change in the nature of the work, leading to a proportional increase of salary; moreover, there is greater satisfaction with the current career situation.

In 2021, 55 individual career consultations and 16 seminars for University students were held at the Career Centre. Moreover, career education seminars were organised for Lithuanian school learners, in which 584 school learners participated. Together with the Education Academy, the Career Planning and Development programme was launched in order to develop career planning skills of teachers, career specialists and vocational teachers.

In 2021, the University continued to cooperate with the Idialogue career mentoring platform, which unites the University community.

Financial and social support. In 2021, 5 students (7 in 2020) were awarded *nominal honorary scholarships* for their scientific, educational, musical, artistic or social activities.

President Algirdas Brazauskas Nominal Scholarships were awarded to 2 Vytautas Magnus University students. In 2021, *Scholarships of the Signatories of the Lithuanian Act of Independence* were awarded to 7 students of the Education Academy (2 in 2020).

In 2021, 505 *one-time Encouragement Scholarships*, 94 *University Rector's Nominal Scholarships* and 56 *one-time Social Scholarships* were awarded to University students for active participation in scientific, sports, cultural and student social activities. A total of 655 scholarships were awarded and paid out in 2021 to encourage and support students, i.e., 38% more than in 2020 (474 in 2020).

In 2021, support for University students was provided by individual natural and legal persons, totaling in 27 nominal scholarships. In 2021, scholarships were awarded by: UAB INTER RAO Lietuva (1), AB East West Agro (4), Jonas Tallat-Kelpša Scholarship (1), Prof. B. Vaškelis Nominal Scholarship (2), L. and F. M. P. Mockūnas Nominal Scholarship (1), Saliamonas Banaitis Nominal Scholarship (1), UAB Baltic Agromachinery Nominal Scholarship (1), AB Lytagra Nominal Scholarship (1), UAB Dotnuva Baltic Nominal Scholarship (1), UAB Dojus Agro Nominal Scholarship (1), UAB Agrokoncernas Nominal Scholarship (1), UAB Thermo Fisher Scientific Baltics Scholarship (3), UAB Nando Nominal Scholarship (1), V. Kuprevičius Nominal Scholarship (1) and UAB Intermedix Lietuva / R1 Lietuva scholarship (7).

Nominal scholarships awarded to VMU students through the University by patrons: Kaunas Tauro LEONS Club (3 scholarships) and VMU graduate I. Belevičius 500 euro scholarships (2 scholarships).

Awarding study scholarships to foreign citizens at VMU is aimed to encourage foreign citizens who have acquired education in foreign countries or Lithuanian higher education institutions to choose studies at VMU, seek the highest academic evaluations, and increase the internationality of VMU studies. In the academic year 2021/2022, the University awarded 188 (71 in 2020) study scholarships to foreign citizens.

In 2021, the University continued to provide financial support to students experiencing financial hardship as a result of the adverse situation of the COVID-19 pandemic or its impact on them, their families and their well-being, thereby mobilizing the entire University community for mutual assistance. In accordance with the *approved description of the procedure for the support of Vytautas Magnus University students experiencing financial difficulties due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic*, financial support (1,760 Eur) for students experiencing financial difficulties due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic was provided to 11 students (26 students and 5,913 euros in 2020).

In 2021, targeted support (15,000 euros) was provided to student organisations in order to promote and foster student initiatives and activities that expand cooperation and the potential of human resources and create or develop scientific, artistic, study organisation, cultural, social, sports, civic and other initiatives that promote the University.

Improving infrastructure for studies and student well-being. In 2021, Vytautas Magnus University carried out infrastructure maintenance and upgrade activities in order to ensure favorable conditions for studies, as well as scientific and artistic activities. An attractive and modern University infrastructure was created.

In 2021, *special attention was paid to the improvement of living conditions in dormitories*: in VMU dormitory No. 1 (Taikos pr. 119, Kaunas), all rooms have been reduced by one place, thus triple rooms have become double rooms and double rooms became single rooms. The number of guest rooms has also been reduced. An Arts Room has been set up and the gym has been refurbished. In VMU dormitory No. 2 (Vytauto pr. 71, Kaunas), a self-service laundry app has been installed and new coffee and snack vending machines have been placed. In VMU dormitory No. 4 (Studentų g. 1, Akademija, Kauno r.), a leisure room has been set up. In VMU dormitory

No. 5 (Universiteto g. 8, Akademija, Kauno r.), a self-service laundry app has been installed, coffee and snack vending machines have been placed, and WiFi network has been installed and calibrated, finally giving up cable Internet. In VMU dormitory No. 6 (A. Vivulskio g. 36, Vilnius), a self-service laundry app has been installed and new coffee and snack vending machines have been placed. In VMU dormitory No. 8 (Studentų g. 5, Akademija, Kauno r.), a more modern and convenient version of dormitory administration has been created.

In 2021, a study innovation was developed and implemented – *virtual laboratories* enabled students and teachers to connect to laboratories and computer rooms remotely and use their software from home.

In 2021, the development of the infrastructure adapted to the physical activities of the Sports Centre also took place: the President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre complex was opened, the gymnasium was repaired, the ventilation system of the hall was reorganised, a wrestling room (around 170 square metres) with a changing room and a shower was set up, while in VMU dormitory No. 1 (Taikos pr. 119) three cardio machines were placed, thus setting up a new gym room, and in dormitories No. 5, No. 7 and No. 10 (Akademija, Kauno r.), physical activity areas were set up and table tennis tables were equipped.

Various distance learning and communication tools relevant to distance learning have been updated: the learning environment Moodle, the web conferencing system BigBlueButton and the video conferencing system Adobe Connect.

Development of teachers' competences and cooperation

In 2021, professional development activities were particularly broad in scope. More than half a hundred different activities were offered to the University community, with 964 University employees participating in them. Activities aimed at developing the competences required for professional activities were carried out by lecturers not only from Lithuania, but also from abroad. VMU's academic and non-academic staff were able to learn from UK partners AdvanceHe. Long-term training in collaboration with Plymouth Marjon University (UK), NHL Stenden University (Netherlands), Bishop Grosseteste University (UK), University of Turku (Finland), Open Universiteit Nederland (Netherlands) and Eindhoven University of Technology (Netherlands) took place, where more than 100 teachers had the opportunity to develop their competences.

In 2021, the teacher training programme Digitally Competent Teacher was designed. 169 teachers developed their competences under this programme. There were also shorter training sessions on certain topics and on ensuring the quality of distance learning.

The most relevant topics of the activities carried out by the University lecturers in 2021 were “MS Teams possibilities at work”, “Conscious time management. Who controls what – you control time or time controls you?”, “Overcoming stress”, and “Personal communication on social networks: Facebook and LinkedIn”.

In 2021, for the first time, the University community had the opportunity to improve the communicative competence not only in English but also in other languages (Lithuanian, Russian and Turkish). The staff also improved their language competences in groups with students, learning not only English but also other foreign languages: Spanish, German, Russian, Italian, Polish, Norwegian, French, Turkish, and Japanese.

Teachers developed their competences in foreign countries as well: In 2021, the number of Erasmus+ teaching visits, during which VMU teachers gave lectures in partner universities, increased by 34% compared to 2020. The number of outgoing teachers in 2021 was 47, while in 2020 – 31.

In 2021, 86 Erasmus+ study visits took place, twice as many as in 2020. In the first half of 2021, due to the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, only three visits took place; however, as the situation improved and travel restrictions were eased, as many as 83 visits took place in the second half of 2021.

In order to maintain the systematic professional development of the University's academic and non-academic community, in 2021, the Professional Competence Development Centre was established. It aims to carry out competence development activities based on research and innovation for academic and non-academic staff, implementing a coherent competence development system at the University that meets the needs of employees. Based on foreign experiences and activities carried out in the European University Alliance Transform4Europe, a professional development system has been developed in order to enable all employees to systematically improve their competences to achieve excellent performance.

Ecosystem conducive to the development of personalities and talents

Academia cum laude activities. In 2021, the fourth class of students graduated Academia cum laude. Academia cum laude, together with the student creative group Declamationes, has initiated a series of poetic events ARS POETICA for the University and city community. Even under the conditions of a pandemic, Academia managed to carry out inter-institutional cooperation in Lithuania and abroad. Lecturers from the

Seiną Paribio Foundation, University of Warsaw, and Lithuanian higher education institutions gave public lectures. The public activities of the Academia involved around 1,000 participants. Students realised their individual study projects in Erasmus studies in Germany and Italy and individual internships in Polish cultural institutions. The Academia's public lectures have become available to the public on the YouTube platform.

VMU school network. In 2021, VMU Classic Education School and VMU lyceum Sokratus joined the VMU school network. The network consisted of 5 schools: VMU Rasa Gymnasium, VMU Atžalynas Progymnasium, VMU Ugnės Karvelis Gymnasium, VMU Classic Education School and VMU lyceum Sokratus. Intensive activities were carried out throughout the year with each school, including more than 100 lectures for students, more than 50 teacher training events, continuous development of foreign language competences, and various project activities.

In 2021, VMU Ugnės Karvelis Gymnasium together with the University started to implement a personalised education strategy "AUGU": "Aš Augu" (grades 5–6); "Mes Augame" (grades 7–8); and "Laisvė Augti" (gymnasium grades I–IV). In cooperation with VMU, first grade gymnasium students were offered education fields, namely *academic, public communication, entrepreneurship, media, which as of 1 September 2021 were started to be implemented*. Teacher training and career development events were also implemented. The teaching of STEM subjects (chemistry, physics, biology and geography) in gymnasiums has been strengthened in cooperation with VMU Agriculture Academy. Projects that started to be developed while in cooperation include the project Literature in Art and implementation of the UDL project.

In cooperation with VMU Atžalynas Progymnasium, the University sought to improve the quality of distance learning. One of the most important activities was the volunteer-mentoring project "Guiding Star"; moreover, activities with VMU representatives for the progymnasium students and their parents were organised. The progymnasium has successfully implemented the international Erasmus+ project "Food for thought".

In 2021, the VMU Classic Education School was granted the name of VMU, and a new school website was designed. In cooperation with VMU, the curriculum of the Classic Education School was prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports of the Republic of Lithuania for assessment. The school has implemented the Erasmus+ KA201 project "CIRCLE LAB", the international educational project for sustainable development "European Climate Initiative: Together for Sustainable School", and the Erasmus+ project "Circular Economy and Sustainable Tourism: Our Democratic Alternative for the Future of Europe".

In 2021, the VMU lyceum Sokratus became a member of the VMU network. A new school management was formed in the lyceum (a new director for education was appointed and the lyceum council was formed), and design work for a new school building started to take place. Moreover, active cooperation with individual VMU departments has also begun.

On 9 December 2021, the VMU School Network conference was held, where the participants shared their experience and presented the distinctiveness of the schools in the network in terms of educational innovations. The schools presented and discussed the principles of educational innovation, including the application of the synergy of *liberal arts and science* in the curriculum, and the development of social-emotional education and thinking school strategies. The schools also devoted a great deal of attention to the synergy of creativity and technological and social innovations in the teaching/learning process and the development of the concept of integrated education.

Activities of the Academy for Gifted Children. The gifted children's programme "Gifted" was launched in 2020 in the VMU Education Academy. Since 2021, the programme has grown and become the international Lithuanian-Israeli education centre for gifted children "Gifted". The centre runs a programme for the intellectual and emotional education of talented children in accordance with the internationally recognised Israeli education model for gifted children, which includes special education programmes for children aged 3-18 and a professional IQ testing methodology.

In 2021, the programme continued its activities in Kaunas, VMU Botanical Garden, and opened its doors to students in Vilnius, in the premises of the Education Academy. In the 2021/2022 school year, 243 children were educated at the "Gifted" Centre, 106 in Vilnius and 137 in Kaunas.

Activities of the Entrepreneurship Academy. In 2021, the Entrepreneurship Academy initiated student internships, trainings, and courses, and implemented business and university projects, promoting the entrepreneurship of University students and researchers, thus providing an opportunity to acquire entrepreneurial skills, regardless of the specialty they are studying. VMU Entrepreneurship Academy also carried out activities targeting University students, school learners and urban communities.

In the spring semester, 63 students studied in minor studies at the Entrepreneurship Academy. Smart Practice MINDED VDU was organised together with partners "Lithuanian Junior Achievement". The students in the

course engaged in a start-up development programme and developed their entrepreneurial competences through practical experience. The programme focused on the development of viable and sustainable business ideas with real investment potential. In the autumn semester, 44 students enrolled in minor studies offered by the Entrepreneurship Academy. In groups of 5-7 people, they, accompanied by a mentor, implemented projects that create social change in small Lithuanian cities. A total of 5 social changes were initiated in the cities ("Social impact").

Arts, sports and other activities for students and school learners

Activities of the Arts Centre. 9 art groups continued their activities at the Arts Centre: the folklore ensemble "Linago", folk dance ensemble "Žilvitis", academic choir "Vivere Cantus", "Ballroom Dancing Studio", Education Academy's song and dance ensemble "Šviesa", Agriculture Academy's folk music band "Ūkininkas", student mixed choir "Daina", folk dance group "Sėja" and theatre "Jovaras".

All VMU Arts Centre groups represented the University at events organised by the University (e.g., *during the Introduction to Studies at VMU in 2021 or to the participants of the Lithuanian Language and Literature courses*), also at local (e.g., "Kaunas – European Capital of Culture 2022") and national concerts, festivals, and other events for students (e.g., *the XI International Festival of Folk Music Bands and Ensembles "Universitas Vilnensis" and the National Art Festival of Higher Education Institutions "Hey, Student, Move with the Wind"*), and for collectives according to the specific nature of their activities (e.g., *the Lithuanian Higher Education Students' Choir Festival and the XI Student Folk Music Festival "Linksminkimos"*).

Sports Centre activities. The number of sports championships organised by the Lithuanian Students' Sports Association (hereinafter referred to as the LSSA) and individual sports leagues (basketball, volleyball and football) in 2021 also decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation and restrictions on sports competitions. There were no student basketball, volleyball, football and indoor football championships as well as sports championships or competitions of some other sports.

In June 2021, for the first time, the Sports Centre organised a weekly summer sports camp for children, the purpose of which was to occupy children during the holidays, to introduce them to some sports (basketball, football, volleyball, badminton, judo and chess), and to spend the holidays meaningfully. The camp took place in the premises of VMU Sports Centre, with 14 children taking part in it.

In 2020–2021, during the sports season, 69 medals were won representing VMU at Lithuanian Student Sports Championships, 30 of which were gold, 23 silver and 16 bronze. In the general classification of Lithuanian higher education institutions (*ranking of universities according to the medals won in individual sports championships in 2021*) Vytautas Magnus University was ranked in third place.

Gold medals: VMU men's basketball team, VMU women's beach volleyball team, VMU rowing team, 3 medals were won at the Lithuanian Student Indoor Athletics Championship, 5 medals were won at the Lithuanian Student Athletics Championship, 6 medals were won at the Lithuanian Student Judo Championships, 3 medals were won at the Lithuanian Student Table Tennis Championship, 2 medals were won at the Lithuanian Student Bullet Shooting Championship and 3 medals were won at the Lithuanian Student Power Triathlon Championship in personal competitions. 2 medals were won at the Lithuanian Student Sambo Championship and the Lithuanian Student Swimming Championship.

Silver medals were won at: National Student Volleyball League Men's Beach Volleyball Championship, Lithuanian Student Rowing Championship, Lithuanian Student Indoor Athletics Championship, in the long jump competition, Lithuanian Student Athletics Championship: running, triple jump and steeplechase competitions, Lithuanian Student Power Triathlon Championship, Lithuanian Student Badminton Championship, Judo Championships, Lithuanian Student Sambo Championship, Lithuanian Student Table Tennis Championship and Lithuanian Student Bullet Shooting Championship.

Bronze medals were won at: Lithuanian Student Rowing Championship, Lithuanian Student Indoor Athletics Championship: the long jump and running competitions, Lithuanian Student Athletics Championship, Lithuanian Student Power Triathlon Championship, Lithuanian Student Travel Sports Championship, Lithuanian Student Badminton Championship, Lithuanian Student Judo Championship, Lithuanian Student Table Tennis Championship, Lithuanian Student Bullet Shooting Championship, and Lithuanian Student Futsal Tournament organised by the Lithuanian Student Football League (LSFL).

Achievements of high-performing athletes outside the University. Kristupas Šleiva, a second year student at the University, won third place and a bronze medal at the World Greco-Roman Wrestling Championship in Oslo (Norway); Kotryna Teterevkova (ŠA), a representative of the swimming sport, Saulius Ritter (ŠA) and Aurimas Adomavičius (ŠA), two-seater rowers, and Dovydas Nemeravičius, Armandas Kelmelis and Giedrius Bieliauskas, four-seater rowers, participated in the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2021;

swimmer K. Teterevkova participated in the World Swimming Championship in Abu Dhabi (Saudi Arabia), in the 25 m pool. The highest achievement of the athlete in this 100 m breaststroke competition is the 7th place; VMU Education Academy student Arūnas Gelažninkas became the winner of the prestigious Dakar Rally motorcycle race in the solo class in 2021.

Achievements and awards of the Sports Centre and individual athletes representing VMU: Lithuanian Baseball Association nominated Vytautas Magnus University as “Partner of the Year” in the 2021 “Best of the Year” awards; Kristupas Šleiva (Greco-Roman wrestler), a second-year student of the Education Academy (ŠA), won the second place in the election of the best athletes of 2021 organised by LSSA; Vitalijus Kozys, a student of the Faculty of Economics and Management (EVF), was named the best 3×3 basketball player of the Lithuanian Student Basketball League in 2021; Urtė Andriukaitytė, a second-year Master’s student of the Faculty of Economics and Management (EVF), was named the best beach volleyball player of 2021.

Leadership in teacher training

Changes in teacher training. Vytautas Magnus University has become the 50th university in the world to implement the International Baccalaureate (IB) Teacher Programme and the first such university in Northern and Central Europe. New Bachelor study programme Sports Studies and Master study programme Physical Education and Sports have been approved. Kindergarten “Little Ones Academy” has been opened at the new premises of VMU Education Academy (T. Ševčenkos g. 31, Vilnius).

Admission to pedagogical studies. In 2021, the Education Academy enrolled 267 first cycle students, 15.7% more than in 2020. For the first time, a programme in the field of pedagogy – Subject Pedagogy – was included in the top ten Lithuanian programmes, in which 136 students were admitted. In 2021, 15 top-performing students in the secondary education programme were admitted to the first cycle pedagogical programmes carried out by the Education Academy. 173 students were admitted to vocational pedagogy studies. 92 students were admitted to the second cycle studies. In 2021, 15 foreign students were admitted.

Admission to in-service training and retraining activities. In 2021, 952 teachers were enrolled in retraining studies, and 1386 teachers improved their professional competences.

The strengthening of teacher training activities focuses on the quality and supply of study programmes in order to train teachers in all possible specialisations. In 2021, a new Master study programme Speech and Language Therapy was introduced.

The quality of teacher training is inseparable from high-profile research in the field of education. In 2021, In 2021, a new application for doctoral studies in education was submitted to the Research Council of Lithuania (LMT) a new regulation for doctoral studies in education was prepared. These documents reflect the innovative model doctoral student mentoring with a support group and the concept of two supervisors from the second year onwards.

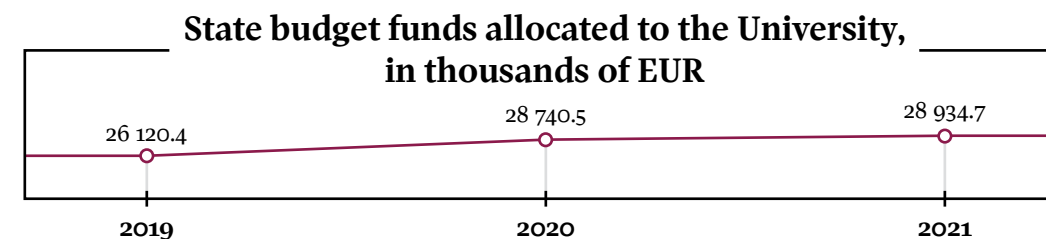
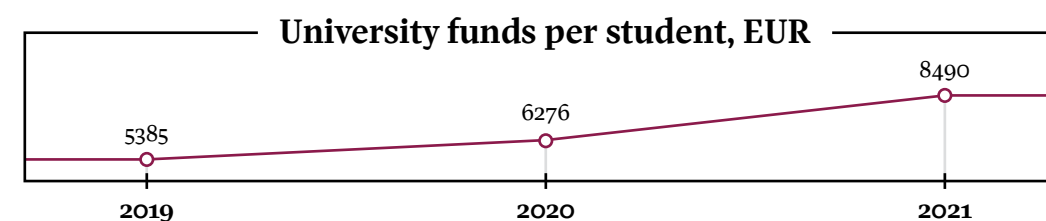
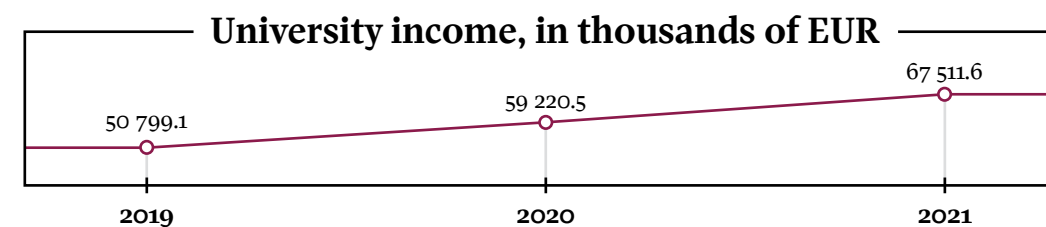
Science laboratories that are being set up and will open their doors in 2022 include the following: Virtual Didactics Laboratory, Motion Laboratory, Education Aid Resource Centre, Eye Movement Tracking Laboratory, and Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, STEAM Laboratory.

Further development of activities:

- To improve the study quality assurance system in order to achieve equal involvement of all participants in the process;
- To develop the internationalisation of studies in order to accredit and carry out interdisciplinary studies using the European quality model;
- To improve the marketing and internationalisation of studies by developing and implementing strategies that are based on the principles of sustainable policy;
- To implement innovations in the fields of study content, teaching methods and infrastructure in order to meet the latest trends;
- To improve the system of students’ study achievement monitoring, assistance and academic mentoring;
- Develop a more effective model for student involvement in research and artistic activities;
- To develop an attractive and effective system of lifelong learning services for the public, involving all groups of society;
- To improve the activities of the University School Network in order to achieve the highest performance of the schools.

Harmony between self-government and responsibility

Library's collection	1 957 210
Number of printed and electronic documents acquired	897 642
Number of printed documents acquired	8370
Number of electronic documents acquired	889 272
Number of publications published	100
Number of databases subscribed	62
Number of searches made	2,3 mln.*
*(Upon the change in the COUNTER standard, only some databases account for search indicators)	
One student downloaded and read	465 documents
Number of printed documents issued per student	9
University library	8
Total area of the University premises per student (m²)	19,88



Stakeholders of Vytautas Magnus University and the value of their contributions (in thousands of EUR)

The State of the Republic of Lithuania (the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania is the institution exercising the stakeholder's property and non-property rights and obligations)	Contribution value	31 12 2020	24 277.9
		31 12 2021	24 277.9

Average salary of the University staff in euros			
	2019	2020	2021
Academic staff	1981	2028	2100
Other employees	983	990	1087
Total of all employees	1450	1526	1623

Harmony between self-government and responsibility

The self-governance, cooperation and synergy of the University's various subdivisions encourage the University's community to achieve society-changing results, knowledge and ideas. The balanced structure of the University ensures fair and equivalent representation in the governing bodies of the University and its academic subdivisions. Effective use of the University's infrastructure, improvement of the environment for learning and research, study, recreation and leisure by renewing existing spaces and opening new ones to meet the comprehensive needs of the community, targeted development of resources essential to study, learning and research, and cultivation of unhindered academic freedom together promote creative processes and new projects, achieving tangible benefits for the learning society of the future and creating technological and social progress that transcends the borders of the country.

Creation of a balanced structure of subdivisions of studies and research

Changes in the structure of the University. At the beginning of 2021, the VMU Council approved a new structure for the Education Academy. The Educational Research Institute was formed, in which eight research groups were launched. In April, four new departments were opened: the Department of Educational Assistance, Physical and Health Education (chaired by Assoc. Prof. Eglė Stasiūnaitienė), the Department of Preschool and Primary Education (chaired by Assoc. Prof. Jolita Kudinovienė), the Department of Modern Didactics (chaired by Assoc. Prof. Linas Jašinauskas), and the Department of Education Management and Policy (chaired by Assoc. Prof. Aušra Rutkienė). The Innovative Studies Institute (headed by Prof. Airina Volungevičienė) became a part of the Education Academy. The international Lithuania-Israel Education Programme "Gifted" (headed by Dileta Tindžiulienė) and the Centre for Lithuanian Studies and International Programmes (headed by Vilma Leonavičienė) were established.

In 2021, a new strategy for VMU Agriculture Academy for 2021–2027 and an action plan for its implementation were prepared and approved, including a mission and vision with a revised strategic orientation. On the basis of the renewed mission and vision, taking into account the internal and external environment and VMU's strategy, three fundamental strategic objectives of the VMU Agriculture Academy were identified for the development of learning and study, research and scientific services, as well as one horizontal goal aimed at creating conditions for the community to achieve its strategic objectives.

In order to achieve the coherent implementation of the strategic objectives of the VMU Agriculture Academy and to respond to trends in the development of one of the areas considered a high-priority of the University, the bioeconomy, and to facilitate the community's ability to carry out its mission and to strengthen its competitiveness in the research and study space, the VMU Council approved Resolution No. 3 on 27 May 2021, creating a new management structure for the Agriculture Academy, which entered into force on 1 September 2021. The following changes were made in the management structure:

- *formation of the Agriculture Academy Administration Group* for centralised administration of learning and study organisation, of marketing of study and research, and of international and research activity;
- *four faculties were formed:* Agronomy, Bioeconomy Development, Engineering, and Forest Sciences and Ecology. In the faculties, from the 14 institutes that had existed prior to the reform, ten departments were formed instead;
- *the Bioeconomy Research Institute* was established, in which the following structural subdivisions are being formed: the Centre for Research and Innovation in Animal Production; the Scientific Analysis and Management Support Group; thematic groups of researchers (clusters);
- *other subdivisions have been reorganised by forming two non-academic subdivisions:* the Business and Social Partnership Centre and the Experimental Station.

The establishment of the *Bioeconomy Research Institute* is significant for the entire University as well as the Agriculture Academy, because the Institute focuses on research and practical developments in an area identified as a breakthrough sector, the bioeconomy. The Institute was officially launched on 24 November 2021, following the approval by the VMU Senate of the Institute's regulations.

On 9 June 2021, the new *Green Intelligence* cluster was officially launched at the Business and Social Partnership Centre. The cluster has become a platform for more effective cooperation among academic, business and social partners.

The new strategy of VMU Agriculture Academy for 2021–2027 and the structural management changes correspond to VMU's strategic objectives and form a foundation for the balanced, sustainable development of learning and study, research and values: *personal and academic freedom, democracy, openness, responsibility, creativity, a sense of community, partnership, respect for traditions, harmony and academic excellence.*

The regulations of the Institute for Digital Resources and Interdisciplinary Research (in Lithuanian, the SITTI) were approved by the VMU Senate on 24 November 2021. The SITTI is the University's academic subdivision for research, carrying out interdisciplinary research and providing the infrastructure for research by the University's students, for preparation of researchers and for performance of research.

On 24 November 2021, the concept for the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities, the needs related to its establishment, the available academic potential and the areas for interdisciplinary research were presented to the University's Senate. The Institute's mission is to initiate and carry out national and international fundamental and applied research in the humanities and social sciences, transdisciplinary research that responds to the needs of science, Lithuanian society and the state; to strengthen the role of the humanities and social sciences in society, and to create an open academic culture.

Ensuring the effective use of infrastructure

Development of resources for learning, study and research. In 2021, VMU library sought to ensure maximum provision of information for learning and study and a supply of information resources meeting the academic needs of the University, to strengthen the academic community's information and scientific communication competencies, to develop, create and improve a modern and high-quality library infrastructure.

To ensure the most favourable conditions for improving the infrastructure and material resources needed for study and research, in particular electronic resource management, sharing, resource analytics, specialised software applications for optimisation of VMU library's activities and other advanced functionality, one of the most important strategic objectives was implemented during the year: the next-generation library-services platform *Alma (ExLibris)*, operating in the cloud. The platform replaced the library's former information system, *Aleph (ExLibris)*, which had been in use for over 20 years.

In 2021, the library's collection contained 1.9 million (in 2020, 1.8 million) printed documents and electronic documents. The quantity of information resources purchased during the year increased by almost 33 percent. The average number of documents in the collection per student increased to 238 (in 2020, 192; in 2019, 189), while the number of purchased documents increased to 109 (in 2020, 72; in 2019, 99). Compared to 2020, 99 percent of the newly-purchased documents were electronic, with an increase of 25 percent. The number of actions (searches, views, downloads) performed with electronic documents increased from 5.8 million (in 2020) to 6.1 million (in 2021). Compared to 2020, there was an increase of almost 5 percent, and compared to 2019, the increase was 10 percent. In the context of the pandemic, the reading of electronic documents (over 12 percent) increased significantly. The loaning of printed documents decreased by 35 percent compared to the previous year. One of the reasons for this was the imposition of quarantine restrictions in 2021. Another reason was a trend seen in academic libraries around the world: the more information resources are available to users in electronic format, the lower the use of printed information resources. The number of loans of printed resources decreased as the library offered users more and more e-resource collections and databases, the content of which was constantly supplemented and updated, so the user had access to the latest and most relevant content. With a drop in physical visits to the library of almost 30 percent compared to the previous year, virtual user visits to the library's website and other sites managed by the library increased by 127 percent.

The European Regional Development Fund project "eMoDB.LT3: Opening of the Online Research Databases for Lithuania – Stage 3" (from 20 September 2016 to 31 March 2021) finished in 2021. As a result of the project, the University ensured access to more than 40 of the most essential research databases, the value of which is almost EUR 1.3 million, with VMU's contribution being EUR 197,000. In 2019–2021 the library participated in the project "MoBiLait: Opening up learning opportunities for people who are unable to read normal printed text, through the network of Lithuanian libraries". VMU community members who are unable to read regular printed text have gained access to 600 audio books by Lithuanian and foreign authors, for learning and study, research and self-study.

For the development of information and research communication competencies, approximately 25 library-produced video trainings, help materials or instructions in Lithuanian and English on access to and search for information resources, ethical quotation of sources in academic or research works, research data, and predatory (fraudulent, deceptive) journals were available to the community.

The procedure for forming the collection of information resources at the University was described in a document approved by the Rector, Order No. 278, on 30 June 2021, establishing the principles, criteria, sources, quantity of information resources to be procured, search of and access to information resources, structure of the library's collection, and indicators for the purpose of monitoring the collection of information resources.

100 titles were published at the University in 2021 (in 2020, 102). 83 of these publications were printed, with a total print run of 6,412 (in 2020, 93 titles with a total print run of 5,165), and 17 publications were electronic-only. In addition, five titles were reprinted (168 copies).

During the year, 144 small-scale print orders were registered at the University's print house and 10,743 products were printed. The volume of textual and visual material of research and academic publications processed and published at the Publishing Centre was 1,214.63 quires (a unit of measure equivalent to 24 pages) (in 2020, 1,236.22 quires).

To raise the profile of authors associated with the University and access to academic and research publications, the collection of electronic publications consisting of academic books on the humanities, social, physical, educational and agricultural sciences at the portal ebooks.vdu.lt is constantly supplemented. At present, the collection consists of 118 titles (in 2020, 106), to 73 of which open access has been granted. Lithuanian libraries and other institutions have been given the opportunity to subscribe to this collection. Printed University publications were distributed in seven academic and three online bookstores.

The University will continue its cooperation with projects supported by the Research Council of Lithuania and EU structural funds, publishing the periodicals *Darbai ir dienos*, *Oikos*, *Meno istorija ir kritika* and *Pedagogika*.

Building and improving infrastructure. The total area of real estate owned and managed by the University as of 31 December 2021, was 186,298.95 m². The total area of the University's premises per student was 19.88 m². In 2022, it is planned to actively seek opportunities to optimise the real estate held and managed by the University and to propose specific solutions to the University Council, to ensure the effectiveness of the University's property management.

In accordance with the description of the procedure for conducting electronic auctions organised by the University for the sale of property, approved on 5 June 2020, the University carried out public electronic auctions in 2021, selling real estate for EUR 5,147,600.

On 2 September 2021, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport by means of a contract of property trust temporarily transferred to the University the buildings of the Music Academy with appurtenances: the building of the Music Academy (unique No. 1995-2003-0015), a water supply network (unique No. 4400-3880-4987), a domestic sewage disposal network (unique No. 4400-3880-4998), a domestic sewage disposal network (unique No. 4400-3949-4778), a domestic sewage disposal network (unique No. 4400-3949-4789), a rainwater and drainage network (unique No. 4400-3880-4976), a lot (unique No. 4400-5372-7614), a lot (unique No. 4400-5372-7625), a lot (unique No. 4400-5372-7603), a lot (unique No. 4400-5372-7636), and a fence with a gate (unique No. 4400-5372-7647) located in Kaunas at V. Čepinskio g. 5.

To ensure a favourable environment for study, academic and artistic activity, the following maintenance works on existing infrastructure were carried out in 2021, and new, attractive and modern University infrastructure was created:

Major repairs of the Teacher Training Centre (administrative building at K. Donelaičio g. 52 in Kaunas, 6,000 m²) are being carried out, changing the purpose of the building from administrative to academic, as well as the engineering works for the Centre for Modern Didactics (the third stage of construction works at V. Putvinskio g. 23 in Kaunas (560 m²) of the multifunctional study and research centre building).

After construction works taking more than a decade, the President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre (Studentų g. 9A in Akademija, Kaunas District) has opened its doors. The sports complex designed for the needs of the University community consists of a building with spectator stands (bleachers), a multi-use gymnasium (2,400 m²) suitable for basketball, futsal (indoor soccer), volleyball, and other sports, a soccer (football) field surrounded by running tracks and horizontal-jump runways, outdoor basketball courts, an outdoor tennis court, an artificial-grass tennis court, a beach volleyball court, and an all-purpose court.

As part of the project, the Agro-innovation Research Facility was modernised, with major renovation works of Building 6 of the Agriculture Academy (converting a 2,400-m²-building used for providing meals into an academic building at Studentų g. 9 in Akademija, Kaunas District).

At the University's Botanical Garden, heritage-preservation works of a cultural monument, the Aukštoji Freda Manour House at Ž.E. Žiliberio g. 6 in Kaunas, were completed, restoring the building's facade and other exterior elements. The premises of the academic building at Vilties g. 6A in Kaunas, where the Research Department of the Botanical Garden is located, were also renovated.

The international Lithuania-Israel Education Programme "Gifted", a centre for gifted children, and "Mažųjų akademija" ("Little Ones Academy"), the kindergarten of the Education Academy, made their home in modern premises specially adapted to children's needs at the Education Academy, at T. Ševčenkos g. 31 in Vilnius.

The University's student dormitories have been equipped with leisure-time spaces, modernised kitchens, convenient bicycle racks/stands, self-service laundry and car-parking facilities. There are facilities for students of the Music Academy to practice.

Maintenance works (restoration, conservation, repair) of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Lithuania building at K. Donelaičio g. 58 in Kaunas (750 m²) have begun.

Information Technology Centre activities. As part of the long-term strategic goals of the University, the aim was to make the most of IT resources and infrastructure in 2021. The growth in the digitalisation of activities has been influenced by the introduction of new and improved IT solutions for the management of the main institutional administration activities:

- A register of study programmes has been created to store, administer, update, modify and record the content of study programmes and individual subjects.
- A register of visiting foreign teachers has been created, which collects and stores information about visiting lecturers at VMU.
- Functionality to analyse a researcher's activity has been implemented.
- The functionality of the existing document management system is being expanded. A contract module has been implemented, covering the initiation of a contract, vetting according to default validation sequences, signing by e-signature and automatic logging.
- Automated synchronisation of employee information among all of the University's systems has been implemented.

As more and more of the University's activities and documents have migrated to an electronic space, the development of information systems necessary for the administration of these processes has continued: the Study Information System (StudIS), the timetable and lecture-hall occupancy/vacancy system, the students' portal, the teachers' portal, and the e-contract signing system. The development of digitalised activities has also increased the efficiency of administrative procedures; student fee accounting for dormitory use, bilingual contract templates, study subject attendance and performance sheets, assignment-performance, and systems for administration of academic results have been updated, and Moodle and StudIS synchronisation, pandemic-period Green Pass control, and survey-functionality integration have been improved.

Other IT solutions have also helped to optimise the administrative process, controlling costs: an integrated annex-formatting editor is used for the printing of diplomas and annexes (supplements), and the library system has migrated to a cloud platform. A system for reserving parking spaces enabling the efficient use of the University's infrastructure resources has been implemented with the capability to graphically visualise the occupancy/vacancy statistics of the Student Campus (Akademija, Kaunas District), and the dormitories-administration system has been modernised, enabling automated access control for staff and students using identification cards.

The President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre has implemented modern IT solutions that ensure synergies between university and commercial activities. There is a two-part entrance-control system that allows flexible management of the flow of visitors according to crowd size during events. The software identifies visitors by means of university employee identification cards, Lithuanian student identification cards or tickets with a QR code. The building uses a keyless access system operating on the principle of electronic locks, equipped with a computer network and wireless network, a car number-plate recognition system and gate automation for controlling vehicle traffic.

The modernisation of university buildings and facilities continues, improving the quality of internet connectivity and the security of buildings and facilities:

- The premises of the *Botanical Garden building at Vilties g. 6A* have been equipped with a security and fire alarm system with monitoring and remote control, and a dedicated 12-fiber 0.5 km fibreoptic cable (Žiliberio g. 4 – Vilties g. 6A), a new communication node, computer and wireless networks, an automated gate-entrance system in the parking lot, a keyless entrance system, and area-surveillance cameras have been installed.
- The premises of the "Mažųjų akademija" kindergarten of the Education Academy have been equipped with a new communication node, 1 km of new fibreoptic cable, and security and fire alarm systems.
- The Agriculture Academy exhibition pavilion has been equipped with an infrared fire detection and alarm system.

IT administrators this year focused on ensuring that remote and hybrid work tools worked smoothly in the study process, assisting lecturers, staff and students as they adapted to remote and/or hybrid work and learning:

- in lecture halls and computer classrooms, 56 workstations were adapted for remote work, and 75 desktops and 72 laptops were upgraded. 202 computers in lecture halls and staff workplaces were modernised. Local networks were expanded in university facilities and dormitories; 110 workstations were installed or redesigned.

- 370 computers and 21 computer classrooms were made ready for remote work by lecturers. Use of SSO (single sign-on) was expanded. Computer classrooms have been equipped with licenses for the ArcGIS and SPSS software.
- Trainings on the use of MS Teams have been provided to more than 300 staff and lecturers, instructions have been prepared, and access to help-desk support has been ensured.
- Staff have been encouraged to use OneDrive file storage and backup functionality. About 28 percent of all users take advantage of the OneDrive service on a daily basis. The total quantity of data stored in OneDrive by University staff is 37 TB.
- Virtual servers for the distance-learning environment Moodle and the *BigBlueButton* remote communication system have been updated.

Development of network infrastructure, maintenance of IT systems. The expansion of the fibreoptic and wireless network, an increase in the reliability and security of IT systems, and the control and security of access to the University's facilities remain important parts of IT infrastructure development and operations:

- 12 fibreoptic cables were installed among the buildings of the VMU Botanical Garden complex.
- The development of the *Eduroam* wireless network in the University-managed infrastructure is being carried out in a systematic manner. 155 additional wireless network access points have been installed in the University's buildings and dormitories. Updates and maintenance of RADIUS servers required for reliable operation of the *Eduroam* wireless network have been performed.
- The University's main web servers have been readied to operate with a new, more secure and more efficient version of PHP.
- An inventory of the University's websites was performed, and access to external sites that potentially carry out illegal distribution of copyrighted content has been restricted.
- Increasing the reliability of VMU e-services, two duplicate servers each for critical services (DNS, LDAP, synchronisation with AZURE) have been configured and put into operation on the University's network.
- Due to automated filtering of spam and blocking of malicious e-mails to the university staff, about 36,000 spam-type letters and about 12,000 phishing letters were not delivered.
- The security of VMU buildings has been enhanced by expanding the video surveillance system, with the installation of 32 new video surveillance points in the University's facilities. The total number of cameras in the video surveillance system has been increased from 425 to 457.
- The keyless electronic access system has been expanded, allowing control of access to offices by using VMU staff identification cards. This year, 146 additional e-locks have been installed in lecture halls and staff offices.

Management of financial resources

In 2021, the University's revenue amounted to EUR 67,511,600 (compared to 2020, the amount increased by EUR 8,291,100, 14.0 percent).

The structure of the University's revenue:

- State budget appropriations and investments: EUR 28,934,700, an increase of EUR 194,200 (0.7 percent) compared to 2020. State budget appropriations in 2021 amounted to 42.9 percent of the University's revenue.
- Targeted funds of EUR 23,229,700 increased by EUR 8,303,700 compared to 2020 (an increase of 55.6 percent). Targeted funds in 2021 amounted to 34.4 percent of the University's total revenue. Of this amount, the University received EUR 19,339,900 from European Union funds and other international support funds, which was 28.6 percent of the University's total revenue. Compared to 2020, such EU and other international support funds increased by EUR 7,946,200 (69.7 percent).
- The University's self-earned funds amounted to EUR 15,347,200; a decrease of EUR 206,800 (1.3 percent) compared to 2020. The main sources of the University's self-earned revenue consisted of tuition payments for full-time and part-time studies (32.7 percent of the University's self-earned revenue), revenue generated by other study, courses and trainings (6.6 percent of the University's self-earned revenue), revenue generated by providing services, property rental and other study organisation (25.1 percent of the University's self-earned revenue), and revenue generated from the sale of property (35.6 percent of the University's self-earned revenue). The University's self-earned funds accounted for 22.7 percent of the University's total revenue.

In 2021, the University's expenses amounted to EUR 61,071,400 (an increase of EUR 9,526,300, or 18.5 percent, from 2020).

In 2021, wages and salaries increased to EUR 44,133,900 (+12.7 percent), social insurance and guarantee-fund (unemployment insurance) contributions increased to EUR 81,600 (+11.5 percent), scholarships increased to EUR 1,018,200 (+23.5 percent), business trip expenses increased to EUR 163,200 (+70.3 percent) upskilling expenses increased to EUR 65,900 (+540.2 percent), facility management expenses increased to EUR 262,200 (+17.1 percent), construction and building renovation increased to EUR 3,671,500 (+114.7 percent), and purchase of goods and other services increased to EUR 619,200 (+10.6 percent). Expenses for copyright and intellectual property decreased to EUR 54,200 (-58.2 percent) and equipment (supplies) decreased to EUR 435,200 (-14.4 percent).

The average monthly salary of the university staff increased by EUR 198 (+13.7 percent), of academic staff increased by EUR 156 (+7.9 percent) and of other staff by EUR 115 (+11.7 percent). In 2021, the average salary increased by 8.0 percent compared to 2020. Various bonuses and supplementary allowances amounted to 29.7 percent of the average salary of employees.

In 2021, the **Public Procurement Department** prepared and approved 15 procurement plans, which were published in the Central Public Procurement Information System. 4,824 applications were completed in the StudIS application system in 2021.

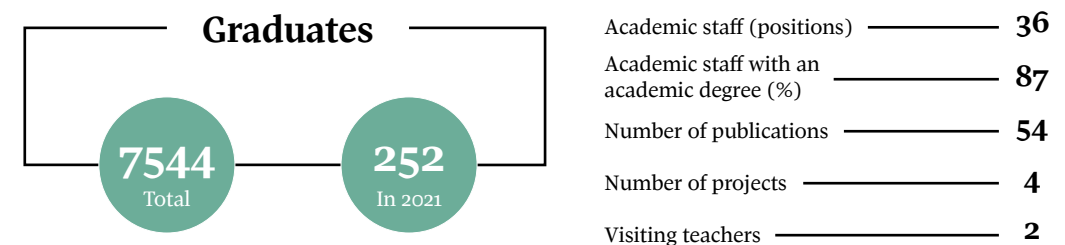
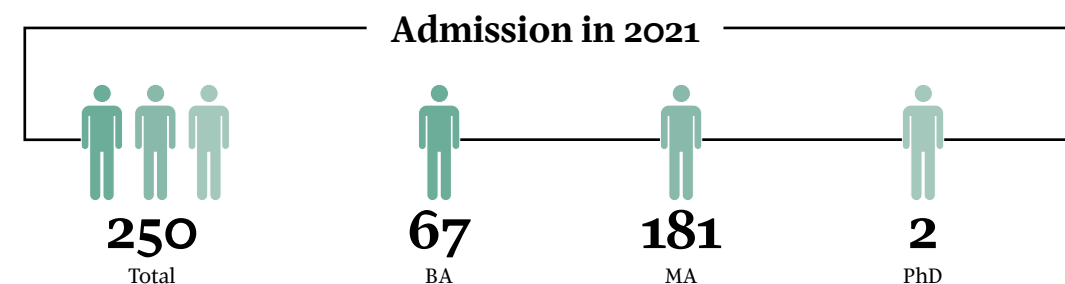
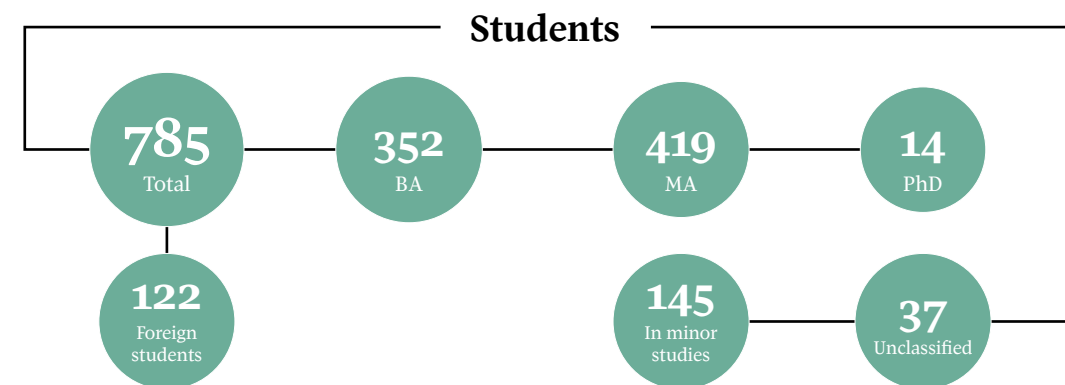
In 2021, 266 low-value procurements were carried out, with a total contract volume of EUR 1,810,800 excluding VAT; one international tender, with the amount of the signed contract being EUR 3,515,200 excluding VAT; 19 simplified open tenders, with the amount of the signed contracts being EUR 3,515,200 excluding VAT; two procurements by means of simplified unannounced negotiation, with the amount of the signed contracts being EUR 60,000 excluding VAT; two procurements by means of unannounced negotiation, with the amount of the signed contracts being EUR 70,100 excluding VAT; three procurements were carried out through the Central Procurement Organisation, with the amount of the signed contracts being EUR 432,450 excluding VAT.

In total 391 contracts were announced in the Central Public Procurement Information System in 2021. 2,724 invoices were accepted and approved in the "e-invoice" system of the State Enterprise Centre of Registers. In total 82 invoices were not accepted and were returned for revision.

Further development of activities:

- To improve the University's organisational structure and management model by implementing the University's strategic objectives, taking into account the opinion of the community, the identity of the subdivisions, the experience of self-governance and administration, and an analysis of the finances and resources for the administration of activities;
- To increase community involvement in decision-making by ensuring equal representation of subdivisions, empowering staff self-direction and autonomy, and promoting responsibility and the highest performance;
- To increase the efficiency of the University's activities by promoting a systematic approach to the development of the organisation, mobilising the strengths, resources, activities, functions, structure and processes of the subdivisions and reducing internal competition among the subdivisions;
- To optimise the administration of the University's activities by effectively applying the existing information systems;
- To ensure the quality of Library services that are open and conveniently accessible to every user, to increase their popularity by exploiting the opportunities offered by the virtual environment and responding to the need for information resources for research and study;
- To perform analysis of study programmes in terms of duplication (overlapping), belonging to academic areas and study directions, and interdisciplinarity;
- To carry out an analysis of the sizes of research clusters and other groups of academics, the productivity of activities, and the efficiency of the use of infrastructure;
- To develop effective management activities for the University's property by conducting analysis of the efficiency of the use of physical infrastructure and installing property administration tools;
- To develop existing projects and to prepare new projects related to the modernisation and adaptation of the University's infrastructure for a modern and high-quality study process and research.

Faculty of Economics and Management



Study programmes

First cycle studies	Second cycle studies	Fields of third cycle studies
Economics	Finance (LT/EN)*	Economics
Economics and Finance	Marketing and International Commerce (LT/EN)*	Management
Marketing	Advertising Management	
Business Administration	Strategic Organisational Management	
Business Finance	International Economics (LT/EN)*	
	Marketing and Sales	
	Business and Entrepreneurship*	
	Executive Master's Degree Programmes:	
	BMI Master's Degree Programme	
	Sports Business Management (EN)	

Dean: Assoc. Prof. Rita Bendaravičienė

Address: S. Daukanto g. 28, 44246 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

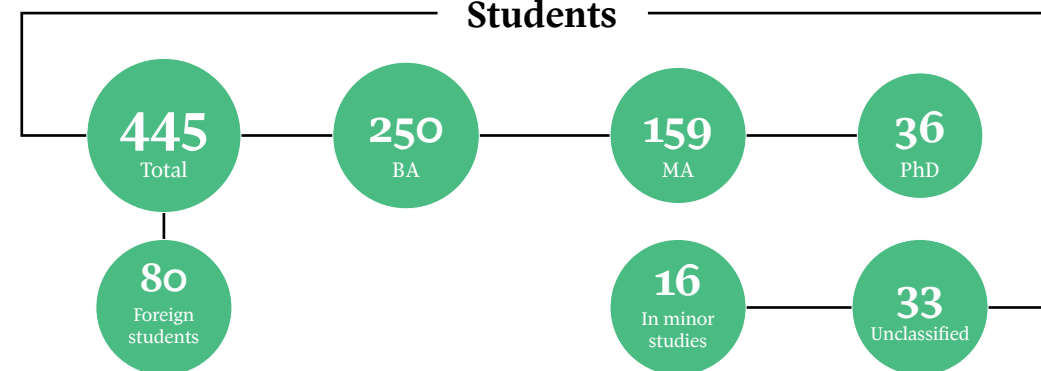
- At the 13th Eduniversal World Convention, held on 17–19 November 2021, the Faculty of Economics and Management was awarded three Palmes of Excellence as an Excellent Business School with reinforcing international influence, for the sixth consecutive year.
- At the meeting of the Senate on 27 January, Assoc. Prof. Rita Bendaravičienė was approved for a second term as Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Management.
- At the meeting of the Senate on 24 March, Prof. Pranas Žukauskas of the Faculty of Economics and Management was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus.
- The winner of this year's competition "Best Thesis 2020" in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences became Dr. Viktorija Grigaliūnaitė. The title of her work was "Modelling of the influence of the elements of visual advertising of fast-moving consumer goods on consumer behaviour".
- Third cycle student Viktorija Tauraitė successfully defended her thesis at the Faculty of Economics and Management on 30 September 2021. The title of the thesis was "Modelling of time allocation of employed population for work and personal life in European countries assessing the economic phenomenon of happiness".
- In April 2021, researchers at the Faculty of Economics and Management (Prof. Arvydas Bakanauskas, Prof. Lina Pilelienė and Dr. Viktorija Grigaliūnaitė) published a monograph, "Static Advertising: Theory and Practice: a Research Monograph".
- On 12 May 2021, the scientific conference of young researchers (third cycle and second cycle students) "EU Economics, Finance and Business Processes and Trends" was held for the twenty-fourth time at the Faculty of Economics and Management. The conference was attended by almost 80 young researchers from various Lithuanian universities.
- On 11–17 November 2021, as part of a Horizon 2020 Twin-Peaks project, researchers at the Faculty of Economics and Management (Assoc. Prof. Aušra Pažeraitė, Dr. Mantautas Račkauskas and third cycle student Rūta Rapovienė), together with colleagues from the Lithuanian Energy Institute and the Technical University of Munich, visited Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg.
- In 2021, three second cycle students from the Faculty of Economics and Management successfully defended double diplomas: Aida Barkauskaitė (Catholic University of Leuven, study programme – Finance), George Ifeanyichukwu Ohuche (Catholic University of Leuven, study programme – Marketing and International Commerce) and Agnėška Stanulevič (University of Aveiro, study programme – International Economics).
- AB INTERRAO, a long-time sponsor of the Faculty of Economics and Management as well as Double Master's Degree studies, awarded two master's degree students of the Faculty EUR 3,000 scholarships each for double degree studies for the 2021–2022 academic year.
- The Minded VMU student team, making its home in the Faculty of Economics and Management, impressed the jury of the Best Lithuanian Students' Business Competition with their one-of-a-kind idea for the board game "Kondigno" and won a trip to present their product idea in the Startup Europe programme.
- In 2021, the Faculty of Economics and Management gained access to the many databases offered by the Bloomberg Terminal. Access is available at the Faculty's *Laboratory of Experimental Economics*.
- In 2021, foreign professors taught remotely at the Faculty of Economics and Management: Prof. Pierre Semal (Catholic University of Leuven) and Prof. Marco Failo (University of Trento).



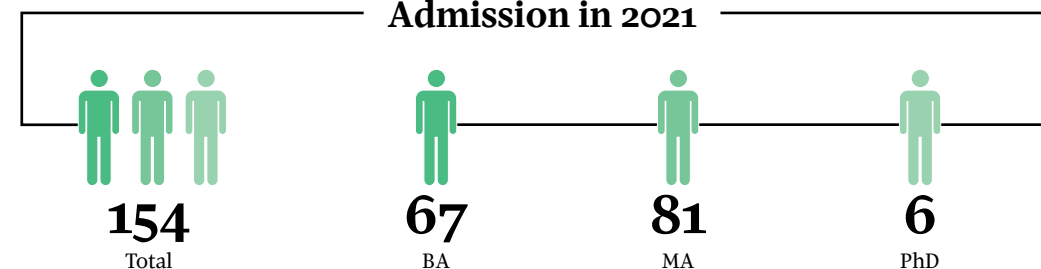
Faculty of Natural Sciences



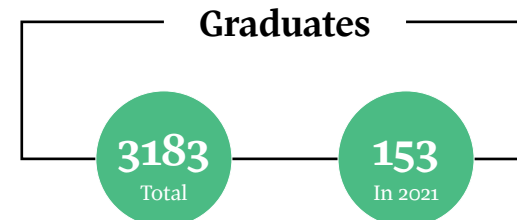
Students



Admission in 2021



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	70
Academic staff with an academic degree (%)	97
Number of publications	116
Number of projects	36
Visiting teachers	3

Study programmes

First cycle studies

Environmental Science
Biochemistry
Biology
Biotechnology

Second cycle studies

Environmental Management
Biochemical Analysis
Molecular Biology and Biotechnology
Applied Biotechnology
Industrial Ecology
Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Analysis

Fields of third cycle studies

Biomedical Sciences
Biology
Biophysics
Ecology and Environmental Science
Physical Sciences
Biochemistry

Dean: Prof. Saulius Mickevičius

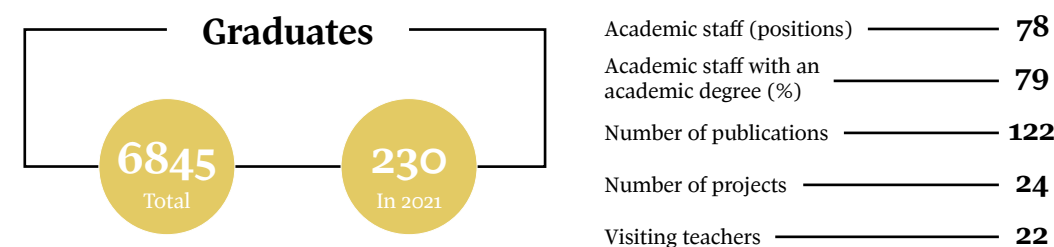
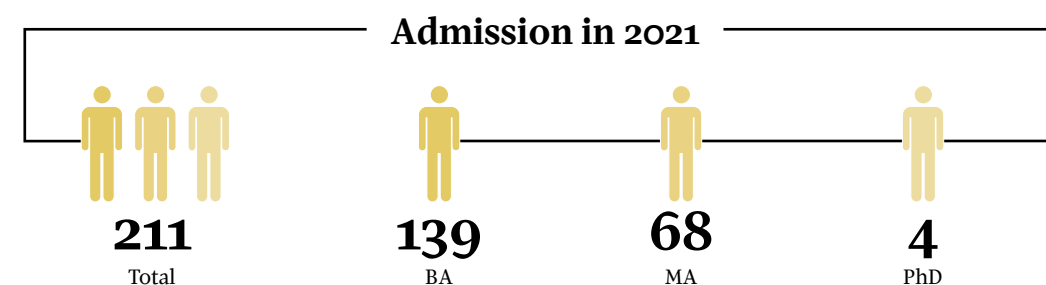
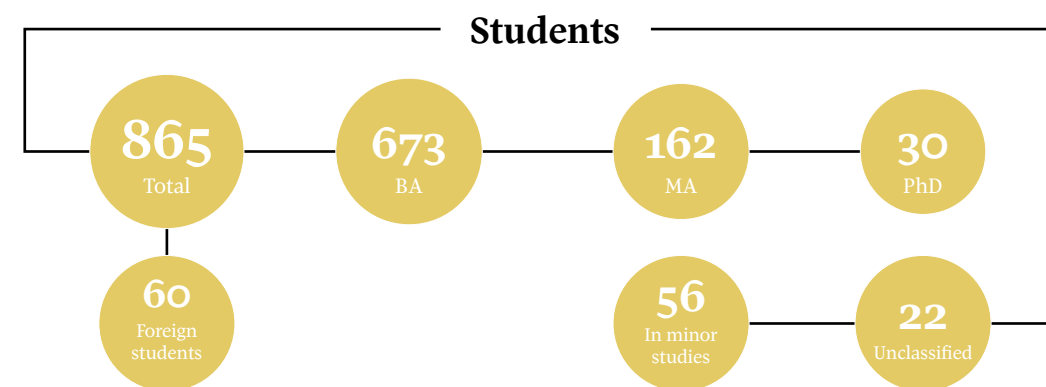
Address: Universiteto g. 10, Akademija, 53361 Kauno r.

Key events of 2021

- Prof. Regina Gražulevičienė of the Department of Environmental Sciences and Prof. Audrius Dėdelė, the Chair of the Department of Environmental Sciences, received the Lithuanian Science Prize in the field of Biomedicine and Agricultural Sciences for the cycle of works “The effect of the urban environment, psychosocial and epigenetic factors on health from infancy to maturity (2005–2019)”.
- Prof. Algimantas Paulauskas, the Chair of the Department of Biology, became a member of the College of the Ministry of Environment.
- Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė of the Department of Biology became a member of the National Health Council of the Republic of Lithuania.
- Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė of the Department of Biology became Vice President of the Lithuanian Pharmaceutical Association.
- Funding for the European Commission’s Horizon 2020 project “Molecular harvesting with electroporation, microfluidics and nanoparticles for diagnostics and therapy of heterogeneous solid tumours (Matisse)” was approved. The project leader for the VMU part of the project is Prof. Gintautas Saulis of the Department of Biology.
- Funding for the Research Council of Lithuania’s project “Management of target metabolites of hemp for the development of products to relieve COVID-19 symptoms” (project number 01.2.2-LMT-K-718-05-0039) was approved. The project leader for the VMU part of the project is Prof. Vida Mildažienė of the Department of Biochemistry.
- Funding for the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (KA2) Cooperation Partnerships project “Diffability: HE Curricula and Transition Programme Empowering Students with Different Abilities” (No. 2021-1-LT01-KA220-HED-000032245) was approved. The project leader is Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Prof. Saulius Mickevičius.
- UAB “Intermedix Lietuva” awarded a personal stipend to Neringa Barauskaitė, third cycle student in the Department of Biology.
- Personal stipends established by “Thermo Fisher Scientific” were awarded to Iuliia Kleimenova (a fourth-year bachelor’s degree student in Biology and Genetics) and to Anastasia Avramenko and Giedrius Galvanauskas (fourth-year bachelor’s degree students in Biotechnology).
- On 21–22 October 2021, VMU Honorary Professor Birutė Galdikas delivered lectures at the Faculty of Natural Sciences.
- On 20–21 May 2021, the virtual 15th international multi-disciplinary conference on life, technology, biomedical, agro-, forest and physical sciences “The Vital Nature Sign 2021” was held. The organiser was Prof. Audrius Sigita Maruška of the Department of Biology.
- On 25–27 January 2021, the virtual 11th Baltic Theriological Conference was held. The organiser was Prof. Algimantas Paulauskas, Chair of the Department of Biology.
- On 26 November 2021, the 13th international conference of the Lithuanian Neuroscience Association was held online. The organiser was Prof. Saulius Šatkauskas, Chair of the Department of Biochemistry.
- Researchers at the Faculty of Natural Sciences are carrying out five MITA “Inočekiai” projects and six projects funded by the LVPA measure “Experimentas”.
- On 10 November 2021, students and teachers from the Faculty of Natural Sciences took part in the online *Science Day* organised by “Thermo Fisher Scientific”.
- Prof. Vida Mildažienė of the Department of Biochemistry is a member of the FEBS Ambassadors of Education group.
- Nine doctoral theses were defended in 2021: four in Biology, three in Ecology and Environmental Science, one each in Biophysics and Biochemistry.
- Three teachers from Poland and Latvia came to the Faculty of Natural Sciences for Erasmus teaching visits.



Faculty of Humanities



Study programmes

First cycle studies	Second cycle studies	Fields of third cycle studies
English Philology	Literature Creation, Criticism and Communication	Ethnology
Philosophy	Comparative Cultural Studies (distance)	Philology
Language and Culture of Francophone Countries	Modern Linguistics (distance)	Philosophy
History	Practical Philosophy	History and Archaeology
Italian Studies and Romance Languages	East Asia Region Studies (in English)	
Italian Studies and Romance Languages	Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism (joint study programme) (in English)	
Cultures and Languages of East Asian Countries	Applied English Linguistics	
Cultures and Languages of Scandinavian Countries	East-Central European and Lithuanian Historical Studies	
German Language and Communication		

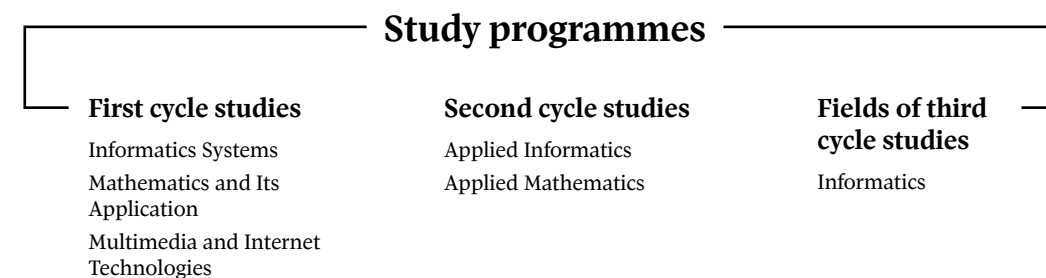
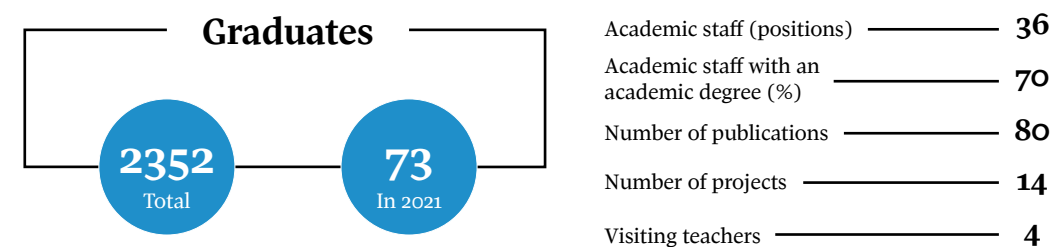
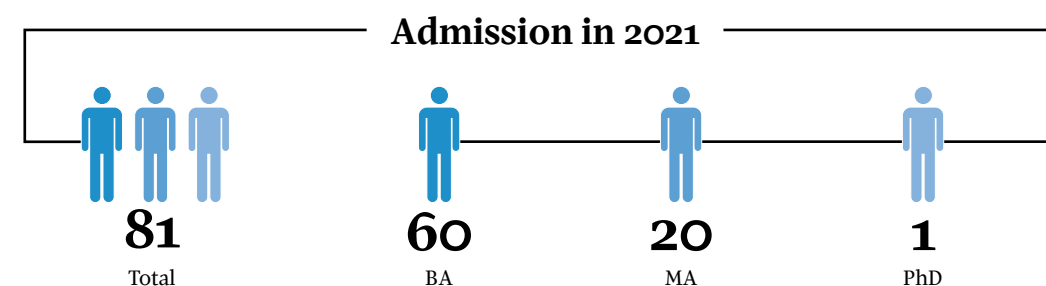
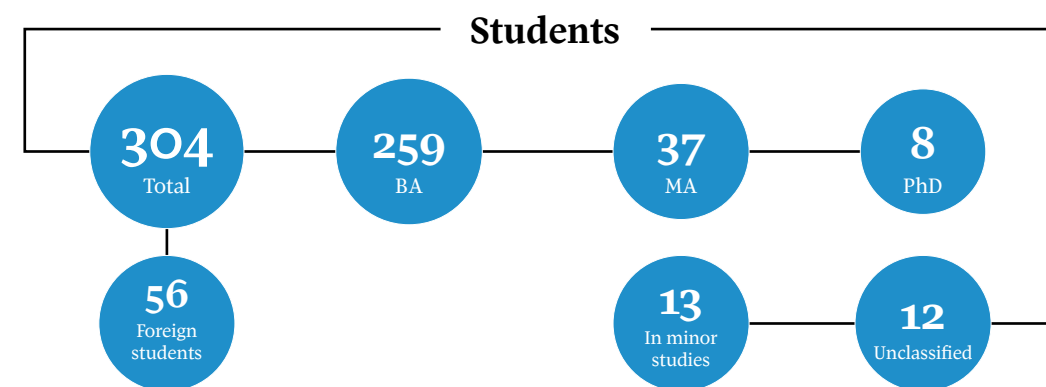
Dean: Assoc. Prof. Rūta Eidukevičienė
Address: V. Putvinskio g. 23, 44243 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- Prof. Milda Danytė from the Department of Foreign Language, Literary and Translation Studies was awarded Gold Medal of Vytautas Magnus University for significant long-term contributions to the development and nurturing of language teaching and philology studies.
- A lecturer Kristina Barancovaitė-Skindaravičienė from the Department of Cultural Studies received a commendation from the Education Department of the Kaunas City Municipality Administration for the nurturing of cultural cooperation between Lithuania and Japan.
- Dr. Danguolė Kalinauskaitė, research fellow of the Centre of Computer Linguistics, was awarded a Technorama 2021 award and a prize from cyber-security hackathon “DELTA1” organised by the Ministry of National Defence of the Republic of Lithuania, Kaunas University of Technology and their partners.
- Faculty students were awarded six nominal scholarships of the Lithuanian diaspora: Prof. Bronius Vaškelis’ Scholarship was awarded to a third cycle student of Philology Agnė Cesiulė; Liūtas and Francoise Mockūnas’ Scholarship was awarded to a third cycle student of History and Archeology Akvilė Kabašinskaitė; Vanda Daugirdaitė-Sruogienė’s Scholarship was awarded to second cycle student of East-Central European and Lithuanian Historical Studies Mantas Barakauskas; Bronius Bieliukas’ Scholarships were awarded to History study programme’s fourth-year student Karolina Sadinauskaitė and second cycle student of Literature Creation, Criticism and Communication Inga Videikaitė.
- Under the complicated conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, seven international scientific conferences were organised during which regional and global issues that are particularly important to Lithuania were analysed: the Belarus Researcher Congress, which gathered 400 participants; “International Cooperation of China and Central and Eastern Europe: Intersections and Strategies”; “The Culture and Politics of the Francophone World”; “The Philosophy of Humour: New Perspectives”; The Family of GDL Nobles Pacai and the Lithuanian Baroque; The (In)Visible Support of World Lithuanians to the Reborn Lithuania; the 34th Conference of the Association of Japanese Language Pedagogues; three national scientific conferences.
- The faculty’s historians and philologists contributed significantly to the organising of the first remote Forum of Lithuanian Education, which sought to draw attention to the situation of the preservation of Lithuanian identity and the Lithuanian education in the diaspora (together with the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, the World Lithuanian Community, and the Embassy of Lithuania in Ireland).
- Prof. Ineta Dabašinskienė from the Department of Lithuanian Studies became the head of the VMU partner section of the international university alliance Transform4Europe – T4E: The European University for Knowledge Entrepreneurs.
- The faculty’s scientists successfully completed five international and national projects and started conducting two new projects of the State Programme of the Lithuanian Research and Promotion by the Research Council of Lithuania: “Intonation of the Lithuanian Language: Prosodic Word and Phrases, Their Hierarchy, Realisation, Transcription [LIEKI]” (head Prof. Kazlauskienė) and “Philosophical Problematics of Martin Heidegger’s Technique in the Context of Ecological Philosophy” (Dr. Tadas Čapanauskas).
- During external assessment of study fields, three humanity-field programmes received high assessment marks from international experts and were accredited for a seven-year period: regional studies (Cultures and Languages of East Asian Countries, Cultures and Languages of Scandinavian Countries), linguistics studies (Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism, Applied English Linguistics, Modern Linguistics) and literary studies (Literature Creation, Criticism and Communication).
- The faculty’s community became actively involved in the activities of the implementation of Kaunas 2022 programme and proposed four significant cultural and scientific projects. One of them is the international book and writer festival Kaunas Literature Week (head Assoc. Prof. Rūta Eidukevičienė, art director Dr. Laurynas Katkus).
- Prof. Gintautas Mažeikis and Assoc. Prof. Tomas Kavaliauskas from the Department of Philosophy started organising online conversation series *Laisvai ir kritiškai*, while Assoc. Prof. Liudas Glemža from the Department of History became one of the hosts of the LRT Radio show *Džiazuojanti istorija*.
- The academic community and the public at large were offered a wide variety of cultural events that are organised by the faculty’s lecturers and students: VMU Asian Week, the Francophone Month, the German Language Days *Ö kaip vokiškai*, the 21st Global Italian Language Week dedicated to Dante Alighieri, the International Day of Native Language at VMU, a creative writing workshop, public discussions about cultural aspects of the understanding of disability, LGBT+ rights, etc.
- The faculty’s lecturers and researchers held more than ten practical seminars and training sessions for speech therapists, specialised pedagogues and business representatives, more than ten events related to language and culture (competitions, Olympiads) for Lithuanian school learners, traditional Lithuanian language and culture summer courses, three remote international summer schools for students from Kanda University of International Studies (Japan), Saga University (Japan), and Al-Farabi Kazakh National University (Kazakhstan).



Faculty of Informatics



Dean: Prof. Tomas Krilavičius (from 27 January 2021), Prof. Daiva Vitkutė-Adžgauskienė (interim dean until 26 January 2021)

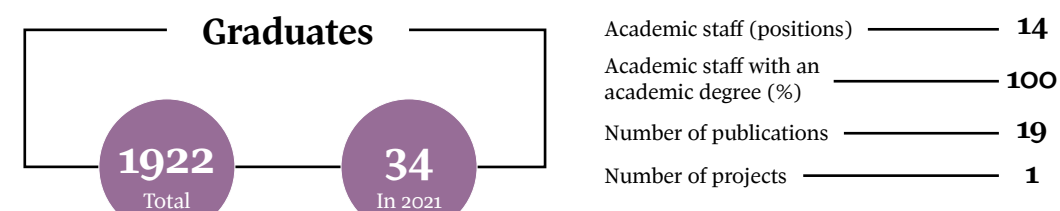
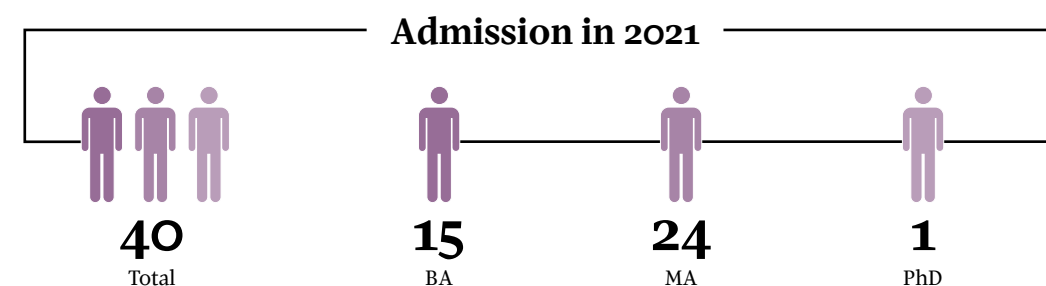
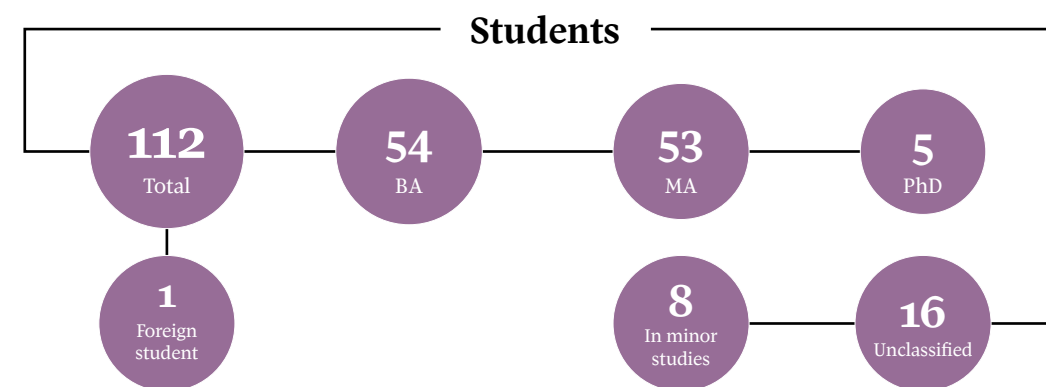
Address: Vileikos g. 8, 44404 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- Prof. Tomas Krilavičius, Assoc. Prof. Darius Amilevičius, Dr. Justina Mandravickaitė and Dr. Danguolė Kalinauskaitė participated in the activities of the working group of the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language established by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language, during which the guidelines for the Lithuanian-language technology development in 2021–2027 were prepared.
- In 2021, Prof. Tomas Krilavičius and Prof. Daiva Vitkutė-Adžgauskienė contributed to the preparation of the Description of the Study Fields of Informatics.
- Prof. Tomas Krilavičius participated in the activities of the NATO Science and Technology Organisation as a member of the Information Systems Technology panel.
- VMU signed a cooperation agreement with “IMINT.AI”, an IT company which develops solutions for video analysis and other tasks. This agreement will aim to promote cooperation in the development of artificial intelligence solutions for the security and defence sector.
- Using neural networks and language technologies, VMU researchers have developed a technology of speech synthesis which is not only already applied on the University’s website and the country’s news portals but will also soon be implemented on the website of the Seimas.
- On 30 January 2021, the 15th competition of informatics and mathematics for 11th-12th grade school learners and 3rd-4th grade gymnasium learners, IFtorina-21, was organised by the VMU Faculty of Informatics. It was attended by 73 school learners (27 teams) from various schools of Lithuania.
- Prof. Tomas Krilavičius participated in the working group of Smart City Management and Quality Public Service Development for the Preparation of Kaunas City Strategic Plan.
- Prof. Juozas Augutis participated in the working group of Quality Educational and Sports Service System Development for the Preparation of Kaunas City Strategic Plan.
- Prof. Tomas Krilavičius, Prof. Ričardas Krikštolaitis and other faculty employees and students initiated joint project with the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, “The Use of Digital Phenotyping for the Monitoring of Cancer Patients During the COVID-19 Pandemic”.
- Prof. Tomas Krilavičius, Dr. Justina Mandravickaitė, Dr. Danguolė Kalinauskaitė and the faculty’s students developed methods for hate speech detection under the HORIZON project “Be Hate-Free: Building Hate-Free Communities in Lithuania”.
- Dr. Edgaras Ščiglinškas and students of the Multimedia and Internet Technologies study programme started activities in a joint project with UAB “Gluk Media”, “The Touch-Based Holographic Display Interface”, which aims to develop smart adaptive interface for a holographic display.
- Research group headed by Prof. Daiva Vitkutė-Adžgauskienė passed to the second stage of the project The Development of the National Informational Impact Recognition and Analysis Ecosystem (NAAS) by the General Jonas Žemaitis Military Academy of Lithuania.
- In 2021, 30 mathematics and 27 informatics teachers from all around Lithuania studied the teacher re-qualification study modules of Mathematics and Informatics conducted by the departments of Mathematics and Statistics and Applied Informatics.
- On 17 September 2021, the team of VMU Faculty of Informatics participated in the events of the scientific festival Spaceship Earth. During the events, virtual reality and other multimedia technology solutions as well robotics applications were demonstrated (the events were organised remotely).
- Prof. Tomas Krilavičius received a letter of commendation from NATO Science and Technology Organisation’s Information Systems Technology panel for activities in the NATO STO IST-141 Exploratory Visual Analytics working group.
- Assoc. Prof. Darius Amilevičius and Prof. Gailius Raškinis commercialised the artificial intelligence solutions developed in the Faculty of Informatics during the project “Commercialisation of Technology of Virtual Teacher of Musical Instrument Playing Based on Artificial Intelligence and Deep Learning Technologies (MUZIKA)”.
- During the project “Research of Possibilities of Lithuanian Industry’s Participation in the Value Chain of Wind Energy Components (VEGRAND)”, Prof. Tomas Krilavičius provided recommendations regarding application of artificial intelligence in wind energy.
- In 2021, the status of visiting professor was granted to the following professors: Robert E. Gutsche, Jr. (Lancaster University, United Kingdom), Lucio Tommaso De Paolis (Salento University, Italy), Ka Lok Man (Sian Cher Tong Liverpool University, China), Jordi Linares-Pellicer (Valencia University, Spain).



Faculty of Catholic Theology



Dean: Assoc. Prof. Benas Ulevičius

Address: Gimnazijos g. 7, 44260 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

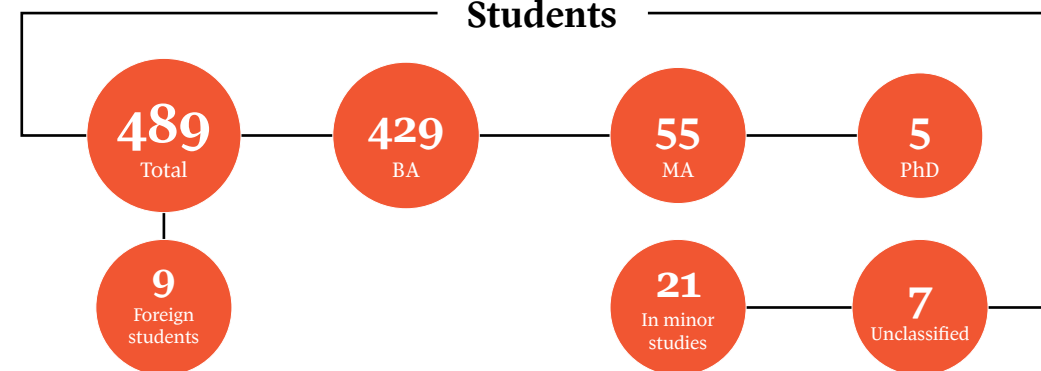
- External assessment of the faculty's four programmes was conducted. An international group of foreign experts assessed the Catholic Theology second cycle study programme, two second cycle study programmes (Religious Education, Pastoral Theology) and the Theology field's third cycle study programme. All programmes received very good assessments and were accredited for the longest time period (7 years).
- In spite of the pandemic, the faculty developed relations with foreign universities and partners. Remote cooperation was conducted with researchers from United Kingdom, Spain, Poland, Malta, and Latvia. Close cooperation was maintained with the Catholic Education Congregation of the Holy See in the Vatican while solving important strategic questions of catholic studies in Lithuania. In 2021, particularly close cooperation was retained with the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (Poland), the Pontifical University of John Paul II in Krakow (Poland) and the Riga Higher Institute of Religious Sciences (Latvia) which is affiliated with the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome.
- In 2020–2021, a group of the faculty's and other institutions' researchers prepared and implemented the project "Open to Life: Improvement of Children's and Youth's Sexual Health and Prevention of Risky Sexual Behaviour by Application of Innovative Teaching Measures". The project was recognised by the State Public Health Improvement Fund as one of the best projects of this field in Lithuania.
- In the autumn of 2021, activities were launched by student collective *Logos*. The aim of the collective is to organise discussions and debates on relevant subjects, invite representatives of various perspectives and scientific fields to engage in dialogue, to nurture the culture of dialogue, discussions and debates in the faculty. The third debates were organised in 2021.
- In 2021, the faculty improved relations with social partners and the public. The faculty's teachers read lectures, hosted radio shows and seminars, consulted and participated in many events of Catholic organisations and communities, conducted educational and spiritual activities in parishes, hospitals, imprisonment institutions face-to-face and remotely. The faculty's students constitute a significant portion of the volunteers in the Catholic organisations of the Archdiocese of Kaunas. The faculty maintains particularly close relations with the Kaunas Archdiocese's Catholic centres and social institutions. The faculty's relations with social partners are very strong because many of the heads and employees of Catholic organisations are the faculty's graduates.
- In 2021, the faculty's teachers went to schools, read lectures for teachers and school learners, while school learners visited the faculty. Notably, the faculty cooperates closely with VMU Rasa Gymnasium and Catholic schools all around Lithuania.



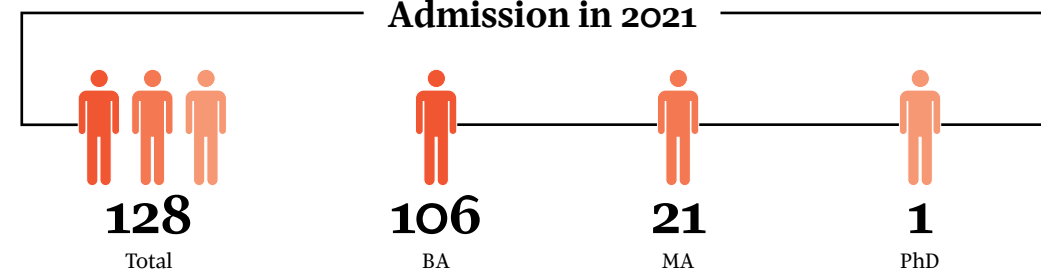
Faculty of Arts



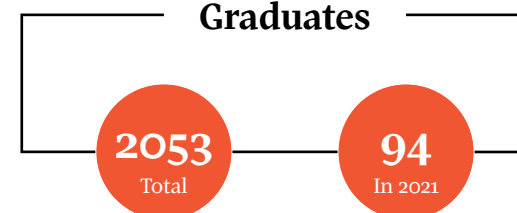
Students



Admission in 2021



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	26
Academic staff with an academic degree (%)	82
Number of publications	26
Number of projects	5
Visiting teachers	5

Study programmes

First cycle studies

Art History, Criticism and Media
New Media Art
Creative Industries
Music Production

Second cycle studies

Cultural Heritage and Tourism
Art Curating
Creative Industries
Theatre Research and Stage Art Management

Fields of third cycle studies

History and Theory of Art

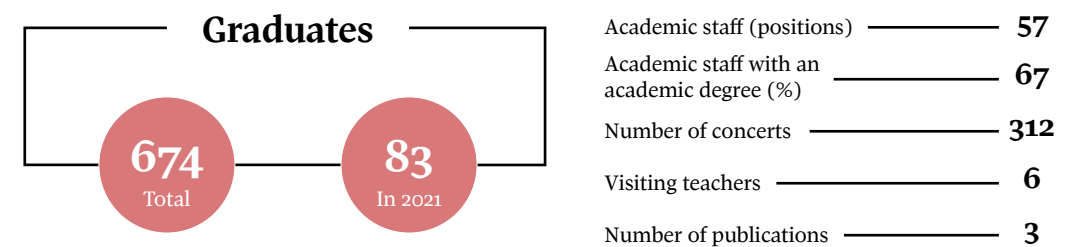
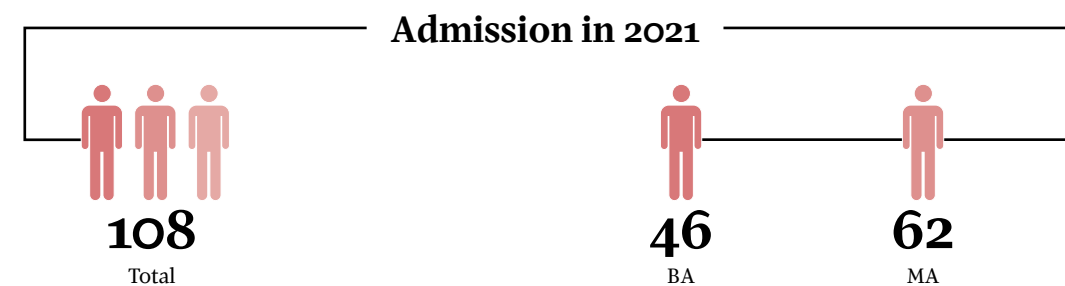
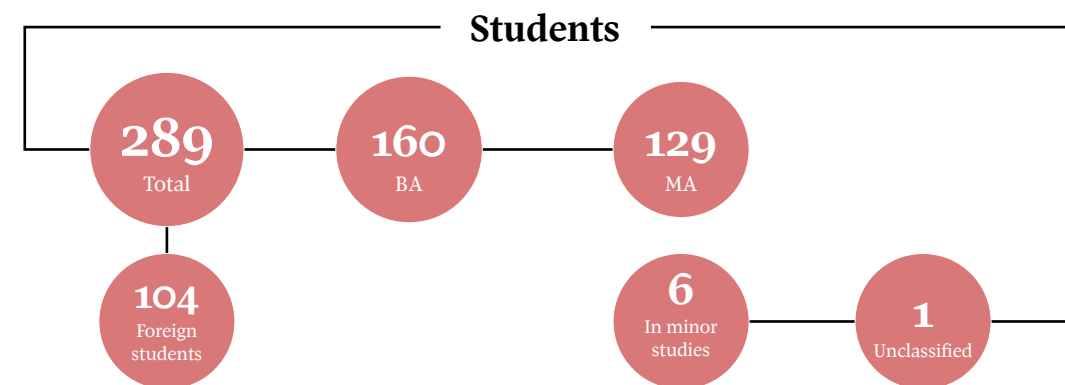
Dean: Prof. Jurgita Staniškytė
Address: Muitinės g. 7, 44280 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- During external assessment, the first and second cycle study programmes of the field of History and Theory of Art as well as the second cycle study programme of the field of Music and the third cycle study programme of the field of History and Theory of Art were accredited for the maximum period. The studies of the field of History and Theory of Art received the highest evaluation marks in the field in Lithuania.
- The scientific journal *Art History & Criticism / Meno istorija ir kritika* was included in the Scopus database.
- Jolita Butkevičienė was elected the best teacher of the Faculty of Arts in 2020–2021.
- Jurgita Staniškytė was delegated to represent Lithuania in the board of the EU Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) and the managing committee of the EU JPI “Cultural Heritage and Global Change: A New Challenge for Europe”.
- Rūta Mažeikienė was delegated to represent Lithuania in the board of the Association of Nordic Theatre Scholars (ANTS).
- The international scientific research project “Nuclear Spaces: Communities, Materialities and Locations of Nuclear Cultural Heritage (NuSPACES)”, funded under the EU JPI “Cultural Heritage and Global Change: A New Challenge for Europe”. It is the only Lithuanian project that won the competition. The VMU partner section is coordinated by Linara Dovydaitytė.
- International project “DeuS”, funded under Erasmus+ Vocational Educational Training programme. The VMU partner section is coordinated by Jūratė Tutlytė.
- The traditional art and culture festival “VMU Culture Days”, during which open lectures, relevant discussions, art events (exhibitions, a theatre production, a musical online event “MusicLab”) and traditional “Open Doors Day for School Learners” were held online and in physical spaces.
- Scientific achievements: Aušrinė Kulvietytė-Cemnolonskė’s monograph *Lietuvos istorija dailėje* (Kaunas: Vytauto Didžiojo universiteto leidykla, 2021); Viltė Migonytė-Petrulienė’s monograph *Weekendų miestai ir priemiesčiai: Kaip buvo kuriami modernūs kurortai tarpukario (1918–1940) Lietuvoje* (Vilnius: Lapas, 2021) and a section of the book Palanga. *Architektūros gidas*, which was nominated in the category of the best non-fiction book of 2021. Edgaras Klivis’ article “National identity” in the prestigious publication *The Oxford handbook of politics and performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021); theatre seminar organised by Vitalija Truskauskaitė “Balys Sruoga on the theatre of the future: a dialogue from the present” (Baiškai, Biržai) and a compiled collection of scientific articles *Dialogas su Baliu Sruoga apie ateities teatrą* (Vilnius: Baltijos kopija, 2021).
- Creative achievements: Rimantas Plungė’s personal exhibition *Reverse 21* at the LDS KS gallery “Meno parkas”; Adas Toleikis’ project “Jungtis” for Pasaulio Tautų Teisuolių Square (Šiauliai, the project’s architect: Ilona Vaznonienė); Titas Petrikis’ music for the compact disc of poetry *Suėjus prie Žemės ribos*; Gytis Dovydaitis’ video-essay *Pertraukti gyvenimai – Pandemija* (KEKS 2022 event Festival of Stories) and cooperation in the development of NKDT theatre production *Mirgėjimas*, Romualdas Požerskis’ personal exhibitions *Neramūs keliautojai* (at Prospektas Gallery, Vilnius), *Paslaptingas Bangladešas* (during the programme of VMU Culture Days, remotely), *Kauno menininkai ir mūzos* (at Kaunas Picture Gallery), *Kelias į laisvę* (in the courtyard of Raudondvaris Art Incubator) and participation in the group exhibition *Permainų šventė* (at the MO museum, Vilnius).



Music Academy



Dean: Assoc. Prof. Saulius Gerulis

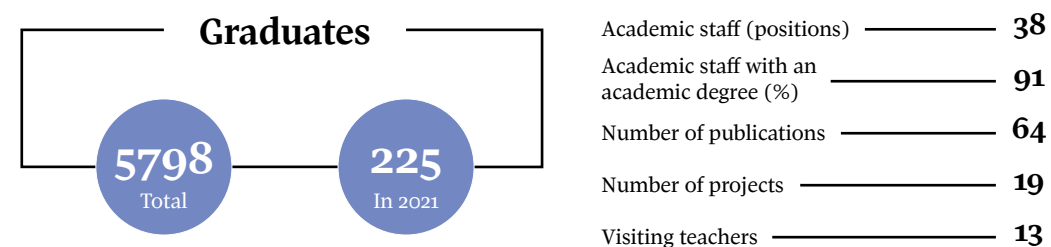
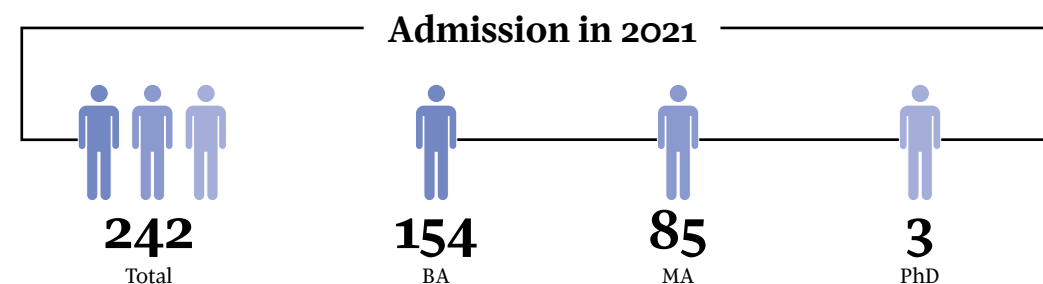
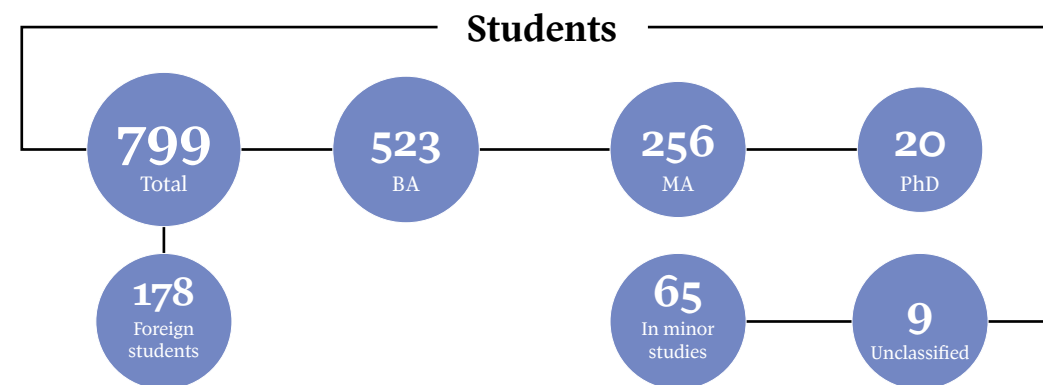
Address: V. Čepinskio g. 5, 46257 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- Assoc. Prof. Birutė Marija Sodaitytė and Prof. Jonas Janulevičius were awarded the 3rd Degree Santaka Badge of Honour of Kaunas City Municipality for their merits in the field of culture.
- Lecturer Kostas Smoriginas performed the role of Giorgio Germont in the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre's production of Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La Traviata* (premiere on 17 November 2021).
- The composer of the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre's opera *Mamulė Mū* (premiere on 5 December 2021) was Assoc. Prof. Sigitas Mickis.
- The Kaunas State Musical Theatre's production of Giuseppe Verdi's opera *La Traviata* (premiere on 26 December 2021) included roles by lecturers Gabrielė Bukinė (Violetta), Egidijus Bavikinas (Giorgio Germont), Gabrielė Kuzmickaitė (Flora Bervoix), Mindaugas Zimkus (Gastone de Letorières), Giedrius Prunskus (Dottore Grenvil) and student Martynas Stankevičius (Giuseppe).
- Kaunas State Musical Theatre's production of Jonathan Swift's opera for children *Gulliver's Travels* (premiere on 19 September 2021): musical director and conductor Assoc. Prof. Virgilijus Visockis, roles played by teachers Assoc. Prof. Giedrius Prunskus (Captain), Mindaugas Zimkus (the chief of the Lilliputians) Nomedė Kukulskienė (the queen of the Lilliputians) and students Kazimieras Ivanovas (Captain), Povilas Strikaitis (Giant), Karolina Činikaitė, Patricija Gadliauskienė, Agnė Čepaitytė, Vasarė Gritenaitė, Rugilė Balčiūnaitė, Viktorija Zeilikovičiūtė, Vygantas Bemovas, Martynas Stankevičius (Lilliputians).
- Kaunas State Musical Theatre's two-part production of Gioacchino Rossini's comic opera *Il Turco in Italia* (*The Turk in Italy*) (premiere on 8 September 2021): conductor Prof. Jonas Janulevičius, roles played by lecturers Giedrius Prunskus (Selim), Gabrielė Bukinė (Fiorilla).
- Lecturer Povilas Velikis and the band *U'Elements* released a compact disc *Warm White*. Publisher ZertStudio.
- The Music Academy's teachers organised several international competitions: the 4th international competition *Daina miestui* (30 April 2021, Prof. Audronė Eitmanavičiūtė), the international pianist competition Magnus dedicated to Ferenc Liszt (28–31 October 2021, lecturer Julija Sadaunykaitė), the 11th international Balys Dvarionas Competition of Young Pianists and Violinists (3 September 2021, Assoc. Prof. Justas Dvarionas), the international Aldona Dvarionaitė Competition-Festival of Young Pianists and Teachers (26–28 October 2021, Assoc. Prof. Justas Dvarionas).
- Assoc. Prof. Aleksandras Rubinovas participated in 4 international theatre festivals: *Baltyjskij dom* in St. Petersburg, *Most* in Hanover, *Thespis* in Kyiv, and *Atspindys* in Visaginas.
- Assoc. Prof. Vytautas Liesionis continues the activities of the Sectoral Professional Committee's Chair and the head of the National School Learners' Academy's section.
- Teacher Kostas Smoriginas has successfully continued his career at the Royal Opera House in London, Zurich Opera House, Moscow's Bolshoi Theatre, Amsterdam's Het Concertgebouw, and Malaga's Opera de Tours.



Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy



Study programmes

First cycle studies	Second cycle studies	Fields of third cycle studies
World Politics and Economy Political Science	Future Media and Journalism	Political Science
International Politics and Development Studies	Diplomacy	
Public Administration	Diplomacy and International Relations	
Public Communication	Integrated Communication	
	Interdisciplinary Research and Studies on Eastern Europe	
	Contemporary European Politics	
	State Institutions' Administration	

Dean: Prof. Šarūnas Liekis

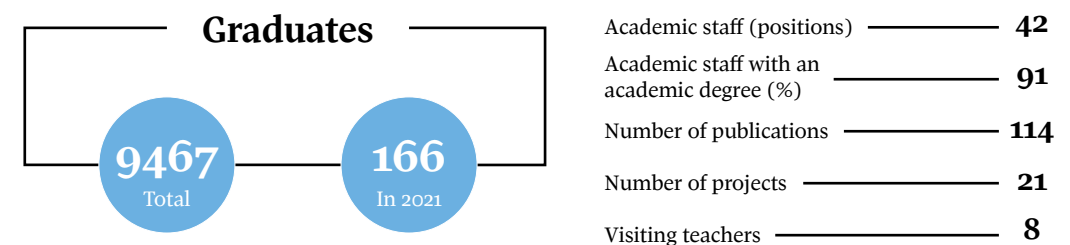
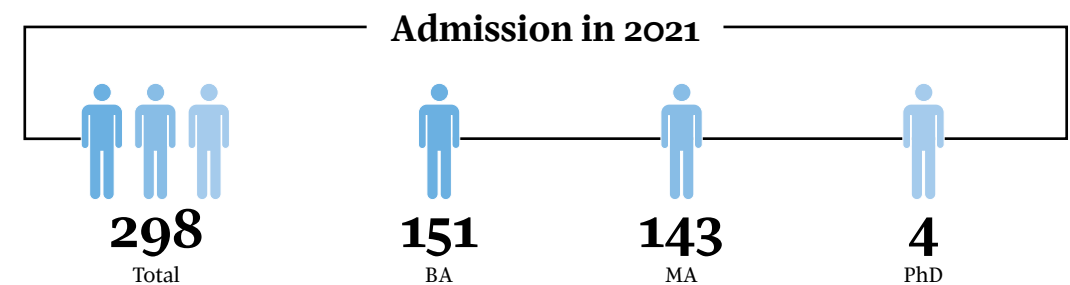
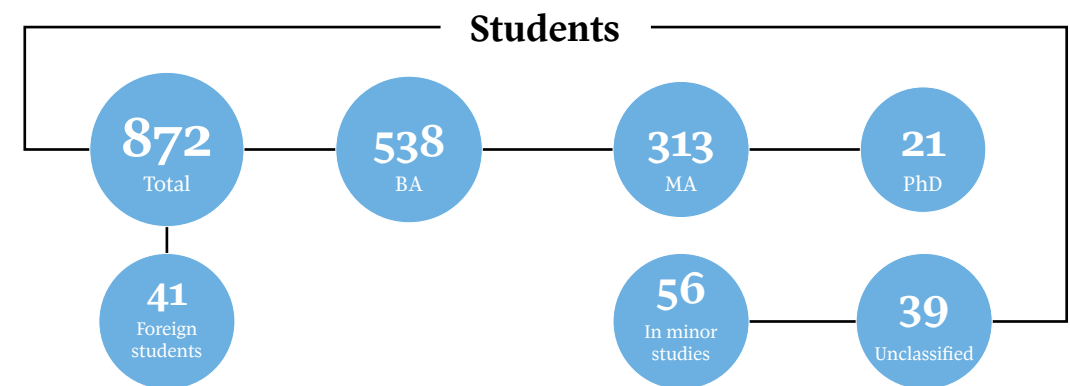
Address: V. Putvinskio g. 23, 44243 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- In 2021, third cycle study programme of Communication and Information Sciences was approved after successful application submitted together with the VGTU Faculty of Creative Industries.
- In 2021, DIGIRES project “Supporting Collaborative partnerships in Capacity Building in Times of the Disinfodemic/COVID-19” (2021–2022), funded by the European Commission, was won. The project’s coordinator is Prof. Auksė Balčytienė. The project’s partners: news portal *Delfi*, the National Institute for Social Integration, regional newspaper *Tauragės kurjeris*, Kaunas region journalist Brigita Sabaliauskaitė. The aim of DIGIRES is to develop a scientific research centre, a watchdog-NGO, the only one of its kind in the Baltic states, until 2022. The centre’s employees will be a team of highly qualified experts who will work together towards increasing the public’s digital resilience against disinformation. Deep involvement is also expected from the media and independent journalists, the scientific community, and representatives of the public.
- By the proposal of President Gitanas Nausėda, in January, professors Audronė Nugaraitė and Lauras Bielinis were appointed members of the Radio and Television Commission of Lithuania (LRTK).
- Professor Saulius Pivoras received a commendation from the Seimas’ Committee on Education and Science and a medal from the Research Council of Lithuania “for cooperation in the implementation of the research policy of Lithuania and for contributions to the development of the activities of the Research Council of Lithuania in 2015–2021 while performing the duties of a member of the Research Council of Lithuania’s Committee of the Humanities and Social Sciences (RCL HSC)”, after ending the term of a member of the RCL HSC in May 2021).
- In July, the European Social Survey announced the results of the competition of the best bachelor’s degree theses that analysed ESS data. The first place was won by the bachelor’s degree thesis of Public Communication graduate Monika Vazgytė titled *Assumptions of Building Romantic Relationships and Searching for a Partner through Internet Media*. The work’s supervisor is Dr. Apolonijus Žilys.
- At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, during the winner award ceremony of the competition of master’s degree theses titled “The Best Master’s Degree Theses on the Topic of the European Union’s Policy Formulation and Implementation”, graduate of second cycle study programme Diplomacy and International Relations at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, Rimvydas Burba, was announced as the third-place winner and awarded a diploma and a monetary prize. The master’s degree thesis *Reasons for the emergence of the European Green Deal and the European Climate Law*. The work’s supervisor is Dr. Linas Didvalis.
- In 2021, Assoc. Prof. Ingrida Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy was elected a board member of the Central European Political Science Association (CEPSA).
- The faculty maintains a close relationship with its graduates. In 2021, the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy organised a discussion titled “Culture and Politics: Building the Future of the State”. The discussion is an event of the Alumni Days, which involves the graduates of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy sharing their assessments of relevant topics with the public. The discussion’s participants were the graduates of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy: Minister of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania Simonas Kairys and the Culture Adviser to the President of the Republic of Lithuania Mindaugas Bundza. Moderator: Dr. Mindaugas Norkevičius.
- On 16 September, the International Academic Romas Sakadolskis Journalism Forum was organised in Vilnius. It was organised and included participation of the teachers Rytis Zemkauskas, Audronė Nugaraitė, Auksė Balčytienė, Kristijonas Jakubsonas and other teachers and students of the Department of Public Communication of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy. During the events, awards were presented for exceptional journalism; an award was received by Assoc. Prof. Rimvydas Valatka of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy.
- On 28–29 October, a two-day conference was held at the Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Lithuania on the 30 years of diplomatic relations between Lithuania and Russia. It was attended by 24 top-level speakers from Lithuania, Russia, Europe and North America. The conference “Can There Be Good Neighbourly Relations?” encompassed topics oriented towards the past, the present, and the future. It was broadcast live in three languages. The conference was organised by the Sakharov Centre of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy.



Faculty of Social Sciences



Study programmes

First cycle studies	Second cycle studies	Fields of third cycle studies
Psychology	School Psychology	Sociology
Social Work	Organisational Psychology	Psychology
Sociology and Anthropology	Social Anthropology	
Society, Culture and Communication (in English)	Social Demographics	
	Social Work	
	Health Psychology	
	Applied Sociology	

Dean (-ė): Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Stelmokienė

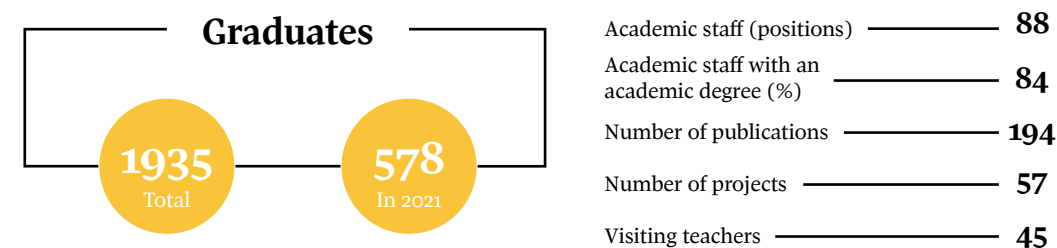
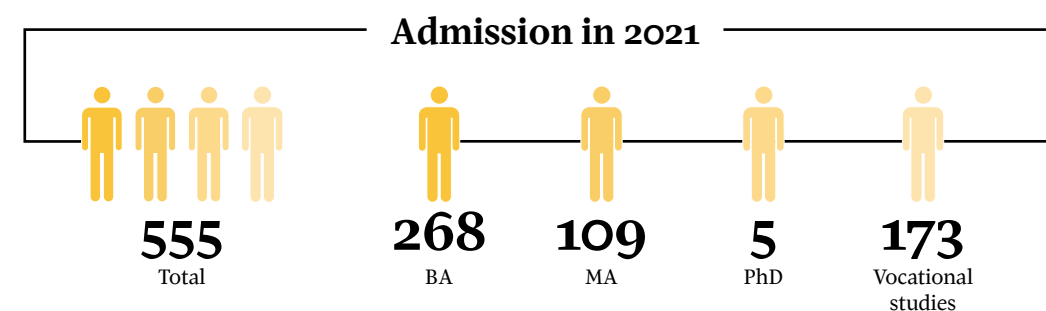
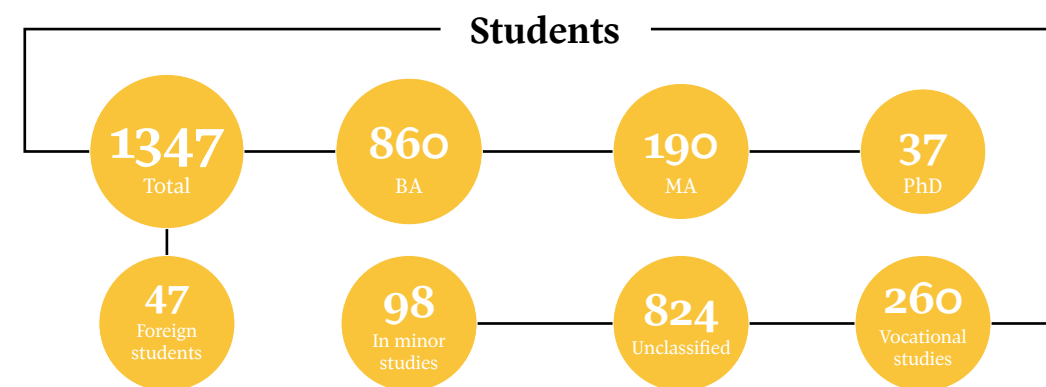
Address: Jonavos g. 66, 44191 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- In April of 2021, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport delegated Assoc. Prof. Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė to the Committee “Culture, Creativity and Inclusive Society” of the European Commission’s Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, European Horizon. In December of 2021, the Research Council of Lithuania delegated Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Stelmokienė as Lithuania’s representative in the European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure. Prof. Aušra Maslauskaitė was elected full member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and invited to become a member of the state progress council. Prof. Natalija Mažeikienė became an editor and author of the international monograph *Learning the Nuclear: Educational Tourism in (Post)Industrial Sites*, Peter Lang Publishing. The Chief Research Fellow Dalia Leinartė is working at the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women for the third term. Prof. Jonas Ruškus is continuing work at the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Assoc. Prof. Kristina Kovalčikienė has started working at the Permanent Commission for the Assessment of Activities of Judges.
- Social Anthropology second cycle study programme graduate Agnieszka Avin’s master’s degree thesis “Imagining ‘lutshaja zhizn’: participation of Vilnius Roma in transnational (im)mobility” was evaluated by the expert commission assembled by the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania as the best master’s degree thesis in 2021 on the topic of national minorities. Health Psychology second cycle study programme graduate Aušra Sirevičiūtė’s master’s degree thesis “The lived male and female experience of unexplained infertility after childbirth: interpretative phenomenological analysis” became one of the main winners of the competition “The Best Qualitative Work in Lithuania 2020” and was awarded for voicing sensitive human experiences. Psychology first cycle study programme graduate Evelina Laurynaitė was elected the president of the Lithuanian Psychology Students’ Association at the extraordinary general meeting of LiPSA on August 20.
- Four new research projects were won: Religion and Gender Equality: “Baltic and Nordic Developments” (head: Prof. Milda Ališauskienė); “The Views on Penalties of Drivers Who had Violated Road Traffic Rules: Justice, Effectiveness, Purpose and their Psychological Premises” (Dr. Rasa Markšaitytė); “Modelling of Professional and Non-Professional Drivers’ Risk Perception, Threat Prediction and Driving Style Interactions: Psychological Perspective” (Dr. Justina Slavinskienė); “Alternative Religiosity in Soviet Lithuania: Changes in Forms of Community” (Eglė Aleknaite).
- After external international assessment, Sociology field studies were awarded the highest, 7-year long, accreditation of the study field. The Psychology first cycle study programme received the highest student number in the studies of this field in Lithuania, while employment of Social Work first cycle graduates is the highest in comparison with graduates of this programme in other universities.
- Under various funding programmes, the faculty was visited by 8 foreign teachers, researchers, practitioners, and 2 third cycle students.
- Employees of the departments of Psychology, Sociology and Social Work organised or contributed to organising 5 international scientific conferences, 7 national scientific events, 5 methodological training events, and 1 methodological conference.
- Seven events for parents were organised at the Parents’ Academy, a discussion forum for parents “(Im) Possible to Learn Remotely?! IDK (I don’t know) or IDC (I don’t care)?”; 15 professional development seminars for teachers were organised; 40 various-type activities were held for school learners; #SocLab competition of scientific-creative projects for 10th-12th grade school learners was organised; more than 60 texts for the press, radio and television interviews, and expert commentaries were prepared on the topics of sociology, psychology and social work; the faculty’s Instagram account as well as podcasts *Reikalingi* and *SMF Podcast #1: Can entertainment become an addiction?* were created and actively updated on relevant topics; cooperation agreements were initiated and signed with 4 organisations.



Education Academy



Study programmes

First cycle studies	Second cycle studies	Vocational studies	Fields of third cycle studies
Pre-school and Pre-primary Pedagogy	Physical Education and Sports	Pedagogy	Educology
Subject Pedagogy	Inclusive Education:		
Pedagogy of Primary Education and Early Foreign Language Teaching	Socioeducational Industries		
Special Educational Support	Music Educology		
Sports Studies	Professional Educology		
	Educational Management (English/Lithuanian)		

Chancellor: Prof. Lina Kaminskienė

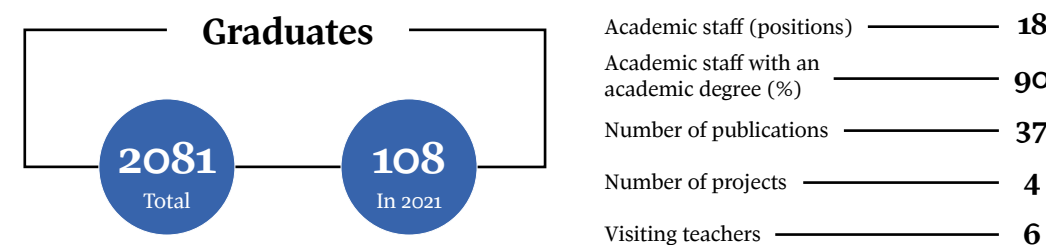
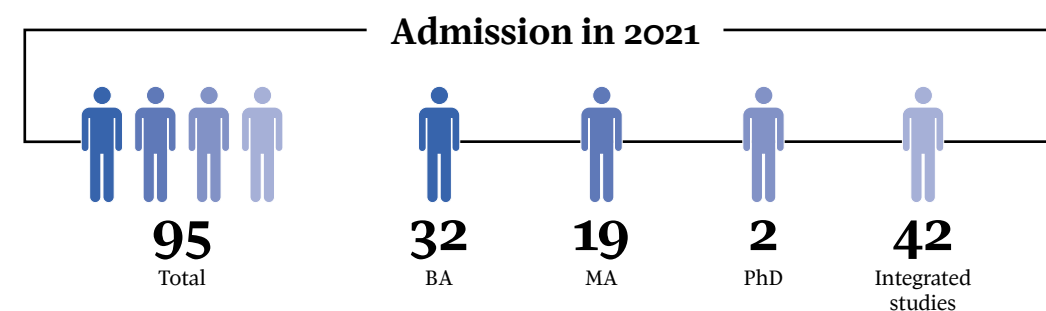
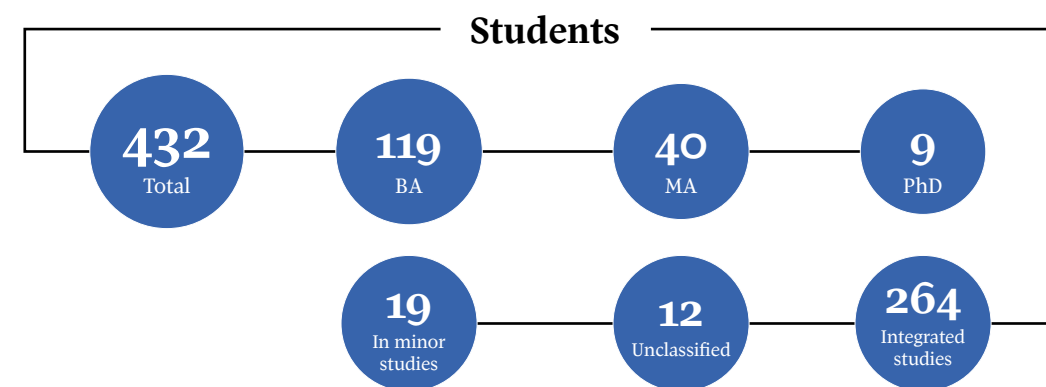
Address: T. Ševčenkos g. 31, 03111 Vilnius | Jonavos g. 66, 44191 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- Vytautas Magnus University became the 50th university in the world conducting the International Baccalaureate (IB) teacher programme and the first university of this kind in Northern and Central Europe.
- The Sports Studies and Physical Education and Sports second cycle study programmes were approved.
- In the competition of “Best Dissertations of 2020” organised by the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers, the 5 best works included the Educology field dissertation “Grounded theory of the informal learning “pendulum”: experience of non-relative foster families” by VMU Education Academy graduate Ramunė Bagdonaitė-Stelmokienė, research supervisor Prof. Vilma Žydzūnaitė.
- At the Presidential Palace, on the occasion of the International Teachers Day, an event, public discussion titled “How to teach and learn”, was organised, which included participation of the President of the Republic of Lithuania, the winners of Meilė Lukšienė Prizes, graduates, and students.
- The Bronius Kviklys Scholarship by the Vydūnas Youth Foundation (Chicago, USA) was awarded to second-year students of VMU Education Academy’s second cycle study programme Inclusive Education: Socioeducational Industries Aistė Bakanauskaitė and Artur Adam Markevič.
- The Lithuanian National Foundation (USA) awarded the Jurgis Mileris Scholarship to third-year student of Vytautas Magnus University’s Education Academy’s second cycle study programme Subject Pedagogy: Lithuanian Language and Culture Pedagogy Amanda Alesiūtė.
- The Lithuanian language and culture teacher’s prize was awarded to Lithuanian Development Officer at Post-Primary Languages Ireland, Lithuanian language teacher, first-year student of VMU Education Academy’s second cycle study programme Education Management Jurgita Urbelienė.
- VMU Education Academy together with the Faculty of Humanities and Baltic Summer University organised the Lithuanian Language and Culture Summer and Winter Courses. The courses took place in person at the VMU Education Academy in Vilnius, they were attended by 160 foreigners from 40 countries of the world.
- VMU Education Academy together with the Faculty of Humanities and Baltic Summer University organised Lithuanian studies; they were attended by 31 teachers of Lithuanian schools abroad.
- Two national COVID-19 needs’ projects were won and successfully implemented: heads Prof. Alvyra Galkienė and Assoc. Prof. Agnė Brandišauskienė.
- At the new premises of the VMU Education Academy (T. Ševčenkos g. 31, Vilnius), kindergarten “Mažųjų akademija” was opened.
- Cooperation is developed with Kaunas District Municipality, providing the conditions for Education Academy’s students to receive an additional scholarship of EUR 200.
- Online event “Moksleivių akademija. Ateities mokytojas” was organised.
- Prof. Airina Volungevičienė, the head of VMU Education Academy’s Innovative Studies Institute, is at the Expert Council of the EdTech Digital Transformation of Education Project.
- A cooperation memorandum was signed with the University of Strathclyde (UK) regarding preparation of a double degree programme (second cycle, Education Management).



Faculty of Law



Dean: Assoc. Prof. Tomas Berkmanas (interim dean until 31 January 2021), Dr. Aušrinė Pasvenskienė (interim dean until 31 August 2021)

Address: Jonavos g. 66, 44191 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- On 29 January 2021, by the ruling of the Judge Council, Assoc. Prof. Paulius Čerka from the Department of Private Law of the Faculty of Law was appointed a member of the Court Mediation Commission.
- In March of 2021, the Faculty of Law became a partner of the Centre for European Company Law (CECL). The faculty's researchers will have the opportunity to contribute to scientific research, discussions, conferences and other activities in the field of company law.
- On 9 March 2021, during "Nepriklausomybės mėnuo", an interactive event dedicated to the commemoration of March 11th organised by "korp!lustitia" and VU Faculty of Law, a team of students of Vytautas Magnus University's Faculty of Law, "Signatarų penketas" – members Gustas Armalis, Matas Baronas, Justina Norinkevičiūtė, Karolis Orlauskas and Marius Bakutis, – won the 1st place.
- On 14 May 2021, by the ruling of the Committee for the Future of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, "On constitutional development of the Republic", Assoc. Prof. Tomas Berkmanas from the Department of Public Law of the Faculty of Law was appointed Constitutional Amendments Member in the Expert Group of the Seimas Committee for the Future.
- In 2021, lecturer of the Faculty of Law's Department of Public Law Dr. Marijus Šalčius participated as an expert in the international research project "Defence Rights in Evidentiary Proceedings" implemented by the Human Rights Monitoring Institute and partners.
- On 1 September 2021, former President of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania Prof. Dainius Žalimas became the Dean of the Faculty of Law.
- On 24 September 2021, the Faculty of Law organised the international conference "The Future of Legal Education". During the conference, discussions focused on issues relevant to legal education, presentations were held by VMU scientists, invited speakers from Tallinn University of Technology (Estonia), University of Oxford (UK), University of Turku (Finland), etc.
- On 25 October 2021, the Constitution Day, the Faculty of Law celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Civil Code. During the conference, presentations were held by the head of the CC Preparation Group Prof. Valentinas Mikelėnas, the group's member Gintautas Bartkus, judge of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania Vytautas Mizaras, judge of the Supreme Court of Lithuania Gediminas Sagatys and scientists of VMU Faculty of Law.
- In 2021, senior research fellow of the Faculty of Law, member of the cluster "Research on the Impact of Globalisation on Law" Dr. Jurgita Malinauskaitė was appointed the head of the Eastern Europe Chapter (focus Baltics) of the Academic Society for Competition Law (ASCOLA).
- In October and December of 2021, as an independent expert, the Dean of the Faculty of Law Prof. Dainius Žalimas participated in the 128th and 129th sessions of the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission).
- In 2021, the Faculty of Law submitted 5 scientific expert opinions: to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Lithuania, the Chancellery of the Republic of Lithuania, the Seimas Committee on Human Rights, the Chief Official Ethics Commission etc.
- In 2021, the scientists of the Faculty of Law participated actively in external social activities: read public lectures, participated in radio and television shows, spoke in the media on various subjects relevant to the public.
- In 2021, the Legal Clinic continued its activities. 10 (ten) final-year students of the Faculty of Law took part in the clinic's activities in 2021. Due to the continuing COVID-19 virus pandemic, the majority of legal consultations were held remotely. This model of work activity encouraged students to learn to effectively organise their time at work, develop skills while preparing legal consultations in writing, and to independently communicate with interested parties. In total, over 120 consultations were provided in 2021.



Agriculture Academy



Students

1471
Total

750
BA

648
MA

73
PhD

62
Foreign students

3
In minor studies

119
Unclassified

Admission in 2021



437
Total



178
BA



247
MA



12
PhD

Graduates

2152
Total

547
In 2021

Academic staff (positions) **175**

Academic staff with an academic degree (%) **88**

Number of publications **412**

Number of projects **71**

Visiting teachers **39**

Study programmes

First cycle studies

Agronomy
Accounting and Finance
Biological Systems Management
Landscape Design
Logistics and Commerce
Food Quality and Safety
Forestry
Applied Ecology
Tourism Industries
Smart Engineering
Water and Land Engineering
Agricultural Mechanical Engineering

Second cycle studies

Agroecosystems
Agronomy
Agri-food Business Management (in English)
Accounting and Finance
Quality and Safety of Plant Food Raw Materials
Hydraulic Engineering
Rural Development Administration
Wildlife Resources and Management
Forestry
Applied Ecology
Transport Machinery Engineering
Sustainable Energy
Business Logistics
Agricultural Economics
Agricultural Engineering and Management
Agricultural Mechanical Engineering
Agricultural Business Management
Land Management

Fields of third cycle studies

Agronomy
Environmental Engineering
Economics
Forestry
Mechanical Engineering
Transport Engineering Management

Chancellor: Prof. Astrida Miceikienė

Address: Studentų g. 11, Akademija, 53361 Kauno r.

Faculty of Agronomy

Key events of 2021

- The former three institutes were reorganised into two departments: the Department of Plant Biology and Food Sciences and the Department of Agroecosystems and Soil Sciences.
- Fifteen cooperation agreements with agribusiness partners were initiated.
- Double diploma agreement of the first and second cycle study programme Agronomy was signed with the Tashkent State Agrarian University.
- Agriculture Academy graduates Ieva and Arnas Radzevičiai allocated financial support of EUR 5,000 to the faculty's students by establishing two nominal scholarships.
- UAB "Nando" established four nominal scholarships of EUR 500 to the faculty's students.
- On 16 September 2021, during the 34th gathering of LUA, Prof. Aušra Blinstrubienė, Assoc. Prof. S. Raudonis, Assoc. Prof. Rita Pupalienė were granted the names of agronomists who contributed significantly to Lithuania.
- On 16 September 2021, during the 34th gathering of LUA, Prof. V. Bogužis and Assoc. Prof. E. Klimas were granted the titles of the Honorary Members of the Lithuanian Union of Agronomists.
- Assoc. Prof. A. Žickis, R. Pilkauskas, lecturers M. Pilkauskas and R. Žickytė were awarded the second place in the competition of ideas for the preparation of the project of the Square next to the J. Basanavičiaus and S. Dariaus ir S. Girėno streets in the town of Utena.
- Four scientific-practical conferences were organised: "Herbology 2021: Ecology and Management of Weeds"; "Sugar Beets in Lithuania: the Past, the Present and Future Prospects"; "The Possibilities of Restoration of Impoverished and Eroded Soils' Sustainability in Plant Farms"; "The Potato Selection in Lithuania: the Past, the Future, and Future Prospects"; students' scientific conference "The Young Scientist 2021".
- A project of the Research Council of Lithuania under the measure "09.3.3-LMT-K-712 Development of Scientific Competence of Scientists, Other Researchers and Students through Practical Scientific Activity", was won. The intern: student of first-cycle study programme Agronomy U. Ginelevičius; supervisor: Prof. K. Romanekas.
- Eight researchers' visits were organised to foreign countries' (Italy, Spain, Latvia, Turkey) universities. Five foreign scientists from Poland, Turkey, and France held lectures for the faculty's students. Three foreign scientists from Poland and Turkey did internships.
- Under the Erasmus+ exchange programme, one second-cycle graduate of the faculty and two first-cycle students went to the University of Huelva and the Czech University of Life Sciences Prague. Two foreign students from Italy and France did internships.
- Over 60 agricultural company representatives and specialists from offices and institutions held lectures and practical sessions for students, and teachers improved their qualification in the field days, seminars and training sessions organised by these companies and cooperated on research issues.
- The faculty's scientists held lectures and theoretical, creative, practical and experimental activities for 24 school learners of Lithuania's gymnasiums. They provided consultations to two school learners of Kaunas Jesuit Gymnasium while they were preparing maturity papers.
- Three doctoral dissertations in the field of agriculture, the area of agronomy were defended.
- 21 scientists of the faculty actively conducted expert activities in the initiatives of the European Commission and other Central and Eastern European institutions, agencies and alliances.
- Eight scientists were editorial board members, experts or deputy editors-in-chief of 5 foreign scientific journals or scientific journals published jointly with foreign research and/or study institutions. Over 20 teachers and research fellows actively participated in the activities of international organisations.
- Over 230 scientific articles were published, 28 of them were scientific articles in publications that are referenced or have a citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* database. The faculty's researchers conducted 27 project activities (2 of them were international programmes) whose estimated value of the VMU share is EUR 926,100. In 2021, EUR 242,000 were received for the conducted project activities.

Dean: Assoc. Prof. Aida Adamavičienė

Address: Studentų g. 11, Akademija, 53361 Kauno r.

Faculty of Bioeconomy Development

Key events of 2021

- The faculty is the leader in Lithuania in the field of the development of the science and research of bioeconomy.
- The institutes of the Faculty of Bioeconomy Development were reorganised into departments. On the basis of the Institute of Bioeconomy Research, the Department of Applied Economics, Finance and Accounting was formed. The Institute of Business and Rural Development Research was reorganised into the Department of Business and Rural Development Management.
- The most important international research projects that were conducted: "H2020 project Advancing Sustainable Circular Bioeconomy in Central and Eastern European Countries" (VMU activity coordinator: Prof. V. Vitunskienė), Interreg Baltic Sea Region programme's project "Promotion of the Use of the Potential of Bio-mass Value Chains in the Baltic Sea Region" (head: V. Kargytė, VMU representative in the project's management committee: Prof. V. Aleknevičienė), project funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers in 2021–2023 "Nordic-Baltic Cooperation for the Development of Bio- and Circular Economy" (head of the VMU Agriculture Academy's section of the project: V. Kargytė), the European Commission's project for 2021–2029 "Networking Activities in Support of the Common Agricultural Policy", Part 2 "Support for networking activities focusing on specifically targeting innovation and knowledge exchange — EIP-AGRI" (head of the project: Prof. A. Maziliauskas, implemented by: Assoc. Prof. R. Pakeltienė).
- The most significant national research projects: 3 projects commissioned by the Ministry of Agriculture and 2 projects of the European Innovation Partnership.
- International scientific conference in the research field of bioeconomy and rural development was organised: "Sustainable Bioeconomy Development 2021: Adaptation to Climate Change".
- Three doctoral dissertations were defended: A. Nausėdienė's "Assessment of the impact of the nitrogen fertiliser tax on the greenhouse gas emissions" (supervisor: Prof. A. Miceikienė), A. Staugaitis' "Assessment of the impact of derivative speculation on agricultural product prices in global commodity markets" (supervisor: Assoc. Prof. B. Vaznonis), A. Čapienė's "Pro-environmental and prosocial consumer engagement in sustainable consumption" (supervisor: Assoc. Prof. A. Rūtelionė).
- The faculty's scientists together with co-authors have published 33 scientific articles in publications that are referenced and have citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science* and *Scopus* databases.
- Prof. A. Miceikienė became a member of the National Climate Change Committee under the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania; Prof. V. Vitunskienė became a member of the Committee of Agrifood and Bioeconomy under the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists; V. Kargytė became a board member of the Lithuanian Biotechnology Association and a member of the BIOEAST Central and Eastern European Initiative's Bioeconomy Education Thematic Working Group.
- Under the Erasmus+ exchange programme, 9 foreign university lecturers arrived to teach at the university, 1 came to study. Under the project of the Education Exchanges Support Foundation, lectures for students were held by visiting professors I. Pilvere and B. Rivza (Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies) and Prof. D. Gozdovski (Warsaw University of Life Sciences).
- Newly prepared first cycle study programme Bioeconomy Business Management, which is planned to be implemented, was presented for the process of accreditation. Self-analysis reports were prepared for the study fields of business and public administration, preparations were held for the visit of foreign experts. Minor studies' programme Accounting and Finances was improved and adapted for foreign students.
- Double degree agreements were signed with universities of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.
- 102 qualification improvement training sessions, seminars, courses for farmers and regional business and public sector employees were held at the faculty. Qualification was improved by 1,644 persons. Moreover, three training events were organised for the employees of the State Tax Inspectorate: over 600 employees were trained.
- Cooperation agreements were signed with UAB "Hoptrans Holding", UAB "Kesko Senukai Lithuania", UAB "Muita", and UAB "Express Heroes".
- Thanks to the faculty's initiative, VMU became a member of the International Network of Customs Universities.

Dean: Assoc. Prof. Bernardas Vaznonis

Address: Universiteto g. 10, Akademija, 53361 Kauno r.

Faculty of Engineering

Key events of 2021

- After merging the Agriculture Academy's Faculty of Water and Land Management and the Faculty of Agricultural Engineering, the Faculty of Engineering started operating on 1 September 2021. Assoc. Prof. Rolandas Domeika became its dean.
- Assoc. Prof. J. Valčiukienė and Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis became members of the International Advisory Council of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies; Prof. Vida Malienė became a member-expert of the Royal Town Planning Institute (United Kingdom, Ireland), academician Prof. Egidijus Šarauskis became a member of the Committee of Natural and Technical Sciences of the Research Council of Lithuania, Prof. Algirdas Radzevičius and Assoc. Prof. Raimondas Šadzevičius became members of the Sectoral Professional Committee of Mining, Electricity, Gas, Steam Supply and Air Conditioning, Water Supply, Water Treatment, Waste Management and Regeneration of the Research Council of Lithuania; Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis was delegated by the Research Council of Lithuania and the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania as a representative of Lithuania to the EU programme's European Partnership under Horizon Europe WATER4ALL – Water Security for the Planet committee; he also became foreign member of the Kazakh National Agrarian University's (Almaty) Doctoral Dissertations' Defence Council in the field of Water Resources and Water Use.
- Study programmes in the fields of Energy Engineering and Mechanical Engineering were accredited for the maximum period of 7 years.
- Five companies of the Study Cluster of the Field of Mechanical Engineering established scholarships for first-year students; the study cluster was joined by three companies.
- Five international projects were won and started to be implemented whose heads that are responsible for the VMU section are the faculty's scientists. In total, over 50 various projects are being implemented; more than 10 applications have been submitted.
- International scientific-practical conference "Human and Nature Safety 2021" was organised; the faculty also helped organise another 5 international scientific conferences in other countries.
- Two doctoral dissertations were successfully defended: in the field of Technology sciences, area of Environmental Engineering, "Sustainable land use model in territorial planning following the example of Lithuania" (Rimvydas Gaudėšius, supervisor Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis), "Fuel preparation and thermochemical conversion analysis of coarse-energy crops" (Živilė Černiauskienė, supervisor Prof. A. Raila).
- Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis was awarded a commendation by the director of the UNESCO and L'Oréal Foundation programme "For Women in Science" for expert work; lecturer Otilija Miseckaitė was awarded a commendation by the Institute of Energy of Tajikistan; Assoc. Prof. Inga Adamonytė was awarded the 1st place diploma of AKKA 2021; Prof. Eglė Jotautienė was awarded a commendation by the Director of the Lithuanian Standards Board, Assoc. Prof. Raimondas Šadzevičius was awarded a commendation by the Director of KTK "For significant contribution to the preparation of specialists for the construction sector".
- The faculty's teachers and research fellows participated as experts in more than 10 various international assessment commissions, more than 10 international associations and more than 20 scientific journals' editorial boards and scientific committees.
- Meetings were held with the faculty's graduates of the classes of 1961, 1971, 1983, and 1986 as well as the graduates of the 21st class of hydrotechnics. The graduates organised 4 thematic meetings for students and lecturers.
- 14 foreign scientists' visits were organised under the Erasmus+ exchange programme; 12 of the faculty's lecturers and research fellows improved qualification; the faculty's scientists held 9 non-project seminars.
- UAB "GEA Farm Technologies", UAB "SV Technika" donated and installed the "DairyPlan" herd management programme in the Smart Animal Husbandry Laboratory. UAB "Biržų žemtiekimas" updated the machinery in the Herbaceous Forage Preparation Laboratory and constructed a precision agriculture fertiliser for the purposes of studies.

Dean: Assoc. Prof. Rolandas Domeika

Address: Studentų g. 15, Akademija, 53362 Kauno r.

Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology

Key events of 2021

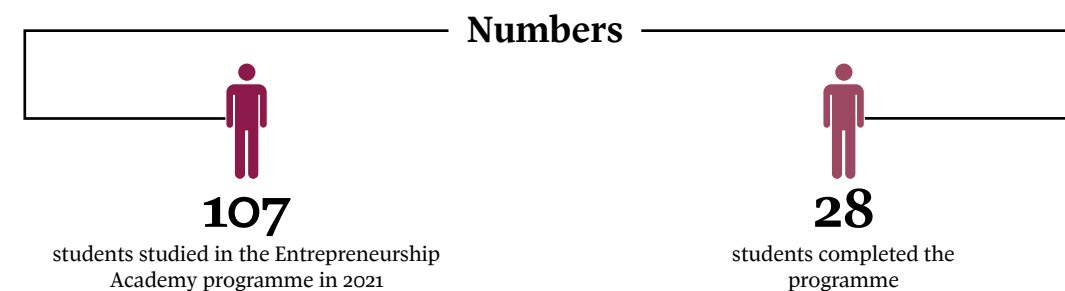
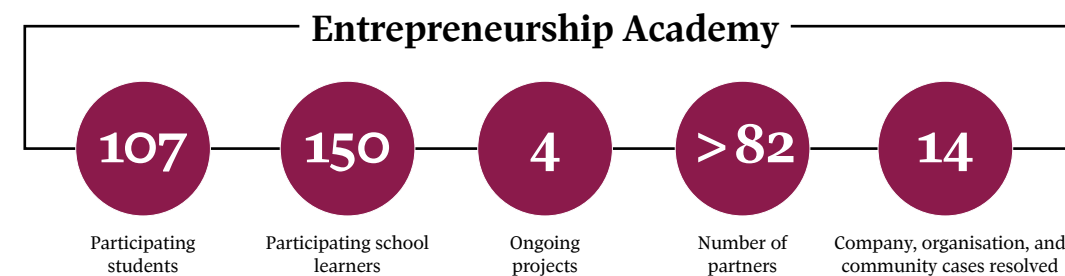
- Dr. M. Manton and E. Makrickas received the award of the Council of the Baltic Sea States for young scientists whose study subject is the Baltic Sea Region.
- Prof. L. Česonienė was awarded for holding the lecture "The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Quality of the Environment" during the 2021 Advanced Materials lecture series. International Association of Advanced Materials.
- Assoc. Prof. of Environment and Ecology A. Gavenauskas was awarded a commendation of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania on the occasion of the 30th anniversary of ecological farming in Lithuania.
- A student Paulina Andriuškevičiūtė of the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology was nominated by VMU as "Mentor of the Year" on the occasion of International Volunteer Day.
- In 2021, a double diploma agreement was signed with the Tashkent State Agrarian University on implementation of the first and second cycle study programmes of Forestry.
- In 2021, the faculty was visited by one teacher of the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences and 4 lecturers of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies.
- Prof. L. Česonienė and Assoc. Prof. D. Šileikienė held lectures at the Polytechnic Institute of Beja (Portugal). Assoc. Prof. A. Dautartė held lectures at the University of Palermo (Italy).
- In 2021, employees of the Institute of Environment and Ecology gave about 60 presentations to farmers and other agricultural businesspeople in the training event "The Basics of Ecological Farming".
- Employees of the Department of Forest Sciences and colleagues from other institutions organised a public series of remote training on forestry commissioned by the State Forest Service.
- The faculty's employees promoted research results in 96 events (TV shows, interviews for the media, lectures, discussions, etc.) on the subjects of forestry, environmental protection, and hunting.
- Joint Lithuanian-Japanese symposium "Preservation of Biodiversity and Use of Natural Resources in the Application of Biotechnologies of Plant-Microorganism Interaction under the Changing Environmental Conditions" was organised.
- International seminar "The Role of Fire in Forest Ecosystems. Controlled Burn as a Nature Management Measure" was organised on 17 March 2021.
- The faculty's scientists became actively involved in the activities of the national agreement regarding forests initiated by the Ministry of Environment.
- The faculty's scientists conducted 36 project activities (including 4 international programmes) whose estimated value of the VMU sections is EUR 3.2 million. For the conducted project activities, EUR 642,600 were received (EUR 199,000 of them were received during implementation of international programme projects, while EUR 15,500 of them were received during implementation of commissions of business entities).
- The faculty's researchers published 54 scientific articles in publications that are referenced and have a citation index in the *Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS)* database.
- Prof. G. Brazaitis is the subject director of the scientific journal *European Journal of Forest Research* (Springer Publishing). Professors G. Brazaitis, E. Petrauskas, V. Marozas, and G. Mozgeris as well as their partners are members of the editorial board of the international scientific journal *Baltic Forestry* published in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. Prof. V. Makarevičienė is a member of the editorial board of the international scientific journal *Biofuels engineering* (publisher: De Gruyter Open). Prof. A. Augustaitis is a member of the editorial board of *Beskydy*, the scientific journal of the Mendel University in Brno; Prof. L. Baležentienė is a member of the IF editorial board of Polish Journal of Environmental Studies; Assoc. Prof. A. Dautartė is a member of the editorial board of Forestry Letters.
- Dr. E. Makrickienė is the deputy coordinator of the working group Research of Forest Policies and Governance in the Baltic and CEE Regions of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO); Prof. A. Augustaitis is a member of this organisation's working group "Impact of Air Pollution and Climate Change on Forest Eco-Systems"; Prof. G. Brazaitis is deputy coordinator of this organisation's working group Forestry and Ungulate Animals.
- Prof. V. Marozas is a member of the International Association for Vegetation Science.
- Prof. D. Danusevičius is a full member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and also serves as the chair of the LAS Division of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences.

Dean: Prof. Edmundas Bartkevičius (interim dean until 31 August 2021), Prof. Vitas Marozas (since 1 September 2021)

Address: Studentų g. 11, Akademija, 53361 Kauno r.

Entrepreneurship Academy

The 33-ECTS-credit minor field study programme “Minded” Entrepreneurship Academy programme for school learners, Minded Academy of Experiences



- Methodologies included**
- EQ-Thinking
 - Design Thinking
 - Experience Design
 - Business model canvas
 - LEGO Serious Play

Activities:

- Changes in “Social Impact” were initiated in 5 towns.
- “Design Thinking” principles were used to solve challenges at UAB “Aconitum” and UAB “ALSO Lietuva” (Xiaomi).
- Personal development programme.
- Joint Start-Up programme with “Junior Achievement Lietuva”, during which seven companies for learning purposes were established.
- Training – “Love for Your Idea”.
- Training – “IDEA LAB: how social ideas are born”.
- Community event “Cooking Slam”.

Projects:

- Project “Creative LAB: encouraging student entrepreneurship and creativity in northern, central, and southern Lithuania” (No. 09.3.1-ESFA-K-731-01-0002) (applicant VMU, partner VMU Centre for Enterprise Practices).
- “School learners’ psychological development and activity programme” (08.4.2-ESFA-K-629-02-0011) (partner VMU Centre for Enterprise Practices).
- Interreg Europe project: “Actions for inducing SME growth and innovation via the ECoC event and legacy” (No. ECoC-SME, No. PG106047) (partner VMU Centre for Enterprise Practices).
- “Lithuanian Regional Youth Active Citizenship Education”, No. K1-O1-PK-D-o88 (partner VMU Centre for Enterprise Practices).

Head: Assoc. Prof. Osvaldas Stripeikis

Address: S. Daukanto g. 28-206, 44246 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

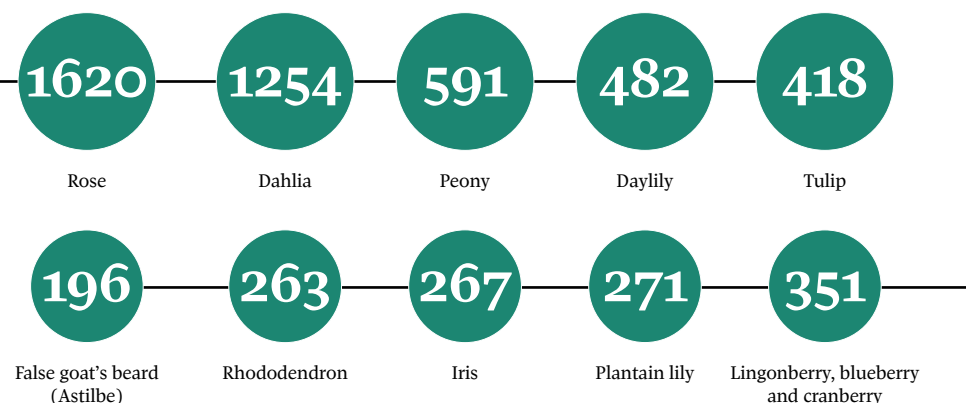
- 63 students studied at the Spring Entrepreneurship Academy, and together with their partners in “Junior Achievement Lietuva” took part in the start-up development programme. Seven companies for learning purposes were established, and the challenge presented by UAB “Aconitum” was solved.
- The top three prizes were won at the start-up competition among institutions of higher education in Lithuania. In the European final at the expo for national start-up companies, Lithuania was represented by *ForFun*, the team making a product for the visually impaired, *Kondigno*.
- Students experienced a personal development programme, led by psychologist Liudas Švipas and psychologist and coach Evelina Savickaitė-Kazlauskė.
- “Business and Bucks: Love for your idea?” was an event dedicated to the development of entrepreneurial competencies, where specialists and business representatives shared their experience of overcoming challenges and learning lessons along the way to creating and cultivating what are now successful businesses.
- In the autumn semester of 2021, 44 students participated in the minor field study programme offered by Entrepreneurship Academy. They implemented social change projects in small Lithuanian cities. In total, 5 social changes were initiated in towns (“Social impact”), and the challenge presented by “ALSO Lietuva” (Xiaomi) was analysed.
- Students usually work in lecture halls, but in this semester they had the opportunity to change the environment and feel the pulse of day-to-day business by working in the UAB “Adeo Web” office at the BLC multifunctional business centre.
- On 10 November, the public online event “IDEA LAB: how are social ideas born?” was held. During the event, speakers Pijus Makarevičius (founder of Furniture1.eu) and Dovydas Kaminskas (mayor of Tauragė District Municipality) shared their personal experiences and challenges.
- On 13 November, the community event “Cooking Slam”, a creative team-building workshop making use of food production as the setting, took place. The main goal of the event was to get acquainted with the members of the Minded community and to test teamwork skills in practice.
- On 2–3 December, the training “Active and Inclusive Methods of Public Citizenship Education” was held in Visaginas for specialists working with young people. During the training, the competencies of specialists were strengthened, and practical methods for developing and activating a sense of public spirit (civic-mindedness) among youth were presented.
- Minded VMU actively worked with school learners. VMU Minded Academy of Experiences was completed, and 40 participants were awarded certificates of completion.



Botanical Garden

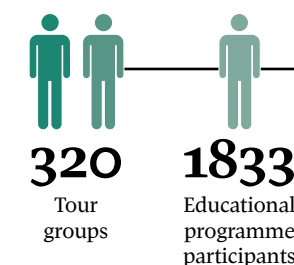


Largest Collections (Number of collection items)



Collection items (total)	15911
Number of publications	10
Rare plant species	97
Plant collection items selected as a national genetic resource	258
Number of projects	2
Volunteers	32

Visitors



Events

Conferences and seminars

Scientific-practical seminar "The dissemination of scientific knowledge about research on and rational use of medicinal plants, to mark the scientific, pedagogical, educational and environmental activities of Jurgis Ambraziejus Pabrėža (1771–1849), the pharmacognost (medicinal plants researcher), botanist, and monk"

Events for the public

"Plant charm day", "Plant flowering week", "Night of plant scents", fair "Lily-of-the-valley blossom" and "Lily-of-the-valley berry", award of the President Valdas Adamkus Prize, photography exhibition "Trees on the way out" by photographer Aleksandras Macijauskas, Pažaislis Music Festival, Music Festival "Summer in Kaunas 2021"

Director: Dr. Nerijus Jurkonis (interim director from 1 July 2020)

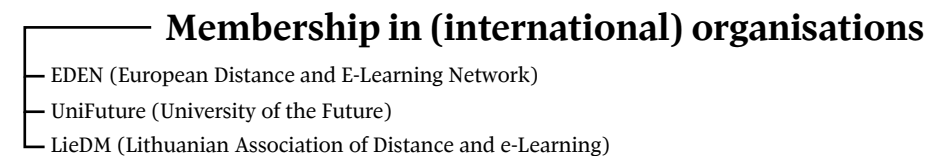
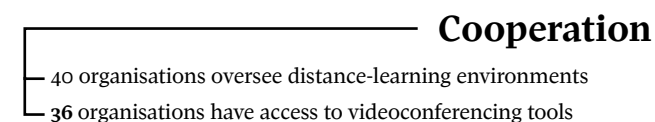
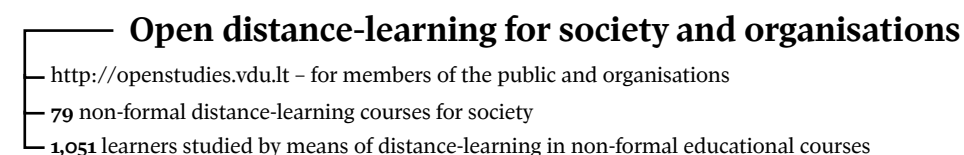
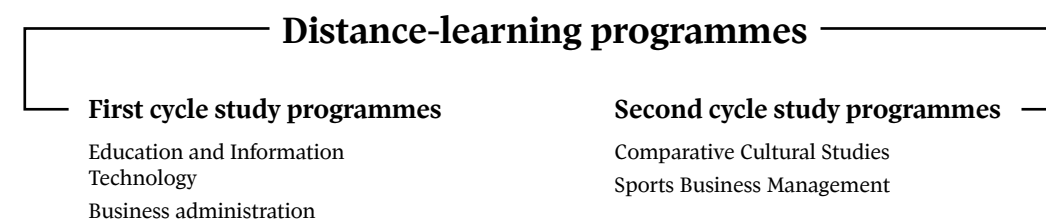
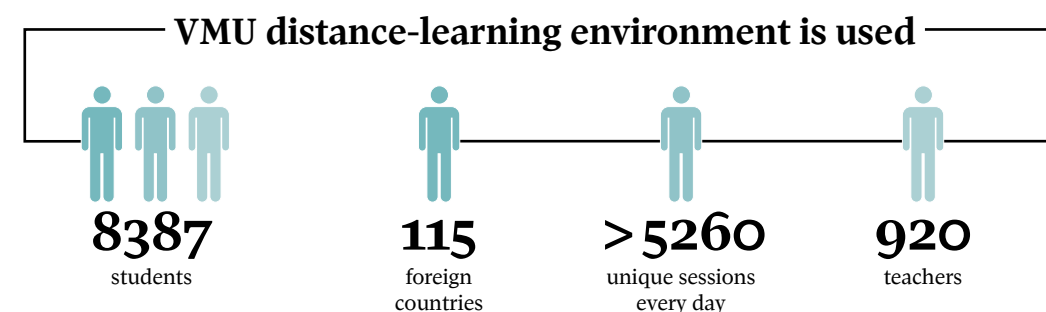
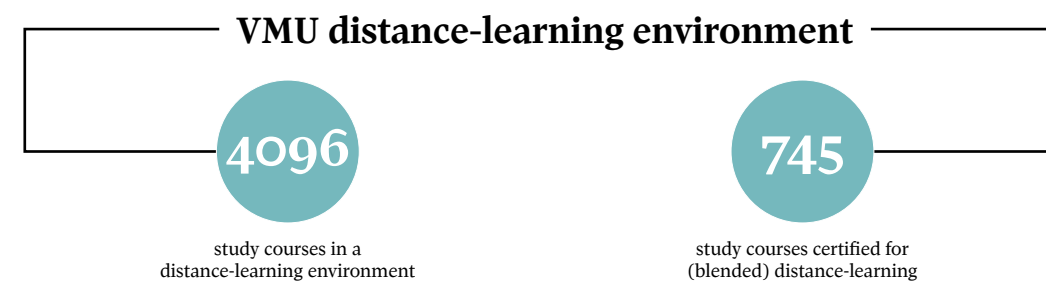
Address: Ž. E. Žilibero g. 6, 46324 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- Completed the projects “Renaturalisation of exploited peatlands and development of technologies for the recovery of plant communities” (project leader Prof. Remigijus Daubaras) and “Development of technology for decontamination of used wooden railway sleepers (railroad ties) by biological methods” (REMTECH) (project leader Prof. Audrius Maruška). Continuing the projects “Development of innovative growing media, using alternative ingredients” (project leader Prof. Remigijus Daubaras) and “Research on the medicinal plant golden root (*Rhodiola rosea*), creating favourable conditions and methods of propagation for this plant” (project leader Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė).
- Poland’s Research Centre for Cultivar Testing tested samples of guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*) and variegated-leaf hardy kiwi (*Actinidia kolomikta*), varieties bred at the Botanical Garden. The Dievind variety of guelder rose was officially recognised (authors: Prof. Remigijus Daubaras and Dr. Laima Česonienė). Samples were taken of six varieties of coral bells (*Heuchera*), six varieties of peonies, two varieties of hair grass (*Deschampsia*), one variety of bee balm (*Monarda*) (all of these by Arūnas Balsevičius), two varieties of geranium (by Indrė Lukšytė), and two varieties of hedgenettle (*Stachys*) (by Arūnas Balsevičius and Indrė Lukšytė), to be submitted for registration.
- Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė was appointed a member of the National Health Council of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania, and served as Acting Chair of the Council from 30 September to 11 November.
- Two international scientific conferences were organised: “People and the protection of nature” (online) and the scientific-practical seminar “The dissemination of scientific knowledge about research on and rational use of medicinal plants, to mark the scientific, pedagogical, educational and environmental activities of Jurgis Ambraziejus Pabrėža (1771–1849), the pharmacognost (medicinal plants researcher), botanist, and monk”.
- The staff of the Botanical Garden published 22 scientific publications in Lithuanian and foreign scientific journals.
- Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė and Erika Šeinauskienė, together with colleagues at Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, published an instructional book, “Introduction, cultivation and preservation of medicinal plants, preparation and therapeutic effect of medicinal plant raw materials”.
- Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius and Ričardas Narijauskas visited the M.M. Hryshko National Botanical Garden in Kyiv (Ukraine), the National Botanical Garden of Georgia in Tbilisi and the Batumi Botanical Garden (Georgia), the Botanical Garden of the University of Zagreb (Croatia) and the Botanical Garden of the University of Naples Federico II (Italy). Dr. Nerijus Jurkonis visited the Stavanger Botanical Garden and the Rogaland Arboretum (Norway). Vesta Aleknavičiūtė visited the Gothenburg Botanical Garden (Sweden). Renata Čanovienė and Loreta Buknienė visited the University of Warsaw Botanic Garden and the Botanic Garden of the Jagiellonian University in Kraków (Poland).
- The well-known Estonian flower-grower Marika Vartla visited the Botanical Garden, giving the Garden a collection of Estonian ornamental plant varieties. Scientists from Latvian, Polish, Turkish and German scientific institutions also visited the Garden. In cooperation with the Polish Institute, the memory of the late Polish composer Krzysztof Penderecki was solemnly celebrated and an oak tree named in his honour was planted.
- The VMU Botanical Garden participated in plant seed exchanges with 405 botanical gardens, arboreta and other scientific institutions from all over the world.
- 189 lessons were held, with a total of 3,543 school learners taking part. Of these, 51 lessons were carried out online due to the COVID-19 pandemic. During the summer holidays, three in-person summer camps (83 school learners in total) were organised. There were 27 lessons making use of the national Cultural Passport programme, in which 591 school learners participated.
- 32 volunteers from Lithuania worked at the VMU Botanical Garden, and 44 school learners took part in social-civic activity lessons.
- 22 new plant exhibitions were installed, and five exhibitions were reconstructed and renewed. Most of the exhibitions and collections were moved to raised beds, to simplify and facilitate plant care. Permanent long-term labels were developed for many plants grown in the exhibitions. There are capillary- and fog-watering systems in the pomological and medicinal plant collections. Repairs of the water-pumping station, drainage and watering wells were carried out. To facilitate garden educational activities and for the convenience of visitors, a temporary structure (cupola) was built, a sewage line was installed, the overhead power line was dismantled and switching works for the electric cable lines were carried out.
- Heritage preservation works were completed at the Aukštoji Freda manor house: restoration of facades and socle plaster, window frames, doors, metalwork, staircases, terraces, balconies, and other protected elements, and other repair works.
- Renovation works at the Science building (Vilties g. 6A) were carried out (replacement of windows, roof repairs, interior layout rearrangement, refurbishment of engineering systems, and so on), the old fence was replaced by a new one (336 m), and gate automation, access control and entrance lighting were installed.



Innovative Studies Institute



Number of projects ————— 8

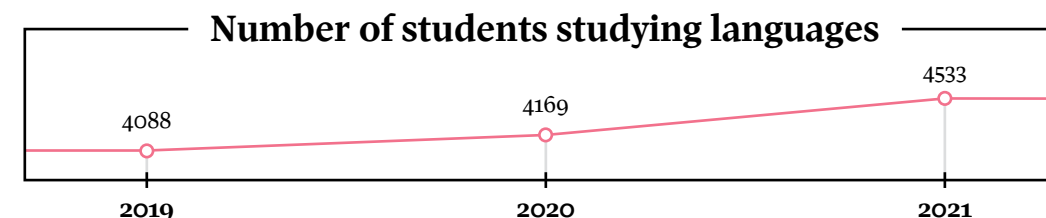
Director: Prof. Airina Volungevičienė
Address: V. Putvinskio g. 23, 44243 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

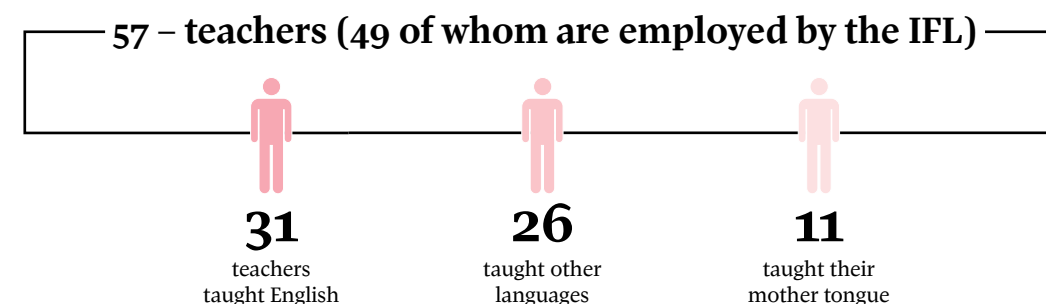
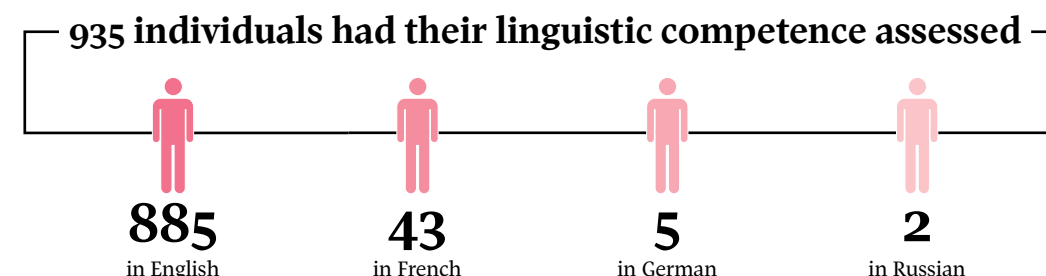
- The VMU Education Academy's Innovative Studies Institute is implementing the European University Association project "DIGI – HE – a strategic tool for digitization of European institutions of higher education", representing not only VMU, but also higher education in the European Distance and E-Learning Network. A study entitled "Developing a high performance digital education ecosystem: Institutional self-assessment instruments" (authors: *Airina Volungevičienė, VMU; Mark Brown, DCU; Rasa Greenspon, VMU; Michael Gaebel, EUA; Alison Morrisroe, EUA*). This study was presented in a series of EUA seminars for all EU and cooperation countries and institutions of higher education. <https://eua.eu/resources/publications/953:developing-a-high-performance-digital-education-ecosystem.html>
- The Innovative Studies Institute continued the activities of the working group of experts on the strategy for digitalisation of the University's academic activities, established by order of the Rector of VMU (group leader Prof. Airina Volungevičienė), assessing the challenges and best practices regarding digitisation of study in the academic subdivisions. At the EUA seminar on 19 October, the chairs of the sub-committees of the working group (Prof. Rūta Petrauskaitė, Prof. Lina Kaminskienė, Assoc. Prof. Laimutė Anglickienė, Prof. Margarita Teresevičienė, Konstantinas Kuržėvas, Aistė Žemaitytė) presented the results of an analysis by the sub-committees of SWOT at VMU according to the model of a digitally competent organisation.
- As part of the project "ECCOE – European Credit Clearinghouse for Opening up Education" (No. 2020-1-FR01-KA203-062951), which aims to increase mobility between European institutions of higher education through the introduction of digital micro-credentials, researchers from the VMU Education Academy's Innovative Studies Institute prepared and presented a prototype of microcredentials to an international network of experts at an open roundtable discussion.
- Advanced assessment tools allowing lecturers to evaluate a task presented by learners according to specific assessment criteria was developed in the VMU distance-learning environment Moodle.
- The Institute of Innovative Studies submitted four project applications. Funding was awarded to three new projects (the Research Council of Lithuania SMART project "Microcredentials" (contract No. 01.2.2-LMT-K-718-05-0023) and two Erasmus+ projects), and one project (H2020 programme) is being evaluated.
- The Innovative Studies Institute carried out eight projects, published one scientific study, one textbook (in two languages) and one academic article.



Institute of Foreign Languages



Total number of students, school learners and other attendees	4703	Translated pages	1535
VMU employees learned English in intensive courses for staff	432	Hours of oral translation	83
School learners learned languages through non-formal education	79	Visiting teachers	1
VMU employees learned in language-study groups together with students	29	Researchers	3
Attendees from society learned in language-study groups together with students	62	Number of publications	15
		Number of projects	6
		5 English and 1 other language course received certification of Virtuality Level III	



Availability of 30 languages

Arabic,	German,	Japanese,	Portuguese,
Chinese,	Ancient Greek,	Kyrgyz,	Russian,
Danish,	Biblical Greek,	Korean,	Spanish,
English,	Modern Greek,	Latin,	Swedish,
Estonian,	Biblical Hebrew,	Latvian,	Turkish,
Finnish,	Modern Hebrew,	Lithuanian Sign,	Ukrainian
French,	Old Icelandic,	Norwegian,	
Georgian,	Italian,	Polish,	

Director: Dr. Teresė Ringailienė

Address: Gedimino g. 44, 44240 Kaunas

Key events of 2021

- On 20 April, a three-week anniversary festival of Spanish culture, “Primavera en español”, began, inviting participants to meetings, lectures and creative workshops.
- On 24 September, the Institute organised and celebrated the European Day of Languages together with six partners of the Transform4Europe Alliance for the first time. More than 400 participants in the event attended presentations by representatives of international companies and organisations, learned about intercultural and multilingual communication and its importance, the need for languages in the labour market, got acquainted with the languages of the Transform4Europe Alliance (Bulgarian, Catalan, Estonian, German, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, Spanish), and participated in interactive multilingual tasks.
- The application for the Erasmus+ project “APATCHE: Adding plurilingual approaches to language teacher competencies in higher education” was submitted and approved, contract No. 2021-1-LT01-KA220-HED-000030285. The aim of this project is to complement the competencies of language teachers in institutions of higher education with methods enabling and developing multilingualism. Partners include universities in Antwerp (Belgium), Algarve (Portugal), Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (Italy) and Warsaw (Poland). The coordinator is the VMU Institute of Foreign Languages. Duration of the project: 2021–2023.
- The Institute participates in six projects: 3K*3M (culture – art – creativity * music – modules – materials), LISTiac (Linguistically Sensitive Teaching in All Classrooms), MiLLaT (Mediation in Language Learning and Teaching), Strengthening Language Training in the Border Area, EuLe: European Biographies of Learning and Living / European Life-Long Learning. The Institute also participated as a social partner in the Language Teachers Association of Lithuania project Quality in Language Learning (QUILL), coordinated by the Polytechnic Institute of Bragança (Portugal).
- The 18th and 19th editions of the journal Sustainable Multilingualism, included in the Scopus database, were published; 22 scientific articles were published in Lithuanian, English, and German.
- On April 29, the first language conference for students, “Let’s Improve Together”, was organised by the Institute. 26 students delivered presentations in foreign languages in seven sections. The plenary session was attended by 182 participants, and student presentations were attended by 592 participants.
- On the 20th anniversary of the European Day of Languages, in September, the Institute organised a video contest for students and school learners, “I, the Pandemic, and Multilingualism”.
- In collaboration with the Centre for Cultures of Various Nations, Institute teachers and international students took part in the cultural festival “Cultures Garden 2021” on 18 September, in which participants presented the Danish, Bosnian, Spanish, Hindi, Georgian, and Arabic languages to the public in Kaunas.
- From October to December, a weekly chat club in German, SprichDeutsch!, was held for all who speak at least a bit of German and who want to remember or communicate in the language.
- From October to December, there was a series of events, “Language tasting”, aiming to introduce and promote different languages and cultures. The Ukrainian, Czech, French, Georgian, Albanian, Hebrew, Danish, and Arabic languages were “tasted”.
- During Alumni Week, the Institute invited alumni to join online lectures in English (B2), Academic English (C1), Spanish (A1), German (A1, A2), Norwegian (A1) and Lithuanian Sign (A1).
- In November, a series of online seminars for language educators, “Innovative Teaching/Learning Methods”, was organised. A total of 378 participants attended four seminars.
- As a member of the Language Teachers Association of Lithuania, the Institute contributed to the successful application of the project “Improvement of communication skills of school learners in their final year of secondary school in a foreign language in preparation for the state exam in that foreign language”.
- Institute lecturers conducted semester-long informal language classes for school learners (79), gave lectures to school learners of various gymnasiums and progymnasiums, and to gifted students in Kaunas.
- Institute lecturers conducted English-language training for Ugnė Karvelis Gymnasium teachers and German-language training for S. Darius and S. Girėnas Gymnasium teachers.
- Online events were held to promote multilingualism (participants included Prof. Liudas Mažylis MEP, polyglot and VMU graduate Julija Vasilenko-Maskvytė, and international students).



Business and Social Partnership Centre

Exhibitions, events for the public – 2:

- “What you sow... 2021” – one of the largest international agricultural exhibitions in the Baltic region
- “Inno panorama 2021” – exhibition of agricultural innovation

Information about exhibitors, visitors, events, sponsors in 2021

	“What you sow...2021”	“Inno panorama 2021”
Number of companies participating in the exhibition	116	43
Number of visitors to the exhibition	50000	15000
Number of educational program events	37	32
Number of visitors to educational programmes (seminars/conferences)	474	107
Number of companies sponsoring the exhibition	7	1

At the University’s exhibition pavilions, in cooperation with partners (International Association of Motor Sports Veterans, Kaunas Centre for Canine Training Methodology, Lithuanian Cynological Amateur Union, International Association of Felinologists, AB “East West agro”, UAB “Anderus”), **11 events were organised.**

Projects and training, upskilling services, participants, funds received



Development of innovative activities, cooperation with agricultural business leaders in the cluster “Green Intelligence”

- Projects of the newly-established cluster “Green Intelligence” – 2
- Carrying out innovative activities in the cluster “Green Intelligence”, cooperation takes place with six agricultural business leaders – AB “Linac agro”, UAB “Timac agro LT”, UAB “Bioenergy LT”, UAB “Scandagra”, UAB “Biodinamika” (a demonstration field project for sustainable and ecological farming), UAB “DOJUS agro” (the project Public Institution “Mokomasis ūkis”).

Business and Social Partnership Centre cooperation with Local Area Groups (LAGs), other organisations in the regions

- Intensive cooperation in organising events for the public in the regions takes place together with long-term partners of the VMU Agriculture Academy: Pasvalys District LAG, Panevėžys District LAG, Vilnius District LAG, Alytus District LAG, Druskininkai LAG, Dzūkija Rural Development Partners Association (Dzūkija LAG), Varėna Regional LAG, Sūduva LAG, Vilkauskis Regional LAG, Tauragė District LAG, LAG “Nemunas”, LAG “Pagėgių kraštas”, Rokiškis District Farmers Union, Ukmergė District department of agriculture and rural development.

Director: Dr. Virginijus Venskutonis

Address: Universiteto 8A, Akademija, 53361 Kauno r.

Key events of 2021

- Since 1 September, the Agricultural Science and Technology Park has been reorganised into the Business and Social Partnership Centre (BSPC), consisting of three units. The Field Testing Unit, which supervises VMU property in Kėdainiai District, has been joined to the BSPC.
- In 2021, the process of establishing the cluster “Green Intelligence” was carried out, and the documents to establish the cluster were prepared and approved. A cluster logo was created, and a web page and a Facebook profile were created to publicise the cluster’s activities.
- On 9 June, the cluster “Green Intelligence” began to operate, joining together six VMU Agriculture Academy subdivisions: Agroecology Centre, Arboretum, Testing Station, Pomological Garden, BSPC, and Public Institution “ASU Mokomasis ūkis”.
- The cluster’s first two projects have been implemented: a QR code guide operates at the Testing Station and at the Arboretum. The guide helps visitors to get acquainted with the experiments of the Testing Station and their results as well as with the unique collection of woody plants at the Arboretum.
- As part of the development of innovative cluster activities, a demonstration field for sustainable and ecological farming is being developed, using resources from the members of the cluster, Public Institution “ASU Mokomasis ūkis” and the Testing Station. For that purpose, five protocols of intent for long-term participation in the project were signed with leading agribusiness companies (AB “Linās agro”, UAB “Timac agro LT”, UAB “Bioenergy LT”, UAB “Scandagra”, UAB “Biodinamika”). Demonstration testing is planned for an area of about 12 hectares. Cooperation is taking place with UAB “DOJUS agro” for preparing the project Public Institution “Mokomasis ūkis”.
- On 26–28 August, the exhibition “Inno panorama 2021” was organised together with Public Institution “Kaimo verslo ir rinkų plėtros agentūra” (Rural Business and Market Development Agency). 43 companies participated in the exhibition in-person and online, 15,000 participants visited, and 32 educational events were organised. During the exhibition, the conference “Decisions for Regional Development. Best practices and opportunities for RDP”. The main sponsor of the exhibition was UAB “Dotnuva Baltic”.
- On 23–25 September, the 25th anniversary of the agricultural exhibition “What you sow...” was held. Ten of the most innovative exhibits were awarded medals and diplomas. The exhibition was attended by 116 innovative companies and about 100 small businesses producing exceptional products, 50,000 participants visited, and there were 37 educational events with 474 attendees. The main sponsor was UAB “Dotnuva Baltic”.
- The project “Implementation of communication measures promoting greater involvement in the RDP and contributing to a more effective application of the RDP for the development of rural areas and the development of the bioeconomy” was implemented. There were 10 training sessions attended by 320 people. The project manager was Prof. Astrida Miceikienė.
- The project “Improvement of accounting, financial and tax competencies to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of agricultural business entities” was carried out under the activity area “Supporting vocational training and skills” of the measure “Knowledge transfer and information activities” of the Lithuanian Rural Development Programme 2014–2020. 102 trainings were carried out; 1,644 people were trained. The project manager was Deimena Montvydaitė.
- Part of the activities of the Lithuanian Rural Network (RNN) projects “Implementation of communication measures promoting the effective application of RDP to innovation in rural areas, development of local markets and sustainable bioeconomy solutions”, “Implementation of communication measures to promote greater involvement in the RDP and contribute to the more effective application of the RDP for rural development and bioeconomy development” were carried out in cooperation with the Faculty of Bioeconomy Development of the Agriculture Academy. The project leader is Prof. Astrida Miceikienė.
- Two international Erasmus+ projects were won and launched: “Digital Media and Technology in Higher Education and Training”, PRUDMET; “Cooperation Partnerships in Vocational Education and Training”, KA220-VET. The project leader for both of them is Dr. Aistė Čapienė.
- The application for the project “Research on the development of a functional model of agricultural knowledge and the innovation system in Lithuania” received funding under the Research and Development Programme for Agriculture, Food and Fisheries 2015–2022. The partners are VMU, LUHS Veterinary Academy, Lithuanian Agriculture Advisory Service, and Lithuanian Agriculture and Forestry Sciences Centre. The project leader is Assoc. Prof. Rasa Pakeltienė.
- In accordance with the tasks of the Erasmus+ project “Joint Master’s Curriculum in Rural Community Development” (2020-1-EE01-KA203-077886), the project is developing a continuous training programme for rural community leaders, making use of the MOOC distance-learning tool. The project leader is Assoc. Prof. Rasa Pakeltienė.





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