

Vytautas Magnus
University
in 2024



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VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY



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Rector's Foreword

For Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), 2024 was a year in which we, as a community, demonstrated our strength and our ability to adapt to changes in the world, while retaining our uniqueness. This year was special due to outstanding achievements, which consolidated our University's position not only at the national level but also internationally. These accomplishments also proved that the *Artes Liberales* model is our identity, guiding us toward the future and shaping our perspectives.

In 2024, we celebrated the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of VMU and the concept of *Artes Liberales* in Lithuania. It was a unique opportunity to reflect on everything we had achieved and to celebrate the contributions of our community members to this remarkable journey. We are part of the University that has been a space of freedom and innovation since its re-establishment—a place where different generations, ideas, and experiences come together, and where everyone finds their own voice, place, and calling.

On the occasion of the birthday of the re-established VMU on 26 April, we invited researchers from the closest VMU partners, *Artes Liberales* universities in the USA, Hong Kong and Taiwan, to the international academic forum “The Idea of University in the Era of Transformations: What Role Is There for Liberal Arts Education?” For the second time, we organised the international forum “The Idea of Europe” to mark the 20th anniversary of Lithuania's membership in the European Union. In the Forum discussions, the President of the Republic of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda and the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda shared their insights on the successful path of Eurointegration taken by both countries, the current geopolitical threats, and support for war-torn Ukraine.

To celebrate this anniversary, we also organised a unique event—“VMU Connections”—which will undoubtedly become a tradition. This event brought together hundreds of participants from various academic, business, and cultural fields. This event served as a platform for our University students and teachers, school students, and representatives of organisations from all over Lithuania to meet and share knowledge and professional opportunities. VMU Connections is not only a place for meetings and discussions, but also a symbol of our ambition to build closer relationships between the academic community, business, and society.

One of the most significant achievements of VMU in 2024 was undoubtedly taking over the presidency of the Transform4Europe (T4EU) alliance. VMU will lead this alliance of eleven European universities until November 2025. The aim of the alliance is to create common structures, programmes, research and innovation platforms, and, most importantly, to strengthen the future vision, identity, and collaboration of the T4EU. The beginning of VMU presidency coincided with the opening of the new premises of the T4EU alliance in VMU Central Building (S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas). These spaces will become an important hub for initiative activities, discussions, and ideas, open to the whole University community. They will offer community members a platform to create, develop professionally, and achieve shared goals.

The year 2024 was a milestone in our collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). At the end of the year, we signed a consortium agreement for the MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI) Programme for Lithuania and became its coordinator. This would not have happened without VMU visiting teachers, MIT professors Nomeda and Gediminas Urbonas, who were the main initiators of this collaboration. For Lithuania to have such an open partnership with one of the best universities in the world, which is ranked first in the QS World University Ranking, is truly a unique opportunity and a great honour.

Last year, we not only established significant international partnerships but also received wide international recognition for our successful results in various areas, particularly in the areas of internationalisation, research excellence, and the organisation of studies. In the latest QS European University Rankings, VMU once again achieved success, moving up from 284th to 267th place in the overall ranking and from 105th to 99th place in Northern Europe. In total, 685 higher education institutions in Europe were assessed in the ranking.

For the second year in a row, VMU remained among the leaders in the ranking of study fields in the magazine "Reitingai", taking the second place in Lithuania in terms of the number of fields of first cycle studies. VMU ranked first in ten study fields in this cycle of studies. VMU secured third place in the country in terms of leadership in second cycle studies, ranking first in eleven study fields.

Our achievements in sport were no less important. VMU became a prominent leader in student sports, both in Lithuania and across Europe. We are particularly proud of our basketball team's achievements: in the 2024 World University 3x3 Basketball Championship, VMU men's trio became world champions. This is excellent proof that the investments VMU made in sports infrastructure, sports facilities of the highest standards, and student sports are successful and yield outstanding results.

In 2024, the University continued its activities in the Centre of Ukraine in Vilnius, which was visited by the President of Ukraine, Honorary Doctor of VMU Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 10 January. The Centre of Ukraine has become an important platform for cultural diplomacy in Lithuania, a hub for cultural exchange, and a centre for the development of education and research, helping Ukraine integrate into the European education system. One such event that has become a tradition is the Youth Think Tank. This initiative, supported by the British Council, helps to bring together Ukrainian young people studying in different educational institutions in Lithuania and engage them in meaningful discussions. The Youth Think Tank initiative provides an opportunity for young people from Ukraine and Lithuania to meet directly with high-level officials and experts from various fields, hear about their experiences first-hand, ask questions and exchange ideas.

All these events clearly show that Vytautas Magnus University continues to strive to be a leader not only in academic achievements, but also in social responsibility, community engagement, and internationalisation. The year 2024 revealed the resourcefulness, creativity, and ability of our community to come together as a force that drives change and innovation. We are fortunate to have the opportunity to study, work, and live together in harmony in VMU community. Our fellowship strengthens and broadens our world view, enriches academic discourse, and creates a dynamic cultural exchange.

VMU Rector

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "prof. Juozas Augutis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the name.

Vytautas Magnus University: cohesive, creative, community-minded

Vytautas Magnus University Annual Report for 2023 has been prepared in accordance with VMU Strategic Plan for 2021–2027.

Vision

We are one of the strongest, wide-ranging universities in the Baltic region, fostering the principles of *artes liberales*, bringing together a community to build the future of Lithuania and Europe.

Mission

To be the community institution of science, arts, and studies which continues the mission of the University of Lithuania, established in Kaunas in 1922, creating liberal learning conditions for an individual, developing partnerships and taking an active part in the life of Lithuania to advance its future and contribute to the global cultural and academic development.

Values

Personal and Academic Freedom, Democracy, Openness, Responsibility, Creativity, Sense of Community, 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:

- community in harmony and consolidation;
- international research University;
- “studies 360”;
- integrity of self-governance and responsibility;
- University impact on societal development.

Founder

The founder of the University is the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania. Pursuant to Paragraph 3 of the Resolution No. 1832 of 22 December 2010 of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the investment of State assets, the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania has been 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 2024 was EUR 24,277,900 (EUR 24,277,900 as of 31 December 2023).

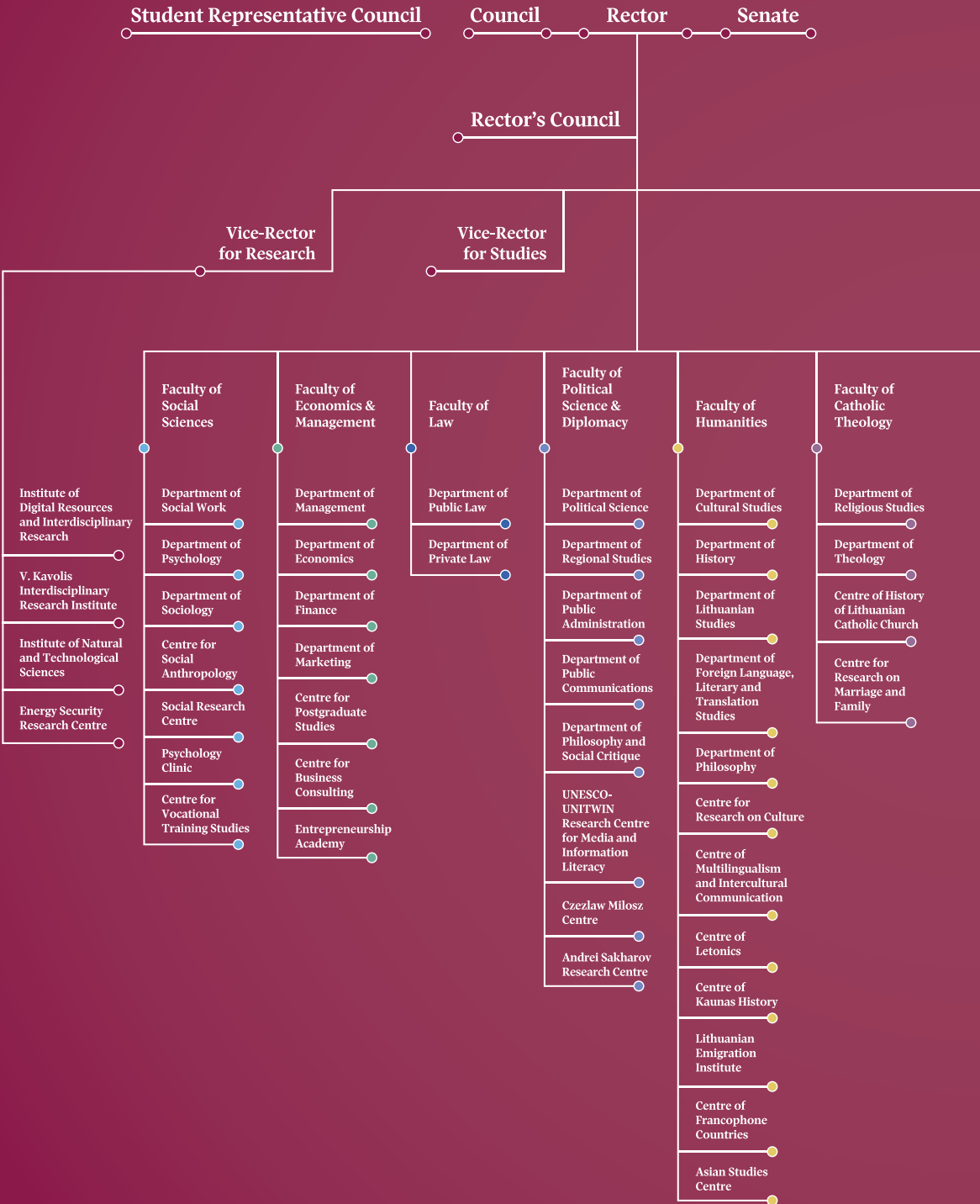
Most important changes in the University management and structure in 2024

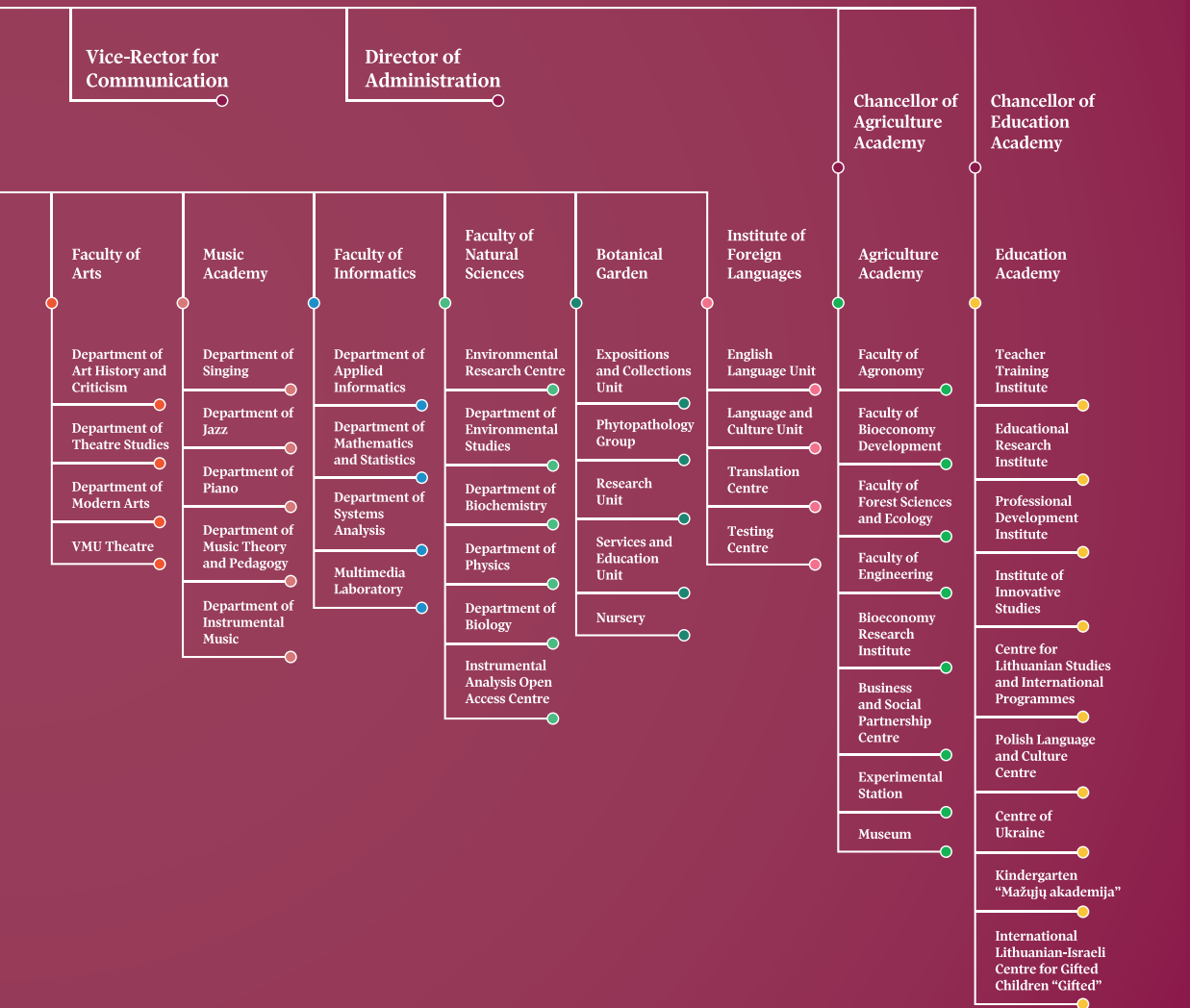
In accordance with the decisions of VMU Senate and Council:

- the *Public Institution Forest 4.0* was established;
- a new *Department of Sports and Physical Education* was established at VMU Education Academy;
- the Department of Educational Support, Physical and Health Education was renamed the *Department of Inclusive Education and Educational Support*.

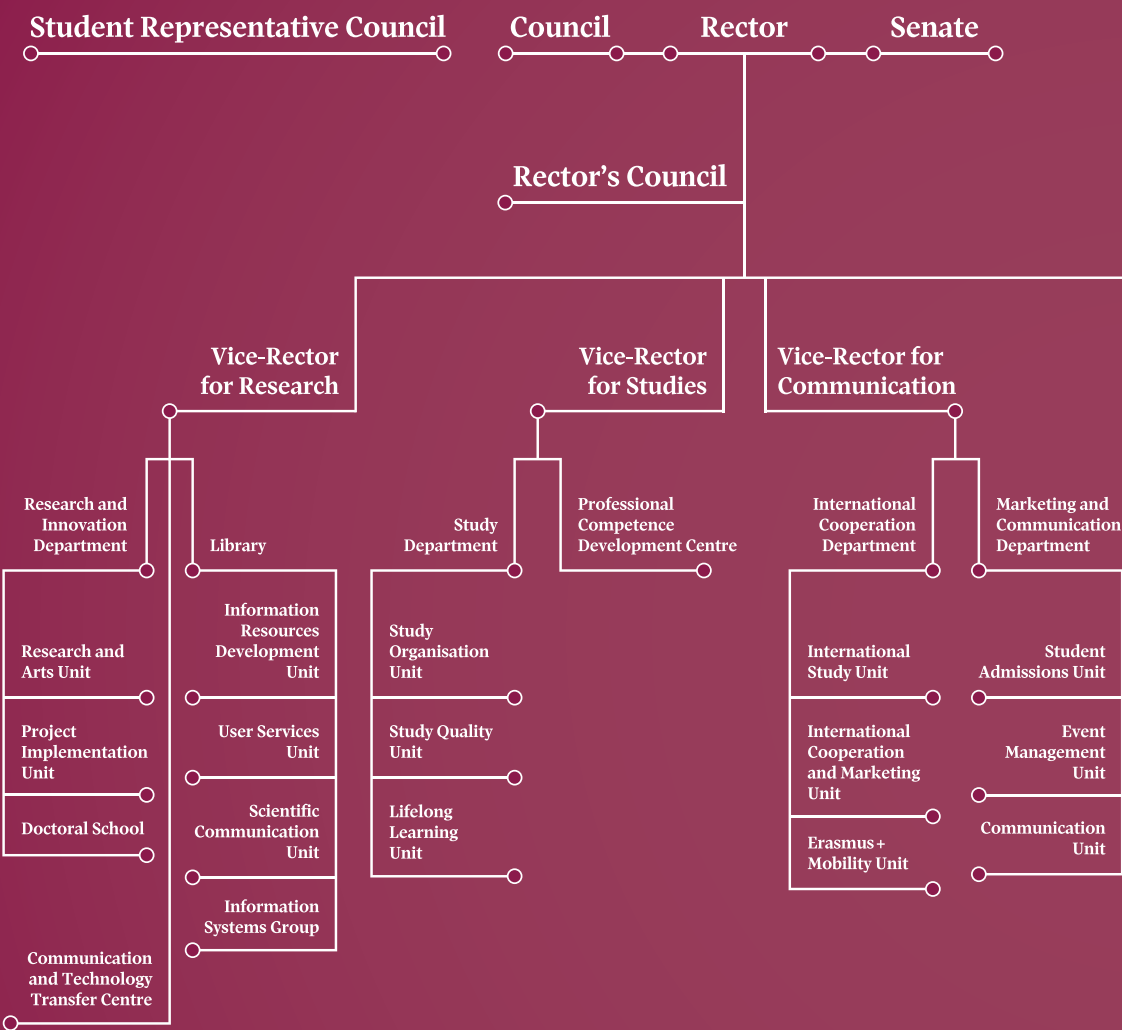


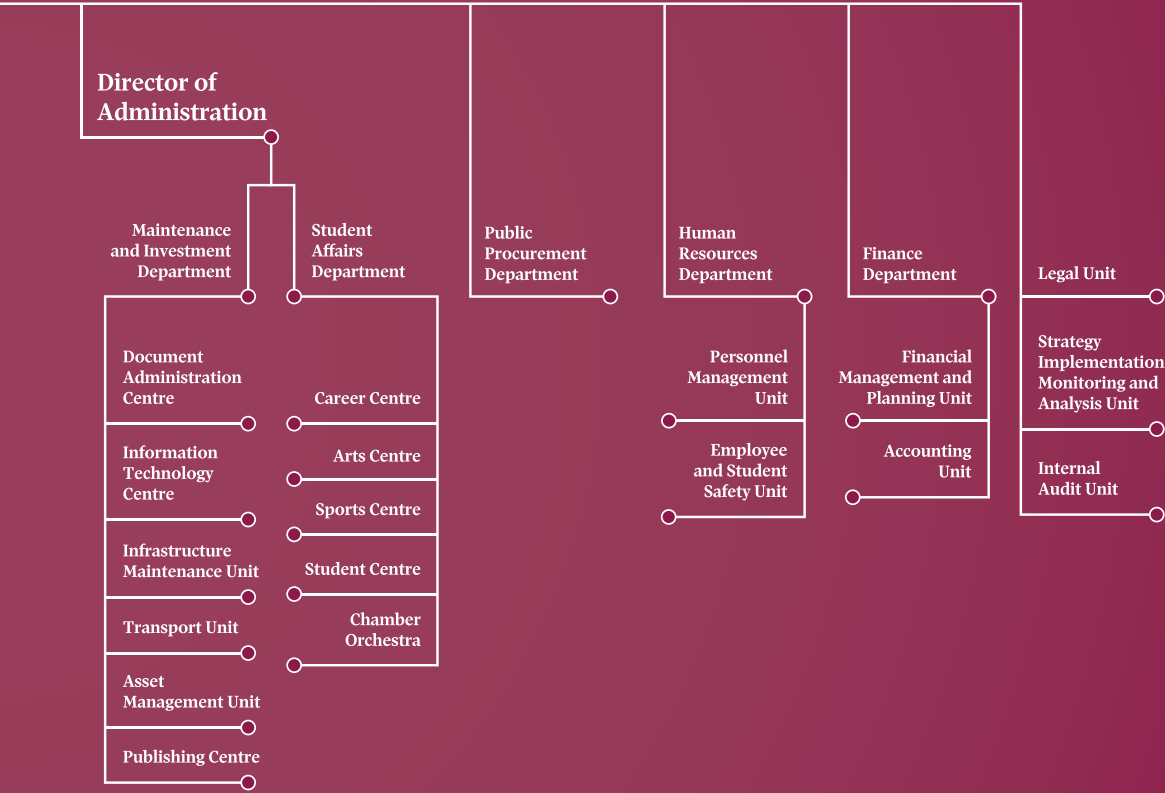
Structure of Academic Units of Vytautas Magnus University





Structure of Non-Academic Units of Vytautas Magnus University





Key Indicators of VMU Strategic Plan for 2021–2027



KEY INDICATORS OF VMU STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021–2027 KEY INDICATORS*	Baseline value of the indicator (or 2020 value)	In 2021		In 2022		In 2023		In 2024	
		Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator	Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator	Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator	Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator
I. COMMUNITY IN HARMONY AND CONSOLIDATION									
1. EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (%) A positive change in the employee diversity and inclusion indicator, as measured by the surveys, is 4% within 2 years.	N/A**	N/A	N/A	69.55%	-	N/A	N/A	73.13%	105%
2. At least 5% annual increase in the salaries for the academic staff.	EUR 2,028	EUR 2,137	100%	EUR 2,353	105%	EUR 2,610	112%	EUR 3,071	126%
3. The annual growth of the fund of financial support provided by patrons and sponsors is not less than 3%.	EUR 32,860	EUR 69,786	206%	EUR 92,651	266%	EUR 96,004	268%	EUR 128,182	348%
II. INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH UNIVERSITY									
4. The increase in the number of articles in scientific publications in the Q1-Q2 quartiles (at least 10% annually, compared to the 2020 indicator).	268	361	122.5%	343	106.7%	384	110.2%	409	109%
5. The growth of the budget for applications in funded projects is on average 3% annually.	35,741,300 EUR ***	56,457,500 EUR	153%	46,842,100 EUR	124%	64,914,900 EUR	165%	64,160,600 EUR	160%
6. The increase in the state budget funds for R&D in the University budget per researcher over three years is at least 10%.	EUR 9,901	EUR 10,417	102%	EUR 11,022	104%	EUR 13,189	121%	EUR 13,807	123%
7. The annual increase of the research fund is not less than 5%.	EUR 1,727,59	EUR 2,008,56	111%	EUR 2,167,7	114%	EUR 2,428,3	122%	EUR 2,624	127%
III. STUDIES “360°”									
8. The total number of students each year is at least 7,000.	7,000	8,210	117%	8,218	117%	8,381	120%	8,742	125%

KEY INDICATORS OF VMU STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2021–2027 KEY INDICATORS*	Baseline value of the indicator (or 2020 value)	In 2021		In 2022		In 2023		In 2024	
		Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator	Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator	Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator	Actual value of the indicator	Achievement of the target value of the indicator
9. The evaluation percentage of students' satisfaction with study resources is 85% annually.	85%	90%	106%	90%	106%	91%	107%	90%	106%
10. The total employability of graduates per year, after 1 year after graduation, is not less than 90%. (According to the Employment Service).	90%	97%	108%	98%	109%	97%	108%	96%	107%
11. Student dropout number does not exceed 15% per year.	15%	12.4%	121%	11.5%	130%	12.9%	116.3%	10.7%	140.2%
12. The proportion of admitted foreign students is at least 10% each year.	10%	13.1%	131%	14.5%	145%	12.1%	121.0%	14.1%	141.0%
13. The number of outgoing teachers is 15% each year.	15%	4.7%	31%	19.9%	133%	24.6%	164%	41.1%	274%
14. The number of teachers participating in in-service training activities is at least 25% each year.	25%	17.9%	72%	33.06%	132%	32.49%	130%	35.1%	140%
IV. INTEGRITY OF SELF-GOVERNANCE AND RESPONSIBILITY									
15. EMPLOYEE DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (%) A positive change in the employee diversity and inclusion indicator, as measured by the surveys, is 4% within 2 years.	N/A**	N/A	N/A	69.55%	-	N/A	N/A	73.13%	105%
16. Infrastructure efficiency index is not less than 80%.	80%	82%	103%	81%	101%	82%	103%	85%	106%
V. UNIVERSITY IMPACT ON SOCIETAL DEVELOPMENT									
17. The number of international and national projects for the public is at least 5 each year.	5	10	200%	15	300%	12	240%	8	160%

*approved by Decision No. 4 of 27 May 2021 of VMU Council; revised by Decision No. TA-N-5.1 of 12 January 2023 of VMU Council; Decision No. TA-N-9 of 14 December 2023.

**The Employee well-being Survey was launched in 2022 using the innovative, validated science platform "UNLOCK tests", making 2022 the baseline year for employee well-being indicators. The Employee Well-being Survey is carried out every two years.

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



The University's Role in the Development of Society



The University's role in the development of society is characterised according to the **areas of its impact: social and civic** (educational innovation, fostering of local communities, creation of a socially responsible, inclusive, civil society, volunteering, developmental cooperation), **cultural** (development of art and culture, fostering of a global Lithuanian identity), **economic** (development of business and the economy, digital and technological innovations), and **environmental** (sustainable development, mitigation of the impact of climate change, and achievement of the goals of the European Green Deal). In all these areas, the University has an impact on the effective development of the city of Kaunas, Kaunas District and the country as a whole. The impact of developmental cooperation is in line with EU and Lithuanian priority objectives and focuses on the Eastern Partnership countries as well as on the regions of Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa. By carrying out global Lithuanian identity-building and fostering Lithuanian studies, the field of influence extends around the world, taking in Lithuanian communities and Lithuanian studies centres in different regions of the world.

Events, cooperation, and strengthening socially responsible activities

Various activities of Vytautas Magnus University focus on the individual, his/her personal dignity, merits and uniqueness, and each person is encouraged to seek opportunities for self-fulfilment through various activities, to reveal his/her creative ideas, and to be a responsible citizen.

- On 10 January, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the President of Ukraine and the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from VMU, visited VMU Centre of Ukraine and delivered a speech. Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda and First Lady Diana Nausėdienė attended the event. The distinguished guests met with members of the Ukrainian community who have fled the war and now gather at VMU Centre of Ukraine, as well as with representatives of NGOs supporting the Centre and representatives of the academic community.
- During a visit to Kyiv, the Rector of VMU, Prof. Juozas Augutis, met with the Secretary of State of the United States of America, Antony Blinken.
- 2024 marked the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of VMU. A number of conferences, exhibitions, and community initiatives were organised to mark the occasion. In April, the international academic forum “Transforming the Idea of the University: what is the role of a liberal arts education?” was organised, attended by members of the community as well as alumni from all over the world and the university's partners. Plenary speakers included internationally renowned artists, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) researchers, VMU Visiting Professors Nomedė Urbonienė and Gediminas Urbonas, and representatives from Lingnan University (Hong Kong), Southern Illinois University Carbondale (USA), National Chengchi University (Taiwan), and other partner universities. The 35th Anniversary Concert was performed for the gathered community.
- The 35th anniversary was celebrated with the “VMU Connections” event, which brought together school students, VMU students, teachers and alumni in a variety of lectures, presentations, discussions, and concerts.
- The 3rd Student Conference “Freedom to Create” was organised to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of VMU and to highlight the concept of artes liberales. Students from VMU and other Kaunas universities as well as school students from VMU network of schools delivered 60 presentations.
- The centenary anniversary of VMU Agriculture Academy in 2024 was marked with events and celebrations that took place across Lithuania, and the publication of a historical sketch of VMU Agriculture Academy, “The Agriculture Academy. 100 Years of Agricultural Progress”. From August to October, the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, together with Agriculture Academy, organised a series of 10 events throughout Lithuania, “From the Scratch Plough to the Robot—100 Years of Progress in Agriculture”. In April, VMU Agriculture Academy, together with patrons, alumni, social partners and friends, planted the centenary oak grove as a symbol of Lithuanian identity, continuity of traditions, and longevity; in May, a pulsating springtime party was celebrated to mark the centenary; in October, a ceremonious flag-raising took place at the central building of VMU Agriculture Academy, and the Scientific-Practical Conference “Agricultural Sciences for Business: 100 Years of Advancement” was organised. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to 100 members of the Academy's community at a celebratory afternoon event, and a museum exhibition on Land Management and Hydraulic Engineering at VMU Agriculture Academy was opened.
- To mark the 20th anniversary of Lithuania's membership in the EU and NATO, the forum “Idea of Europe” was held for a second time, bringing together heads of state, political leaders, intellectuals and academics. The event was attended by Lithuanian President Gitanas Nausėda and Polish President Andrzej Duda, former Permanent Representative of Sweden to the European Union Lars Danielsson, the Rector of Mariupol State University (Ukraine), the Rector of the University of Latvia, the Vice-Rector for International and Local Cooperation at the University of Silesia (Poland) and the Acting Head of the European Commission Representation in Lithuania.
- To mark the 20th anniversary of Lithuania's membership in the European Union, VMU invited the public to the exhibition “Lithuania's Road to the European Union: Taking a Historic Decision”. The exhibition featured photographs recording Lithuania's path to the European Union from the restoration of independence on 11 March 1990 until the referendum in 2003.
- Belarusian opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya visited the University and delivered the presentation “Regional Stability: the Role of Democratic Belarus in Ensuring Security in Eastern Europe”.
- A delegation from the Principality of Andorra, including Prime Minister Xavier Espot Zamora and Minister of Foreign Affairs Imma Tor Faus, visited VMU. The distinguished guests discussed cooperation with the

University and the development of the European Higher Education Area.

- For the fourth year in a row, the Romas Sakadolskis International Academic Forum on Journalism took place, organised by VMU, Vilnius University (VU) and the steering group of Romas Sakadolskis Journalism Forum. In cooperation with the U.S. Embassy in Lithuania, a presentation was delivered at VMU by James LeMay, former deputy managing editor at CNN.
- Now an annual tradition, the 7th National Human Rights Forum was held. In keeping with the theme “Different but Equal”, the Forum highlighted the different circumstances of people’s lives, discussing various forms of discrimination as well as the systemic causes of social exclusion.
- Implementing VMU Disability Policy “University of Inclusive Opportunities”, the event “Disability Forum: Inclusive Higher Education 2024” was organised. The Forum brought together experts on Lithuanian higher education with experience in creating appropriate conditions and increasing accessibility to higher education for people with a range of disabilities and individual needs.
- VMU Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development organised its 14th International Conference, “Hidden Wounds of War”, on trauma among war veterans and its consequences. More than 60 mental health professionals from Ukraine participated in the Conference. Presentations were given by specialists from Europe and North America. The Centre also hosted the 7th Leonidas Donskis Conference, “From Black and White to Shades of Grey”.
- The Lithuanian Emigration Institute celebrated its 30th anniversary. In November-December, celebratory events were held for the academic community and the general public: the Conference “Lithuanian Diaspora Studies: Widening Horizons and Future Challenges”, seminars, presentations of documentary films produced by the Institute’s staff, and exhibitions about the Institute’s activities, and the work of the Lithuanian Emigration Institute was featured in Lithuanian cultural publications and on radio programmes.
- The 4th Lithuanian Education Forum was organised, to continue to draw the attention of Lithuanian society and the diaspora to the importance of Lithuanian education in foreign countries. A series of events were held as part of “October—Lithuanian Diaspora Month”, bringing together various initiatives by VMU, other organisations, institutions and individual representatives of science and the arts related to the Lithuanian diaspora.
- VMU STEAM Didactics Centre, the first such institution in Lithuania, opened its doors. Prof. Edmond Saliklis of California Polytechnic State University (USA) delivered a virtual presentation.
- The second STEAM-focused forum, “STEAM Spectra 2024”, was held for the education community. The event focused on STEAM education and featured a presentation by Prof. Jari Lavonen of the University of Helsinki (Finland) on best practices. The forum was organised to bring together participants in the STEAM ecosystem and to renew and broaden the discussion of pathways for cooperation, emerging challenges, and the development of STEAM education.
- VMU Agriculture Academy Agro-Innovation Centre was opened.
- VMU Education Academy, together with the portal Irytas.lt and partners, organised the largest education forum in Lithuania, “Education Code”, and the annual award ceremony “Lithuanian Teacher 2024”. The event took place at VMU in Kaunas, with the participation of 1,200 representatives from the fields of education and politics as well as the general public.
- The forum “Next-Generation Educators for Inclusive Education: How to Teach All School Students?” was organised, with the participation of Prof. Katie Bonawitz, Programme Director of Special Education as well as the Associate Dean of Education at Bethel University (Minnesota, USA), experts from the Lithuanian Centre for Inclusion in Education, and VMU Education Academy scholars, researchers, students, and educators.
- Together with the British Council and the Polish Institute in Vilnius, the International Conference “Empowering Education: Developing an Inclusive Multicultural Environment in General Education” was held at VMU, to improve the education of children who speak a language other than the national language and to develop recommendations for multilingual education in schools. Experts from the UK, Poland, Lithuania, and Germany took part in the Conference, and focus group discussions were held.
- VMU, together with its partners, the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, the National Agency for Education, and Raudondvaris Gymnasium in Kaunas District, organised the Conference “Physical Education Teachers Forum ’24” for leaders in the field of sport, physical education teachers, students of sport and physical education pedagogy, and high-performance and personal coaches and trainers.
- The 39th SELL Student Games took place at VMU President Valdas Adamkus Sports Centre, with participants competing in 15 sports.
- VMU Sports Centre organised the forum “VMU Sports Science Clinic” for sport leaders, high-performance and personal coaches and trainers, sport education specialists, and sport studies students.
- VMU PSDF was the first and only institution in Lithuania to be awarded the right to organise an Annual Conference of the Central European Political Science Association (CEPSA). The theme of the 28th Conference was “Twenty Years of EU Membership: Lessons Learned, Challenges and Opportunities”. The Conference was attended by over 150 speakers from Lithuania and abroad.
- The now-traditional “Kaunas Literature Week” was held, the only such international literature festival in Kaunas.

- During the Francophone Month in Kaunas, VMU organised the International Scientific Conference “Culture and Politics of the Francophone World”, which was open to the public and extended VMU’s cultural and educational activities to the community. Public lectures were given on “The work of director Xavier Dolan in the context of Canadian cinema”.
- During “Scandinavian Days” in Kaunas, His Excellency Lars Wahlund, Ambassador of Sweden to Lithuania, delivered a lecture to VMU students, “Sweden in the Baltic Sea Region”.
- The 8th VMU Spanish Language Forum took place, aiming to bring together Spanish language teachers, lecturers, translators and other professionals. The 13th annual festival of Spanish culture, “Primavera en español”, was also held, inviting participants to explore the cultural diversity of the Spanish-speaking world. The 7th Olympiad for School Students, “The Spanish-Speaking World and Me”, was also dedicated to promoting the Spanish language.
- The international exhibition “Between Life and Death: Stories of Rescue in the Face of the Holocaust” was presented, telling the stories of Holocaust survivors and rescuers from 12 countries and placing them in a broader historical context. It was a joint initiative of the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw and the Silent Heroes Memorial Centre in Berlin.
- The International Conference “Considering History, Understanding Memory” commemorated the 80th anniversary of the liquidation of the Kaunas Ghetto. The event included discussions of history, political science, social sciences, theatre and art, and considered the life of Lithuanian Jews before and during the Holocaust.
- The 30th International Scientific and Practical Conference “Human and Nature Safety 2024” marked the World Health, Environment Protection, and Occupational Safety and Health Days, and celebrated the centenaries of VMU Agriculture Academy and the Department of Medicinal Plants at the Botanical Garden of the University of Lithuania.
- The international agricultural exhibition “Ką pasėsi... 2024” was held.
- The 5th International Scientific Conference “Sustainability of Agroecosystems: Links Among Capturing Soil Carbon, Food Security, and Climate Change” was held.
- The International Conference “Towards Child and Family Well-being. What Can Social Work Offer in a Context of Dynamic Change?” was held.
- The 10th National Conference of Young Sociologists and Anthropologists “Current Research in Sociology and Anthropology: Problems and Context” was held.
- The 28th annual Kaunas History Conference was organised, the theme of which was “Historical Narratives about Kaunas and Kaunas Residents”.
- The 12th National Conference “Evaluating Public Policy and Services: Objectives, Accessibility, and Effectiveness” took place.
- Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum hosted a number of important events promoting citizenship, historical awareness, and cultural heritage. The fourth seminar on the preservation of historical memory and the heritage of Sąjūdis discussed the meaning of memory during the national revival period in Estonia, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia, Czechia, and the eastern part of Germany. The Scientific Conference “Algirdas Landsbergis: A Journey Between Two Worlds” was organised to mark the centenary of the birth of the Lithuanian diaspora writer and journalist Algirdas Landsbergis (1924–2004). To commemorate the 90th anniversary of the birth of Liūtas Mockūnas, the prominent Lithuanian diaspora journalist, engineer, and editor of the monthly “Akiračiai”, an Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference “Mutineers aboard a Ship of Mutineers” was organised.

Recognition and awards

- Mariupol State University (MSU), which due to the war is currently continuing its activities in Kyiv, conferred on VMU Rector, Prof. Juozas Augutis, the regalia of an Honorary Doctor of Law, recognising the entire University for its assistance to Ukraine and MSU.
- VMU awarded an Honorary Doctorate to Prof. Timothy Garton Ash, the historian, for his contributions in the fields of international cooperation and democracy building as well as the promotion of the values of liberty, justice, and solidarity.
- The title of Honorary Doctor was awarded to Prof. Irina Pilvere, the former Rector of the Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies (2014–2024), for her contributions in the field of international cooperation and the strengthening of agricultural sciences and studies, creating a sustainable future for Lithuania and the world.
- The regalia of Honorary Professor of VMU were conferred on Prof. Vytautas Steponas Vaičiūnas—prelate, theologian, diplomat, restorer of the Catholic theological discipline in Lithuania, prominent figure in public life. The title of Honorary Professor of VMU was awarded to the prelate for his significant contributions to the theological discipline and significant achievements in promoting the name of VMU around the world.
- On 6 July, celebrated in Lithuania as Statehood Day (marking the Coronation of King Mindaugas) and National Anthem Day, the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda, presented awards to Prof. Vytautas Levandauskas, architectural historian and teacher at VMU Faculty of Arts, for his contributions to the Republic of Lithuania and for making its name known in the world. In recognition of his longtime architectural research

at the highest scientific level, his outstanding contributions to the creation and development of unique studies in integrated art history and the training of a new generation of scholars, Prof. Levandauskas was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas.

- Prof. Šarūnas Liekis, Dean of the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, was appointed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe as a new member of the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.
- The Gold Medal of the Lithuanian Energy Institute (LEI) was awarded to Prof. Julija Kiršienė, VMU Vice-Rector, in recognition of her cooperation, initiation of joint inter-institutional projects, contribution to the results of LEI activities, and valuable advice in the development of the ecosystem of experimental research, development, innovation, and doctoral studies at LEI.
- Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis of the Department of Water Engineering at VMU was awarded the Medal of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in recognition of his significant research on climate change and water ecosystems and his active expert activities.
- Assoc. Prof. Vilma Naujokienė was elected a member of the Young Academy of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences in the field of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences.
- The Lithuanian Academy of Sciences awarded the Simonas Daukantas (History) Prize to Prof. Saulius Pivoras at the Department of Public Administration in the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, for his monograph "Virtus Litwana. Political Thought in the Historiography of Simonas Daukantas".
- Prof. Jonas Ruškus at the Department of Social Work in the Faculty of Social Sciences, a former Vice Chair of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, was awarded the Mark of Honour of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport.
- The Kaunas City Council agreed that one of the two Kaunas Science Prizes was to be awarded to Assoc. Prof. Liudas Glemža, a historian at VMU.
- Prof. Rimantas Velička was named "Knight of the Trade" by the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists.
- Prof. Vaclovas Bogužas was awarded the title of "Meritorious Agronomist" and Assoc. Prof. Darija Jodaugienė was named an Honorary Member by the Lithuanian Union of Agronomists.
- Lecturer Aurelija Lozuraitienė received the award "For Contributions to Lithuanian Landscape Architecture".
- Assist. Prof. Gedas Malinauskas of the Faculty of Social Sciences was awarded the Medal of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas.
- The Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania recognised 30 representatives of institutions working in the field of justice who have made the greatest contribution to the protection, strengthening and promotion of human rights, including Prof. Milda Ališauskienė at the Department of Sociology in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Prof. Jonas Ruškus at the Department of Social Work in the Faculty of Social Sciences.
- "Foreign Affairs", the USA-based journal of international relations and foreign policy, published a list of the best books of 2024, which included the monograph "The Russian Way of Deterrence: Strategic Culture, Coercion, and War" by Dmitry (Dima) Adamsky, a visiting professor and researcher at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy.
- Ramūnas Čičelis, a research worker at the Lithuanian Emigration Institute, won the prize for essay-writing at the Lithuanian Writers' Union international poetry festival "Poezijos pavasaris".
- On World Theatre Day, outstanding theatre artists were honoured at the Golden Stage Cross award ceremony. Among the recipients was opera soloist Kostas Smoriginas, a lecturer at the Department of Singing in the Music Academy, who received the award for performing the role of Amonasro in the opera "Aida" at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre.
- Prof. Rasutė Žukienė of the Department of Art History and Criticism in the Faculty of Arts received the "Gold Muse / Gold Badge" award from the Lithuanian Artists' Association and was honoured with a Certificate of Appreciation from the Mayor of Marijampolė Municipality for her work to enrich the cultural life of Marijampolė by organising professional art exhibitions.
- The "Golden Bird" Award, the highest honour given to non-professional artists in Lithuania, was presented to the best adult choir, the academic mixed choir "Vivere Cantus", and its artistic director, Assoc. Prof. Rolandas Daugėla.
- Assoc. Prof. Lina Preišgalavičienė was awarded a medal of appreciation by the Director of the Kaunas State Puppet Theatre in recognition of her reconstruction and architectural design solutions.
- At the IUFRO World Congress in June, during the opening ceremony attended by His Majesty Carl XVI Gustaf, the King of Sweden, IUFRO President John Parrotta presented an award to Prof. Algirdas Augustaitis of the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology in the Agriculture Academy, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the field of forestry in the Baltic region.
- The artistic director of the centenary Song Celebration "May the Green Forest Grow" (29 June–6 July) was Prof. Artūras Dambrauskas, the conductors at the Song Celebration were Assoc. Prof. Rolandas Daugėla, Prof. Artūras Dambrauskas, and student Artūras Vrublevskis, and the volunteer co-ordinator of the Song Celebration was student Ausma Sakalauskaitė.

- The “Chordos” string quartet, directed by Prof. Robertas Bliškevičius, was awarded the Culture and Art Prize of the Government of Lithuania.
- Assoc. Prof. Danielius Vėbra was awarded the “Fortūna” statuette for his longtime contributions to the performing arts.
- Prof. Daiva Bukantaitė was awarded the 3rd degree “Santaka” Badge of Honour and Prof. Romualdas Požerskis was awarded the 2nd degree “Santaka” Badge of Honour.
- Dr. Daiva Price (for the journal “Memory as a Journal”) and Assoc. Prof. Tomas Pabedinskas (together with his team for a series of broadcasts about photography, “Perspective. The Art and Everyday Life of Photography” on LRT Plius) were shortlisted as candidates for the Art Criticism of the Year Award.
- The mission of VMU flag-bearer was entrusted to Mantas Karanauskas, graduate of the Education Academy, Teacher of the Year in the Irytas.lt project “Lithuanian Teacher 2024”, and geography teacher at Vilnius Balsiai Pro-Gymnasium and Šiaurės licėjus.
- During the centenary celebration at the Agriculture Academy, the Chancellor of the Academy, Prof. Astrida Miceikienė, was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Speaker of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and Badge of Honour of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania, in recognition of her strategic decisions in the development of agriculture and forestry sciences and studies in Lithuania. The following were awarded Certificates of Appreciation by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania: Prof. Zita Kriaučiūnienė, Prof. Aušra Blinstrubienė, Prof. Kęstutis Romanekas, and Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Paulauskienė of the Faculty of Agronomy; Prof. Vladžė Vitunskienė, Prof. Vilma Atkočiūnienė, and Assoc. Prof. Rasa Pakeltienė of the Faculty of Bioeconomy Development; Prof. Rolandas Bleizgys, Prof. Egidijus Šarauskis, and Assoc. Prof. Gražina Žibienė of the Faculty of Engineering; and marketing co-ordinator Deimena Montvydaitė. The following were awarded Certificates of Appreciation by Jonas Varkalys, Member of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania: Assoc. Prof. Jolanta Valčiukienė and Assoc. Prof. Algis Kvaraciejus of the Faculty of Engineering; Assoc. Prof. Rasa Pranskūnienė, Head of the Museum; and Senior Specialist Roberta Didžiulienė of VMU Document Administration Centre. The following were awarded Certificates of Appreciation by the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania: Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis of the Faculty of Engineering; Prof. Laima Česonienė, Prof. Gediminas Brazaitis, and Prof. Gintautas Mozgeris of the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology.

Agreements, cooperation

- In order to achieve mutually beneficial goals and to train qualified teachers, ensuring a sufficient supply of teachers in municipal educational institutions, a cooperation agreement was signed with the municipalities of Zarasai, Molėtai, Rokiškis, Šalčininkai, Joniškis, and Kupiškis.
- A cooperation agreement was signed with EY Lietuva (UAB Ernst & Young Baltic), which will allow students to become more closely acquainted with the activities of a leading international company and expand their practical professional knowledge. This is a strategically crucial step for the future prospects of the University and its students.
- An agreement was signed with UAB Genomika to strengthen cooperation and social partnership to achieve mutually beneficial goals, including the organisation of student internships and events, and cooperation in project activities in the fields of genetics and biotechnology. The company is already working on a joint project for bison genome scanning together with VMU Research Institute of Natural and Technological Sciences.
- An agreement with the Red Cross Society was signed, aiming to strengthen mutual cooperation in the development and improvement of study programmes, lectures, student internships and joint projects.
- An agreement with Kaunas Simonas Daukantas Pro-Gymnasium was signed in order to consolidate the ongoing cooperation with the University, including activities for school students, teacher development and retraining with Minded VMU Academy and VMU Education Academy. The agreement also aimed to facilitate organisation of student internships, collaboration in the development of natural science education methodologies and participation in the development of a STEAM and integrated activities plan and methodological tools for natural science education.
- A cooperation agreement was signed with the President Valdas Adamkus Gymnasium to establish VMU Media Creativity and Entrepreneurship classes and to carry out activities to achieve mutually beneficial goals.
- A cooperation agreement was signed with the Lithuanian Police in response to the problem of alcohol-related domestic violence in Lithuania. The project “Problem of alcohol-related domestic violence: what do police interventions reveal?” will be carried out by bringing together the competences of VMU researchers, the data available to the Police Department, and the experience of researchers and officials.
- A cooperation agreement was signed with the Department of Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture, providing for a social partnership to achieve mutually beneficial goals. The agreement committed the parties to share human and intellectual resources in joint projects in the field of cultural heritage protection, to cooperate in organising educational internships for VMU students, and to ensure the applicability of the acquired knowledge to the activities of the Department.
- A cooperation agreement was signed with the State Forest Service (SFS), aiming at cooperation and social partnership in the development of forest-related sciences and innovations and their practical implementation

in forest management. The agreement provided for the support of VMU specialists for forestry research and projects carried out by the SFS, and for VMU to contribute to public education projects.

- VMU, Vilnius University, and the steering group of the Romas Sakadolskis Journalism Forum signed a cooperation agreement to organise the Romas Sakadolskis International Academic Forum on Journalism.
- Continuing the Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Analysis Programme Committee's planned renewal of the study programme and equipping of the basic biotechnology laboratories at VMU, an investment agreement was signed with the international company Esco Medical Technologies, and on the basis of the agreement, the University received a donation of biotechnology laboratory equipment from the company, with a value of nearly EUR 100,000.
- A cooperation agreement was signed with the Competition Council of the Republic of Lithuania and the coaching association ICF Lithuania (International Coaching Federation).
- By signing an agreement with the Centre of Registers, VMU confirmed its intention to cooperate by using its knowledge, experience, and best practices, strengthening social partnership, fostering and disseminating the ideas of the Centre and the University, developing civic and national values, developing, implementing, and achieving integration of science and closer contact between studies and practice.

International cooperation

- Prof. Juozas Augutis, Rector of VMU, together with Prof. Mykola Trofimenko, Rector of Mariupol State University, met with Antony Blinken, Secretary of State of the United States of America, in Kyiv and discussed cooperation between VMU and the academic community of Ukraine.
- VMU warmly welcomed the Director of HSSH, Prof. Risto Kunelius, as well as Prof. Hannu Nieminen, emeritus professor at the University of Helsinki and researcher at the Kavolis Institute. Further development of cooperation between the two Institutes was discussed. The aim is that close cooperation between the Institutes will lead to broader platforms for the development of scientific competences, opportunities to attract external funding, and joint activities to strengthen the methodological skills of early-career scientists.
- VMU Botanical Garden joined one of the Council of Europe's Cultural Routes and became a member of the international association "Aromas Itinerarium Salutis" (AIS), in recognition of the longtime scientific, study, practical, and public educational activities of this VMU unit, existing for a century.
- A cooperation agreement was signed with the National Chengchi University (NCCU) (Taiwan), represented by its President, Prof. Tsai-Yen Li, on the establishment of the Lithuanian Centre at NCCU, to provide impetus for the smooth and more regular development of Lithuania-related scientific, study, and cultural activities.
- A tripartite cooperation agreement was signed in the field of agrobiotechnology with a Danish university and the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry.
- The first agreement for an Ecology and Climate Change second cycle study programme to earn a double degree was signed with Keele University (United Kingdom). An agreement for an Agronomy doctoral degree to earn a double diploma was signed with Gifu University (Japan).
- VMU reviews existing bilateral (MoU) and Erasmus+ agreements on an annual basis. In 2024, special attention was paid to strengthening cooperation with universities in Ukraine, the UK, Taiwan, the USA, Indonesia, and Singapore, by organising visits of management and ICD staff to partner universities, virtual meetings, and visits of representatives of partner universities to VMU.
- An application for Erasmus+ funding for mobility to higher education institutions in Partner Countries (outside the EU/EEA) was submitted and evaluated as excellent (97 out of a possible 100 points), resulting in funding for 159 students and staff mobility in universities in 37 countries. The funding received in 2024 was the highest among Lithuanian universities and colleges.
- For mobility in Programme countries (EU, EEA, and candidate countries), funding was received for 600 student and staff mobility visits in 2024, 512 in 2023, and 891 in 2022.
- In the Erasmus+ programme, VMU cooperated with universities from 51 countries outside the EU/EEA, bringing the number of cooperation agreements to 126. In 2023, the number of cooperation agreements was 118 (44 countries), and in 2022, 112 (41 countries). In 2024, cooperation was expanded to include Argentina, Jordan, Taiwan, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uruguay, and Ukraine. Cooperation was launched with universities in two new countries: Singapore and Vietnam. The largest number of Erasmus+ inter-institutional agreements is with universities in Ukraine (16) and Israel (6).
- VMU reviewed and renewed its network of Erasmus+ partner higher education institutions in Programme countries (EU, EEA, and candidate countries): inactive contracts were discontinued, and new ones were initiated and concluded in response to demand. The total number of partner institutions evolved over the last three years from 417 (33 countries) in 2022–2023 and 440 (32 countries) in 2023–2024 to 485 (32 countries) in 2024–2025.
- VMU has signed 232 (251 in 2023) bilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) cooperation agreements with universities and organisations in 42 countries around the world. In 2024, 26 new MoUs were signed with universities in Argentina, Azerbaijan, the USA, Kazakhstan, Taiwan, Ukraine, the Republic of Korea (South Korea), Poland, Indonesia, and Singapore. However, 44 inactive agreements were not renewed.

- The University continued its successful cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology of the Republic of Indonesia through the Indonesian International Student Mobility Awards (IISMA) programme. VMU is the only higher education institution in Lithuania and the Baltic countries participating in this programme. In 2021, 5 students came to VMU for a semester of study under the programme, in 2022—8, in 2023—49, and in 2024—42 students.
- VMU has 30 existing double degree agreements (38 agreements in 2024) with universities in Belgium, India, Italy, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Germany, Japan, and Poland. The number of agreements has decreased due to withdrawal or non-renewal of inactive double degree agreements.
- Double degree contract projects continue in the Transform4Europe Alliance in the fields of Political Science, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences, Arts, and Informatics. The application for the Erasmus Mundus Design Measures Joint Programme on Ecology and Climate Change with T4EU partners was approved in 2024, and the first triple degree contract is being coordinated in the field of Informatics.

Scholarships and student achievement

- The winners of the competitions “Best Master’s Thesis 2024” and “Best Master’s Theses on European Union Policy-Making and Implementation”, including four VMU graduates, received their awards at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences (LAS) Higher Education Student Research Competition, a letter of commendation was awarded to Gitana Baležentienė, graduating with a Master’s degree from the Education Academy, for her Master’s thesis, “The Phenomenon of the Teacher’s Professional Identity: Structure and Dimensions” (Supervisor Prof. Vilma Žydzūnaitė).
- Researcher Modesta Morkevičiūtė was awarded the LAS Young Scientist Fellowship and the LAS Young Scientist and Doctoral Thesis Competition Prize.
- The Lithuanian Sociological Association’s award for the best Master’s thesis went to Katrė Lungytė, a student in the second cycle programme “Social Anthropology”.
- The Master’s thesis of Aušra Česnulevičienė, in the “Art Curatorship” study programme, entitled “The Čiurlionis Family: Their Life in Music” (Supervisor Prof. Rasutė Žukienė), was selected by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language as the most correctly and stylishly written thesis.
- The Master’s thesis of Paulina Okunytė, in the “Creative Industries” study programme, entitled “The Potential of the Creative Village in Lithuania” (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Jūratė Tutlytė), won second place in the competition “Best Master’s Thesis 2024” (LSYR).
- Ugnė Aleksiejūnaitė, a student in the first cycle programme “Creative Industries”, was awarded a VMU honorary scholarship in recognition of her active creative and cultural activities.
- The winners of the Prof. Bronius Vaškėlis scholarship were Austė Žiogaitė, a student in the second cycle programme “Theatre Studies and Performing Arts Management”, and Liepa Kairytė, a student in the first cycle programme in Art History, Criticism, and Media.
- Daiva Vaišnorienė, a doctoral student in Art History and Criticism, Mažvydas Maziliauskas, a student in the first cycle programme “Creative Industries”, and Andreja Gričiūtė, a student in the second cycle programme “Theatre Studies and Performing Arts Management”, were awarded VMU scholarships for their academic and artistic achievements.
- The “B-Oil” team of students Simona Griniūtė, Eva Griškutė, Nojus Narvilas, and Ramojus Kriugiškis, in the first cycle programme “Creative Industries”, won the Entrepreneurship Hackathon and represented the University at the International Hackathon in Albacete (Spain).
- The winners of the competition of theses about social policy, social work, and labour law, including VMU doctoral student Irmė Beneševičiūtė and first cycle student Tadas Gasparavičius, received awards at the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania.
- In the competition among research papers by Lithuanian higher education students, sponsored by the Division of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, second cycle students Jonas Balčiūnas and Žygimantas Niekis were recognised for having written the best works. Their supervisor was Prof. Dainius Steponavičius.
- The Vydūnas Youth Fund’s Bronius Kviklys Scholarship (Chicago, USA) was awarded to Erika Valiulytė, a first-year student of the second cycle programme “Educational Management”.
- The Jurgis Mileris Scholarship of the Lithuanian National Foundation (USA) was awarded to Gabrielė Čičelytė and Evelina Tarasevičiūtė, fourth-year students in the first cycle programme “Lithuanian Language and Literature Pedagogy” at VMU Education Academy.
- The scholarship named for the President of the Republic of Lithuania, Algirdas Brazauskas, in the area of social sciences and educational sciences, law, business, and public administration, was awarded to Margarita Kalinka, a fourth-year student in the first cycle programme “Art Education” at VMU Education Academy.
- For his academic and cultural achievements, Simonas Surdokas was awarded the scholarship marking the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of VMU. The student’s main study programme is “Psychology”, with individual studies in “Literature” (tutor Assoc. Prof. Rūta Eidukevičienė).

University external communication

According to the quantitative and qualitative analysis carried out by “Mediaskopas”, VMU remained one of the leading universities. In 2024, the analysis revealed that VMU maintained a strong second position in the media among Lithuanian universities. The effectiveness of VMU's external communication continued to improve, as did the audience reached in terms of tone. VMU ranked second among Lithuanian higher education institutions in all categories—number of press releases and mentions, number of contacts effectively reached, potential target audience reached and weighted favourability ratio.

In 2024, as in previous years, the main media coverage of the University was through expert commentaries, which increased by 135 items (3,336 in 2023 and 3,471 in 2024).

The sources that generated the most news about VMU in 2024 were lrt.lt, BNS, delfi.lt, 15min.lt, lrytas.lt, tv3.lt, kauno.diena.lt, vz.lt, etc. VMU was mainly mentioned on the internet (72.45%) and in regional publications (13.95%). Looking at the distribution of mentions in portals and newspapers assigned to a specific region, it can be said that VMU is mostly visible in the regions of Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys, Vilnius, Marijampolė, Alytus, Telsiai, Tauragė and Utena.

In the opinion leadership market, the most-cited VMU figures were Ignas Kalpokas, Gintautas Mažeikis, Juozas Augutis, Luras Bielinis, Egdūnas Račius, Mindaugas Jurkynas, Dainius Žalimas, Astrida Miceikienė, Simona Pilkienė, Lina Kaminskienė, Ingrida Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė, Arvydas Kumpis, Arūnas Juknevičius, Viktorija Tauraitė, Mindaugas Nefas, Šarūnas Liekis, Mindaugas Norkevičius, Milda Ališauskienė, Andžejus Pukšto, and Jonas Ruškus.

Media attention was attracted to topics that popularise science at VMU, comments by the University's experts, and topics about economics, migration, politics, education, history, etc.

The most popular publications in the media mentioning VMU were about the elections and voter activeness, the victory of VMU basketball players in the Lithuanian Student Basketball League, the exhibition of butterflies at VMU Botanical Garden, and the funding of studies for Ukrainians, etc.

In 2024, VMU achieved impressive results on social networks. Facebook posts reached 1.2 million users (45% more than in 2023), content created by VMU was viewed 1.5 million times, users engaged with the content 36,500 times (18.9% more than in 2023), page visitation amounted to 397,700 visits (77.7% more than in 2023), and the number of page followers increased by 4.4%. In 2024, the paid-advertising strategy was re-orientated from a focus on admissions only to an even distribution of the total advertising budget across the year. This allowed a wider audience to find out about the life, events, and values of VMU, encouraging a deeper dialogue with an audience that needs more information and time to make decisions. There was an increased focus on developing popular video content: the video series “VMU People and 35”, dedicated to the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of VMU, showed representatives of VMU community from the inside and attracted a high level of engagement, especially on Instagram. Among the most popular videos were the admissions department's video on admission requirements, which was viewed 26,000 times, as well as interviews with first-year students about scholarships and the admissions process (28,000 and 14,000 views, respectively). The results showed that consistent and strategic social media communication can effectively increase the visibility of the University, promote audience engagement, and build a positive image of the University.

Support for Ukraine

Since the outbreak of the full-scale war in Ukraine, VMU has actively provided a wide range of assistance to Ukraine, its academic community, students, and Ukrainians fleeing the war. The Centre of Ukraine in Vilnius and the Mariupol State University Centre in Kaunas were set up in cooperation with the President of the Republic of Lithuania and the Embassy of Ukraine in Lithuania.

The most significant event of 2024 at the Centre of Ukraine at VMU Education Academy was the visit of the President of Ukraine, His Excellency Volodymyr Zelenskyy, his acquaintance with the activities of the Centre and of the numerous NGOs supporting the Centre, and his speech to the Ukrainian community. The President of the Republic of Lithuania, His Excellency Gitanas Nausėda, First Lady Diana Nausėdienė, representatives of VMU, diplomats, 400 members of the Ukrainian community, visitors to VMU Centre of Ukraine, and guests from various regions, organisations, and educational communities welcomed the President of Ukraine to the Centre.

An international forum, “Two Years of Relentless Struggle: Strengthening the Leadership of the Ukrainian Community”, was held at the Centre, with a virtual speech given by Ukraine's First Lady, Olena Zelenska. The Forum was aimed at strengthening and expanding opportunities for Ukrainian communities in Lithuania, providing a unique networking opportunity for them to exchange experience and establish relationships for future cooperation.

The Centre of Ukraine celebrated its second anniversary in 2024. On this occasion, a picnic for Ukrainian communities was organised at VMU Botanical Garden, along with a fair of organisations supporting the Centre of Ukraine, various educational and informational activities, and musical performances by artists of the Centre of Ukraine. The First Ladies of Lithuania and Ukraine, Diana Nausėdienė and Olena Zelenska, greeted the event participants (in person and virtually, respectively).

Crown Prince Haakon of Norway visited the Centre of Ukraine and met with the First Lady of Lithuania, Diana Nausėdienė, and the Ambassador of Ukraine to Lithuania, His Excellency Petro Beshta. During the meeting, Crown Prince Haakon was introduced to the activities of the Centre. The Ambassador had an informal discussion with

Ukrainian young people studying at VMU and other universities, and after the discussion he invited them to a screening of the film “20 Days in Mariupol” by Mstyslav Chernov.

In 2024, the Centre of Ukraine organised various exhibitions. The international exhibition “Helsinki to Kyiv: Back to the Future”, organised by Member of the European Parliament Prof. Liudas Mažylis, was on display. The exhibition presented the emergence of new states in Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea in 1917–1918 and the quest for collective regional security then and now.

The University hosted an event, “From Lithuania with Warmest Wishes”, together with VMU Mariupol State University Centre and VMU Centre of Ukraine, to collect donations and letters for Ukrainian soldiers. In cooperation with Mariupol State University, the donations and letters were delivered to Ukrainian soldiers fighting on the front lines.

The Centre of Ukraine hosted activities with women's and children's choirs, Community accelerator training and Lithuanian and English language training. The Centre's activities for younger and school-age Ukrainian children continued: Saturday schools and summer camps, teenager think tanks supported by the British Council, and workshops and meetings with ambassadors from different countries. The STEAM activities at the summer camp were led by two internship students from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

In 2024, 200 Ukrainians learned the Lithuanian language in Kaunas, Vilnius, and virtually, participating in the project “Lithuanian language training for Ukrainian refugees fleeing the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine”, implemented by the Faculty of Humanities and the Institute of Foreign Languages. In addition to learning Lithuanian, the Ukrainians also participated in socio-cultural lectures on Lithuanian history, the Lithuanian diaspora, national and Christian holidays, customs, culture, human rights and their implementation in Lithuania, and took part in thematic excursions. Lithuanian language was taught through handicraft activities and cooking Lithuanian and Ukrainian dishes. Training was also organised for families with children. In order to ensure that the project activities had lasting value and helped more Ukrainians to learn, the project developed a teaching tool for Ukrainians.

Various research initiatives on aid to Ukraine have taken place at VMU. The Valdas Adamkus Presidential Library-Museum and the Lithuanian Emigration Institute hosted a lecture on integration of Ukrainians in Lithuania, delivered by Assoc. Prof. Valentina Demidenko, a psychologist as well as the director of the Jonava social services centre. Ambassador Petras Vaitiekūnas gave a lecture on “The Price of Freedom: the (Un)Success of Lithuania and Ukraine in the Geopolitical Context”. Postdoctoral research fellow Emilija Pundziūtė-Gallois, a researcher at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, organised a virtual roundtable discussion, “Ukraine's Cultural Diplomacy in Wartime”, with the participation of Svitlana Fomenko, Director of the Centre for Ukrainian Culture in France, Arūnas Gelūnas, Director General of the Lithuanian National Museum of Art, and Frédéric Ramel, Professor of International Relations at Sciences Po in Paris.

Since the beginning of the full-scale war in Ukraine, the staff of VMU International Relations Department has paid special attention and given support to Ukrainian students at VMU. In 2024, various actions were organised to promote student involvement in the life and community of the city and University, such as races, free climbing training, public debates, and watching basketball matches. In accordance with the “Description of the Procedure for Granting Support to Students of Vytautas Magnus University Who Are Victims of Government Repression in the Republic of Belarus and Military Actions in Ukraine”, the granting of support to citizens of the Republic of Belarus and of Ukraine studying at VMU was continued.

A total of 123 Ukrainian citizens were admitted to first cycle and second cycle programmes taught in foreign languages (6 were admitted from the spring semester of 2024, 117 were admitted from the autumn semester). Of these, 26 admitted Ukrainians received a 100% tuition fee reduction for the entire period of study, 23 received a 90% reduction, 24 received a 75% reduction, 37 received a 50% reduction, 2 received a 25% reduction, and 1 received a 15% reduction. The total amount of support granted by VMU to Ukrainian citizens decreased by 12% in 2024, from EUR 1,311,170 in 2023 to EUR 746,779 in 2024.

The number of Ukrainian students staying in VMU dormitories increased from 228 (2022) to 260 (2024), an increase of 14%. The number of Ukrainian citizens, relatives of students, and other persons with refugee status, who were also granted the opportunity to live in VMU dormitories, decreased from 102 (2022) to 21 (2024), i.e., 79%.

Since the beginning of the war, VMU has admitted a total of 481 Ukrainian citizens to full-time first cycle and second cycle studies taught in English. Before the war, 80 Ukrainians had been enrolled at VMU, while in 2024 this number grew to 363.

Developing the potential of Transform4Europe—T4EU

Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), as a member of the Transform4Europe Alliance of European Universities (T4EU), continued to successfully develop international cooperation opportunities in 2024. The initiatives of the Alliance of eleven universities were organically integrated into the daily life of VMU, opening up wider prospects for students and staff ranging from virtual exchange programmes and joint study modules to research projects and intercultural events. T4EU activities encouraged community members to actively engage in a Europe-wide exchange of knowledge and experiences, contributing to the realisation of the vision of an open, inclusive, and civic-minded European University and to the creation of shared progress.

On 1 November, VMU assumed the chairmanship of the Transform4Europe Alliance from the University of Silesia in Katowice (Poland). During its one-year term, VMU will lead the T4EU Alliance. During its T4EU chairmanship,

VMU will intensify its efforts to encourage Alliance members to develop joint study programmes, to develop entrepreneurship activities, and to mobilise the community around common goals: continuous learning, leadership, innovation, interdisciplinarity, and inclusiveness. VMU aims to strengthen the image of T4EU, to promote exchanges, joint research projects, and new study programmes, thus contributing to solving national and global challenges. The year of VMU chairmanship is characterised by an abundance of planned events: international forums, conferences, and activities for students, etc. To generate new ideas and develop the activities of the Alliance, a new space was established at our University—the T4EU Centre, open for meetings and discussions on new initiatives.

One of the most important activities of the past year, directly related to the sustainable prospects of the Alliance initiative, was the launch of the process of establishing the Alliance's legal status. This is one of the key objectives of the second phase of T4EU. According to the T4EU roadmap, the Transform4Europe Alliance must formally establish itself as a legal entity in Europe by November 2025. After lengthy discussions, all Alliance Rectors at the T4EU Board meeting endorsed the chosen format for the Alliance's legal personality and the plan for its establishment. A second important decision, which is expected to allow for competition in the science and innovation development process, is the establishment of a Joint Grants Office (JGO), which will be responsible for the development of joint projects and the generation of funds. The creation of a single and sustainable Alliance as a legal entity with a common management structure, services, and infrastructure will ensure the sustainability of the Alliance's growth and the effective continuity of resource generation and use.

The year 2024 was an especially successful year for the T4EU Alliance in developing joint study programmes. The newly developed second cycle programme “Digital Creativity Art & Science European Master”, a joint programme among three T4EU partners (the Jean Monnet University, the Catholic University of Portugal, and the University of Silesia in Katowice) won the Erasmus Mundus Joint Masters project. This 6-year project has a budget of more than EUR 3.7 million. The Erasmus Mundus Design Measures project was awarded for the development of a joint second cycle study programme “Ecology and Sustainability of Global Changes”. This programme is being developed by three T4EU partners: the University of Silesia in Katowice, the University of Trieste, and VMU.

VMU community members actively participated in various academic initiatives, discussions about open, more engaging, and inclusive education, learning in the service of the community, etc. They were encouraged to engage in active sports activity breaks at work (live via the Zoom virtual platform), and to learn about the Alliance's community initiative launched earlier this year, the Reach Out podcast series, which aims to advance the debate on digital transformation, environmental sustainability, and social change.

Since 2022, T4EU Alliance students have had the opportunity to diversify their study basket with additional modules covering the three Transform4Europe focal areas— digitalisation, ecology, and sustainability as well as social change and inclusion. Each student can choose up to five courses from a choice of six modules. Since the launch of the initiative, 108 BA Tracks courses have been offered to VMU T4EU students. In 2024, 16 VMU students chose to take T4EU BA Tracks courses offered by partner universities, while 118 students from other T4EU universities registered for courses offered by VMU.

As usual, T4EU organised a wide range of events, inviting both students and staff to participate. Key events for 2024 included the Joint Mobility Week at the Universities of Trieste and Primorska, the Strategic Assembly, the Mobility Week and the Global Partnerships Forum at the University of Silesia in Katowice, the Doctoral Student Conference and Networking Event at the Jean Monnet University, the Young Scientist Camp at Sofia University, and several Erasmus+ BIPs. All T4EU events were very popular with students. More than 300 applications for short-term mobility were submitted by VMU students and 51 students successfully made use of the opportunity, while 23 students chose T4EU universities for a semester-long Erasmus+ study. VMU staff have also actively participated in various mobility programmes, travelling to T4EU universities. A total of 57 VMU staff members went on various mobility programmes to T4EU universities.

On 26–30 August, the T4EU Alliance Summer School “(Co)happiness Laboratory” took place at VMU. Twenty-one students from nine T4EU partner universities, representing different levels and fields of study such as business, economics, psychology, and law, came to Kaunas. The training programme for Alliance students was designed and implemented by experts from the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The programme of the Summer School included theoretical lectures delivered by experts from VMU and T4EU partner universities, practical workshops, hackathon projects, meditation practices, excursions, and creative activities.

The virtual professional development programme is now in its third year of offering virtual learning to academic and non-academic staff of the T4EU Alliance, and its flexible format attracts the University's staff seeking knowledge and its integration into their daily professional activities. In the autumn, 14 training sessions were held, attended by 959 participants, 180 of whom were VMU staff (the numbers were 20(664) in 2023 and 20(327) in 2022). For academic staff, 4 more trainings on innovative teaching methods and their application were planned for January and February 2025.

In order to foster educational innovation and collaboration within the T4EU Alliance, VMU continued the annual Transform4Europe Innovative Teaching Award in 2024, which has traditionally attracted a great deal of interest from the academic community. In 2025, the Non-Academic Staff Awards were to be initiated and to be held for the first time, to recognise innovative solutions in higher education institutions and to honour the hard-working staff who devise such solutions. The results of both competitions will be announced during the Transform4Europe Conference “Enhancing Professional Excellence: Synergy of Academic and Non-Academic Staff” on 9–10 April 2025, to be held at VMU.

In 2024, the Transform4Europe Alliance launched Seed Funding, a brand-new initial-funding programme that enabled academics and researchers from partner universities, in collaboration with at least one other university in the T4EU Alliance, to receive funding of between EUR 3,000 and EUR 30,000 to carry out collaborative projects. Funded activities included research, organisation of events, and development of new curricula and teaching materials. This initiative was very popular in our community, with 49 project proposals submitted for consideration, of which 9 were selected. In total, more than EUR 177,000 was allocated to the projects selected through this call for proposals. One of the selected projects—"Empowering Social Change: Co-creating Digital Marketing Communications Between Nonprofit Organisations (NPOs) and Social Media Influencers"—will involve VMU representatives. It is planned that new calls for proposals for this initiative will be organised every year.

In order to raise the profile of the T4EU Alliance among target audiences and to promote active engagement of the academic community, a comprehensive integrated marketing strategy was implemented in 2024, including the following initiatives:

- A 12-episode talk show, "Transforming the Academic Universe", was created. It was a great success in introducing VMU and the T4EU Alliance to national and international audiences. The content not only provided valuable information about the Alliance's opportunities for students, teachers, businesses, and social partners, but also received international recognition—it was ranked by the German portal *study.eu* as one of the top ten marketing videos for higher education institutions in Europe. Some episodes of the talk show were viewed more than 21,000 times.
- A new VMU image clip was created in cooperation between the Alliance and the University's communication teams, voiced by VMU student and Olympic champion Rūta Meilutytė. The video was very popular with the public and reached more than 50,000 views.
- A strategic multi-channel communication campaign was implemented, covering Lithuanian media and social networks. The aim was to inform the general public about the mission, vision, and opportunities of the T4EU Alliance. The aim was not only to raise the profile of the Alliance, but also to create a positive image and attract new social partners.

WLU (World Lithuanian University): activities for the diaspora

In line with the strategic objective of VMU, i.e., to strengthen and develop the idea and activities of VMU World Lithuanian University (WLU), and in accordance with the strategic guidelines of the Lithuanian diaspora policy "Global Lithuania", the WLU aims to gather an active academic Lithuanian diaspora, to foster the self-awareness of Lithuanians as a diasporic nation, and to foster the ability of Lithuanians to think about the future of the diasporic nation.

With these goals in mind, the WLU and its partners organised the fourth Lithuanian Education Forum in 2024 and declared October as Lithuanian Diaspora Month. For the first time, lectures on the Lithuanian diaspora were opened to the general public and German Lithuanians became guests of the programme.

The following projects were pursued as part of the WLU mission:

- "Conversations at the World Lithuanian University"—six discussions with representatives of the Lithuanian diaspora were held at VMU in Vilnius (in the Liūtas and Francoisė Mockūnas space);
- The Vytautas Kavolis Interdisciplinary Teaching Visits Programme, supported by the Dana Gedvilienė Foundation. In May, Assoc. Prof. Evelina Gužauskytė of Wellesley College (USA) was invited to visit the University.
- For the sixth year in a row, the informal studies course "Challenges of Lithuanian Identity and Family Narratives" was conducted. Ten teachers from Lithuanian and Lithuanian schools abroad attended.

The WLU platform was complemented by new ideas and activities: the WLU education project for Lithuanian and Lithuanian language schools abroad was launched; the first issue of the WLU magazine "Connections" was published; and the WLU one-stop shop website was launched with detailed information on study opportunities at VMU for the Lithuanian diaspora in both Lithuanian and English.

An important aspect of the WLU's activities in 2024 was cooperation with organisations and figures from the diaspora and Lithuania: the Education Council of the World Lithuanian Community, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Language Schools Association, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sports, Seimas member Dalia Asanavičiūtė, the President Valdas Adamkus Library-Museum, the Venezuelan Lithuanian repatriate community, the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania.

Vilma Bijekienė, Vice-Rector of Communications, participated in the activities of the Coordination Commission for the Lithuanian Diaspora, organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania. WLU Coordinator Ingrida Dačioliienė participated in the Ministry's Working Group on the Implementation of the Lithuanian Diaspora Policy and in the Working Group on Publicity of Lithuanian Diaspora Education Abroad.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology's International Science and Technology Initiatives Programme for Lithuania

In line with the University's strategic goals of expanding international cooperation and promoting innovation, VMU took the lead in the implementation of the MIT-MISTI Lithuania programme. This programme will open unique

opportunities for Lithuania's science and innovation ecosystem to integrate into a global network, to collaborate with the world-class Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Boston, USA), and to foster the development of innovation in Lithuania.

On 9 September 2024, VMU was elected as the coordinator of the MIT-MISTI consortium in a vote by the Research Council of Lithuania (RCL). On 19 December, a formal Joint Activity Agreement was signed, establishing the joint activities of the consortium partners.

The consortium partners were listed as Vytautas Magnus University (consortium coordinator), Kaunas University of Technology, Klaipėda University, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University (VILNIUS TECH), Vilnius Academy of Arts, Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, Lithuanian Energy Institute, Ignitis Group, Lithuanian Railways, and UAB Novian.

Following the signing of the agreement with MIT in January 2025, VMU, as the consortium coordinator, will be actively involved in shaping the programme's strategy and coordinating its activities. The main activities planned for the programme include: the MIT student internship programme, the "Global Seed Fund" programme, and STEAM and entrepreneurship education in Lithuanian schools. The consortium also plans to organise training for science and business, to participate in technology and innovation fairs in Boston and at MIT, and to initiate and organise conferences with MIT on relevant regional and global topics.

The MIT-MISTI Lithuania programme is also expected to strengthen Lithuania's image as an innovation and technology centre in the international arena and contribute to the country's economic growth.

Strengthening the reputation of the University

VMU scored highly in the QS European University Ranking. Vytautas Magnus University performed well in the latest QS Europe University Rankings, rising from 284th to 267th place in the overall ranking and from 105th to 99th place in Northern Europe. In total, 685 higher education institutions in Europe were ranked. In terms of individual ranking categories, VMU performed particularly well in terms of student-staff ratio, where it was ranked seventh in all of Europe, as well as 43rd in the category of incoming exchange students, and 152nd in terms of the diversity of international students. VMU also scored highly in employer ratings (175th in Europe) and in outgoing exchange students (165th). The biggest jump for VMU was in the employability performance category, where the University scored 37.4 points this year (20.2 last year). The University also made a significant rise in the International Academic Network category, scoring 20.9 points this year, up from 11.9 points in 2023. The University also rose impressively in Sustainable Development and Sustainability (19.5 points this year, up from 7.2 last year) and in the ratio of foreign staff to all academic staff (18.3 points this year, up from 7.4 last year).

VMU jumped by over 100 places in the QS World University Ranking. In the latest QS World University Rankings (QS), Vytautas Magnus University significantly improved its already-high indicators, especially in the field of internationalisation, where VMU remained the leader in Lithuania in terms of the number of students and teachers coming from abroad, and in terms of the total number of points among the five Lithuanian universities ranked, VMU rose from fourth to second place. The best result was achieved in terms of the number of foreign students: in this category, VMU ranked 304th among all universities worldwide, thus achieving its best result in this category and remaining unrivalled in Lithuania. Last year, VMU was ranked 341st in this category. The biggest jump in the ranking was in the number of foreign teachers, where VMU ranked 520th in the world, up 146 positions (last year, the University was ranked 666th). VMU was also the leader among Lithuanian universities in the number of foreign teachers. As in 2023, VMU significantly raised its score in terms of student-staff ratio, ranking 371st in the world, up from last year's 410th place.

QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024. In the latest QS World University Rankings by Subject 2024, VMU earned more than 40 points in the majority of the assessed fields of study, while VMU improved its score in 16 narrow fields of study. Among the broad subject areas, VMU received the highest score in Arts and Humanities, with 58.1 points (compared to 53.2 last year). The other assessed broad areas also scored highly, with more than 40 points. Among the narrow subject areas, a total of 38 fields of study at VMU were rated, 24 of which were rated above 40 points. In Agriculture and Forestry, VMU was ranked 351–400 with 51.6 points. Particularly high scores were also awarded to Education (53.4 points), Law (51 points), Business Management and Administration (48.9 points), Music (48.7 points), Linguistics (48.7 points), and other subject areas.

In the "Reitingai" magazine's ranking of universities, VMU ranks second in terms of scholarship and academic staff. In the 2024 ranking of state universities published by "Reitingai" magazine, VMU was ranked second in Lithuania in terms of science, art, sports, and academic staff. In the overall ranking, VMU was ranked fourth. VMU ranked second in the country in terms of scientific, artistic, and/or sporting activities and the highest achievements of academic staff (8.89 points). The University also ranked second in the category of current and future academic staff (3.34 points). This criteria group assessed the ratio of teachers under 35, PhD holders, the ratio of recognised artists to all teachers, and the ratio of those who defended their doctoral thesis in 2023 to all those began doctoral studies in 2019. VMU also ranked competitively high in other criteria assessed in the ranking.

For the second year in a row, VMU remained among the leaders in the "Reitingai" magazine's ranking of fields of study. VMU ranked second in Lithuania in terms of the number of first cycle study programmes in which the University took first place, with VMU leading in a total of ten first cycle study programmes. VMU ranked third in the country in terms of its leadership in Master's studies, where the University took first place in eleven fields. In first cycle study programmes, VMU was ranked first in ten fields: Agronomy, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Studies, Accounting, Ecology, Food Studies, Forestry, Regional Studies, Religious Studies, and Agriculture. The top-

ranked VMU first cycle study programmes were in the following fields: Environmental Engineering (96.21), Food Studies (95.29), Religious Studies (92.86), Regional Studies (90.33), History (88.41), Accounting (84.88), Psychology (80.02), Media Arts (79.66), Pedagogy (78.33), Sociology (77.99), Business (77.29), Marketing (76.97), Art History and Criticism (76.18), and Law (75.76). This year, VMU also moved up to second place in the fields of Law and Psychology. In the second cycle study programmes, VMU remained the leader in Lithuania in eleven fields of study: Agronomy, Anthropology, Environmental Engineering, Environmental Studies, Education, Ecology, Cultural Studies, Food Studies, Art Studies and Criticism, Forestry, Theology, and Religious Studies. The most points were awarded to VMU second cycle study programmes in the following fields: Education (91.11), Ecology (87.5), Theology, Religious Studies (83.2), Environmental Studies (83.16), Art Studies and Criticism (82.41), Environmental Engineering (81.76), History (75.3), Political Science (71.39).

QS World University Rankings: Sustainability. Vytautas Magnus University was ranked 824 out of 1,744 institutions in the QS Sustainability World Ranking 2024. In Europe, VMU ranks 332 out of 556. The rankings were given in a variety of areas, with an emphasis on addressing environmental, social impact, and other important issues. This represents the University's efforts to engage in global sustainability challenges. The University performed best in the Environmental Training category (966th in the world, 346th in Europe, 100th in Northern Europe) and in Environmental Research (784th in the world). The University scored well in Governance, ranking 662nd globally, indicating a stronger organisation of activities compared to the other ranked aspects.

Sport achievements

Achievements of VMU students at Paris Olympics. Eight VMU students took part in the most important sporting event of 2024—Paris Olympics, competing in five sports. They were rower Giedrius Bieliauskas, wrestler Mindaugas Venckaitis, beach volleyball player Ainė Raupelytė (paired with Monika Paulikienė), swimmer Kotryna Teterevkova, swimmer Rūta Meilutytė, and the 3x3 basketball team of Evaldas Džiaugys, Šarūnas Vingelis, and Aurelijus Pukelis (the fourth player on the team, Gintautas Matulis, was not VMU student). The 3x3 basketball team was the most successful, winning third place and bronze medals. Kotryna Teterevkova (200 m breaststroke) took a high 5th place in her event. For this achievement, the athlete from VMU was voted the best female student athlete of 2024 by the Lithuanian Student Sports Association. The other VMU athletes did quite well, too: Giedrius Bieliauskas (rowing—single scull)—10th place, Rūta Meilutytė (swimming, 100 m breaststroke)—11th place, Mindaugas Venckaitis (wrestling)—13th place.

VMU graduate athlete Oksana Dobrovolskaya (discus throw) participated in Paris Paralympic Games. They were her second Games, and she managed to significantly improve her result in the event (by 5 metres) and take 5th place (compared to 8th place at the Tokyo Games).

Achievements of VMU students at the World University Championships. VMU students took part in the World University Championships (FISU) in six sports: 3x3 basketball, beach volleyball, rowing, kayak and canoe rowing, modern pentathlon, and sport climbing. A total of 12 VMU athletes competed in the championships and achieved excellent results, winning one gold medal and one silver medal:

- On 22–24 November, VMU 3x3 basketball team of Augustinas Mikštas, Gabrielius Čelka, Nojus Lebskas, and Rokas Jocyš won the gold medal in Xiamen (China).
- On 20–24 August, the FISU World Student Modern Pentathlon Championships were held for the first time in Kaunas, at VMU Sports Centre (and only for the second time in Lithuania), bringing together the strongest student pentathletes from 19 countries around the world. The silver medal was won by Anastasija Končytė, a VMU athlete in the modern pentathlon.

Achievements of VMU students at the VII European University Games. The VII European University Games (EUSA) in Debrecen and Miskolc (both locations—in Hungary) included 17 different sports in the competition programme. VMU athletes won six medals, securing twelfth place overall among more than 400 universities. The University's athletes participated in seven sports: 3x3 basketball, basketball, beach volleyball, judo, karate, table tennis, and badminton. VMU athletes achieved excellent results, winning two gold medals (men's basketball and women's judo, weight category 70 kg), a silver medal (women's singles badminton), and three bronze medals (beach volleyball, men's 3x3 basketball, women's doubles table tennis).

The list of notable international achievements also includes European University Rowing gold medals won by VMU athletes competing in Zagreb (Croatia).

Taking into account all the achievements of VMU athletes in 2024, VMU rose to its highest-ever position, 4th–5th place in the overall ranking of European universities (10th in 2022, 9th in 2023), consolidating its position as having some of the best athletes representing universities in Europe.

Achievements of VMU students at the Baltic Student Sports Games (SELL). Vytautas Magnus University achieved an impressive result at the Baltic Student Sports Games (SELL), which took place in and on VMU sports halls and fields, with all of the competition on the final day taking place exclusively at VMU. This was the first time that a competition of this level and number of sports had been organised and held at VMU since the beginning of the University. The University's athletes won 52 medals at the Games (judo athletes won 7 gold and 3 silver medals; the track-and-field team members won 5 gold, 6 silver, and 2 bronze medals; badminton players won 5 gold, 2 silver, and 2 bronze medals; table tennis players won 4 gold and 2 bronze medals; swimmers won 3 gold and 1 bronze medal; sport climbers won 1 silver and 1 bronze medal; the basketball and 3x3 basketball teams won 1 silver and 2 bronze medals; volleyball and beach volleyball players each won 1 gold medal; chess players won 1 silver

and 1 bronze medal), and as a group, the University's athletes finished 1st in the final ranking of all universities, demonstrating the highest level of sportsmanship.

Achievements of VMU students at the Lithuanian Student Championships. Lithuanian Student Team Sports Leagues and the Lithuanian Student Sports Association (LSSA) organised sports championships in 2023–2024. In the sports season, 196 VMU athletes competed and won a total of 42 medals, including 25 gold, 10 silver, and 7 bronze medals (sambo wrestlers won 7 gold, 1 silver, and 2 bronze medals; Greco-Roman wrestlers earned 5 gold, 2 silver, and 1 bronze medal; indoor track-and-field athletes won 5 gold, 4 silver, and 3 bronze medals; the rowing team won 3 gold and 2 silver medals; the climbing team won 1 gold and 2 silver medals; a cross-country runner won a gold medal; the basketball, mini-football, and volleyball teams each won 1 gold medal; and a fencing athlete won 1 bronze medal), and in the final Lithuanian Student Championships 2024, VMU took 1st place in the final ranking of universities, in terms of medals won.

VMU students, high performance athletes, 2024:

- Giedrius Bieliauskas, Faculty of Economics and Management, rowing, participant in the Olympic Games (10th place), 3rd place in the European Rowing Championships, the athlete was also recognised as the best athlete of the city of Kaunas in the 2024 Kaunas Sports Awards;
- Gabrieliūs Čelka, Education Academy, 3x3 basketball, World University Cup winner, European University Champion, 3rd place in the European University Games;
- Evaldas Džiaugys, Education Academy, 3x3 basketball, Olympic bronze medallist;
- Artūras Gelažninkas, Education Academy, motorsport, winner of the Dakar Rally single rider class;
- Rokas Jakubauskas, Faculty of Economics and Management, rowing, quadruple sculls, gold medal winner of the European University Championships;
- Rokas Jocys, Education Academy, 3x3 basketball, World University Cup winner;
- Martyna Kazlauskaitė, Education Academy, rowing, double sculls, gold medal winner at the World University Games, 5th place at the World University Championships;
- Armandas Kelmelis, Faculty of Economics and Management, rowing, double sculls, European University Double Sculls Champion, Olympic Games participant;
- Audrius Knašas, second cycle study programme in the Faculty of Economics and Management, beach volleyball, European University Games champion, Lithuanian beach volleyball national team player.
- Vitalijus Kozys, Faculty of Economics and Management, basketball, World University Games participant (7th place), European University Games champion, LKL player;
- Nojus Lebskas, Faculty of Bioeconomy Development at the Agriculture Academy, 3x3 basketball, World University Cup gold medallist, European University Games 3rd place;
- Gytis Masiulis, Faculty of Economics and Management, basketball, Lithuanian national basketball team candidate, LKL player;
- Sergej Maslobojev, Education Academy, kickboxing, World Kickboxing Champion;
- Rūta Meilutytė, Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, swimming, winner of two gold medals at the World Swimming Championships, Olympic Games participant;
- Augustinas Mikštas, Education Academy, 3x3 basketball, World University Cup winner, 3rd place in the European University Games;
- Raminta Morkūnaitė, Education Academy, rowing, European University Championships silver medal, World University Games 5th place;
- Dovydas Nemeravičius, Faculty of Economics and Management, rowing, double sculls, World Rowing Quadruple Sculls Champion, European University Double Sculls Champion;
- Benas Paunksnis, Education Academy, rowing, quadruple sculls, gold medal winner at the European University Championships, 6th place at the World University Championships;
- Aurelijus Pukelis, Education Academy, 3x3 basketball, Olympic bronze medallist;
- Justinas Ramanauskas, Faculty of Economics and Management, basketball, European University Basketball Championship 2nd place winner (silver medal), European University Games champion, LKL basketball player;
- Domantas Riauba, Education Academy, rowing, quadruple sculls, gold medal winner of the European University Championships, 4th place winner of the World University Championships;
- Mantas Rubštavičius, Faculty of Economics and Management, basketball, Lithuanian national basketball team candidate, LKL player;
- Arnas Rumševičius, Education Academy, beach volleyball, European University Games silver and bronze medallist;
- Patrikas Stankevičius, Faculty of Bioeconomy Development at the Agriculture Academy, beach volleyball, European university champion, Lithuanian beach volleyball national team player;
- Povilas Stankūnas, Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology at the Agriculture Academy, rowing, World University Games gold medallist, European University Championships gold medallist;

- Kotryna Teterevkova, Education Academy, swimming, Best Lithuanian Student Athlete 2024 (LSSA), Olympic Games 5th place winner, World Swimming Championships 5th place winner;
- Marius Valinskas, Faculty of Economics and Management, basketball, World University Games participant (7th place), LKL basketball player;
- Grantas Vasiliauskas, Faculty of Economics and Management, basketball, European University Basketball Championship 2nd place winner (silver medals), LKL basketball player;
- Mindaugas Venckaitis, Education Academy, Greco-Roman wrestling, Olympic Games participant;
- Artūr Vincelovič, Education Academy, beach volleyball, European University Games silver and bronze medallist;
- Šarūnas Vingelis, Education Academy, 3x3 basketball, Olympic bronze medallist;
- Tomas Zdanavičius, Faculty of Economics and Management, basketball, World University Games participant (7th place), European University Games champion, LKL player;
- Eimantas Žilius, Education Academy, 3x3 basketball, World University Cup winner, European University Champion.

The best athletes of the 2024 Lithuanian student team sports leagues:

- National Student Volleyball League, volleyball, Martyna Paukštytė, Faculty of Social Sciences, best volleyball player of NSVL, coach Viltė Bogdanovič;
- Lithuanian Student Basketball League, basketball, Adomas Sidarevičius, Education Academy, best basketball player of the Lithuanian Student Basketball League, coach Arūnas Juknevičius.

Highlights of VMU sports teams:

- VMU 3x3 basketball team won the European University Games 2024, Debrecen (Hungary)—3rd place, World University 3x3 Basketball Cup 2024; Xiamen (China)—1st place. The team was also recognised as the best team of the year in the Lithuanian Student Sports Association and Kaunas Sports Awards.
- VMU women's table tennis team became the champion of the Lithuanian Students Association table tennis tournament, SELL Games, and won third place in the European Student Games. At the Kaunas Sports Awards, they were recognized as the best women's team in 2024.
- SELL Beach Volleyball team (males)—champions;
- SELL Volleyball team (females)—champions;
- SELL Basketball teams (two teams participated) (males)—vice-champions and bronze medal winners;
- SELL 3x3 basketball teams (males and females)—bronze medal winners.
- VMU team (males)—champion of the Lithuanian Student Basketball League;
- VMU volleyball team (females)—champion of the National Student Volleyball League;
- VMU football team (males)—winner of the Lithuanian Student Football League's Mini-Football (8x8) Cup.

The Kaunas Sports Awards recognised the SELL Baltic Games organised at VMU Sports Centre and the World University Championships in Modern Pentathlon (both organised jointly with LSSA) as the event of the year.

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

Research on Bioeconomy, Biosystems Engineering, and the European Green Deal is carried out in the University's priority research areas: Bioeconomy and Biosystems Engineering, and Sustainability of Agro-, Forest, and Water Ecosystems and Climate Change. University researchers published 69 articles on the European Green Deal and climate change, in peer-reviewed publications with a citation index listed in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science database. In recent years, articles on the European Green Deal and climate change have accounted on average for around 21% of the total number of articles published by VMU researchers in the publications with a citation index listed in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science database. The highest number of publications are linked to the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Good health and well-being (Goal 3), Combating climate change (Goal 13), Forest, land, biodiversity (Goal 15), Fighting hunger, safe and healthy food, sustainable agriculture (Goal 2), and Affordable and clean energy (Goal 7).

In 2024, 81 research and development (R&D) projects were carried out at the University, related to the implementation of the bioeconomy and the European Green Deal policy (2022—50, 2023—84). The most common themes of the projects related to the following elements of the European Green Deal: the zero-pollution objective and the conservation and restoration of ecosystems and biodiversity (15 projects each), a fair, healthy, and environmentally friendly farm-to-fork food system (11 projects), the supply of clean energy (9 projects), and climate change and the circular economy (8 projects each). 13 projects were related to bioeconomy policy. Six Horizon Europe projects on bioeconomy and the European Green Deal were launched.

VMU Agriculture Academy focused on strengthening partnerships with business and social partners in implementing national and international initiatives to improve the image of agriculture, increase the social impact

of science, contribute to the sustainable development of the country's agri-business and rural areas, and strengthen synergies among science, studies, and business. 17 new cooperation agreements were concluded.

The Lithuanian STI Roadmap includes 3 research infrastructures that reflect the European Green Deal in a consortium of VMU and other Lithuanian research and study institutions: the Research Infrastructure for Climate-Smart Regenerative and Precision Agriculture (CLIMAGRO LT is seeking to become a member of the AnaEE-ERIC network, which is addressing ecosystem management issues on a global and regional scale); the Centre of Competence for Advanced Forestry (FOREST 4.0 develops digital technologies for future forestry and the forest-based bioeconomy); and Plant phenotyping infrastructure for sustainable production of functional food (PhenoPlant infrastructure is important for the development of future varieties of plants through the application of advanced technologies and techniques such as drones, satellite, and robotic systems to promote the development of sustainable food production).

Further development of activities:

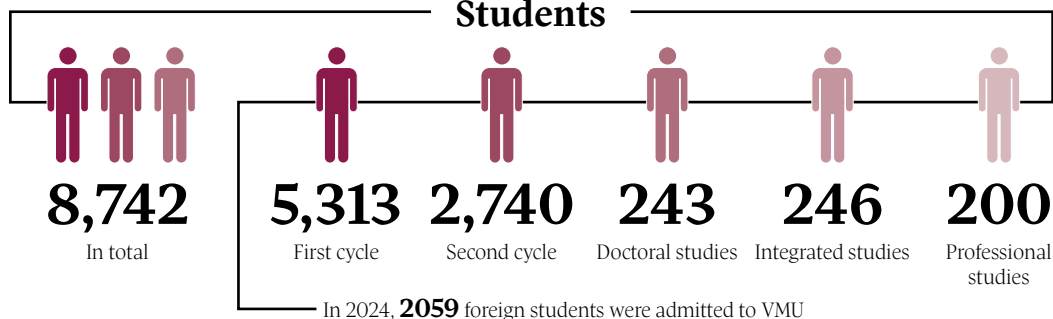
- Strengthening the University's international and national recognition and relationships, taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the MISTI Lithuania programme and consortium coordination.
- Fostering the University's historical memory and traditions, developing the dissemination of the University's artes liberales ideas and implementing VMU chairmanship programme of the T4EU Alliance.
- Creating added value for the University by publicising research, projects, and studies, and discussing current and future events, phenomena, and circumstances in the country and the world, thus consolidating VMU identity.
- Developing joint projects between VMU and the Diaspora, publicising WLU activities that engage Diaspora youth and encourage them to choose to study at VMU, forging international partnerships that give meaning to the University's identity, and strengthening leadership in Lithuanian language education activities.
- Creating digital and social progress, sustainable environmental and societal transformation and T4EU activities.
- Increasing the visibility and recognition of the University's highly competent experts in the public, national, and international media, and improving cooperation with information partners.
- Actively collaborating with research organisations and companies on climate change, sustainable energy, smart, environmentally friendly transport through start-ups and the promotion and development of European Green Deal innovation.
- Enhancing the exploitation of scientific potential, innovation, and the creation of innovative businesses, and the dissemination of scientific information by promoting cooperation with business organisations.
- Seeking clear feedback, monitoring and evaluating the impact and results of marketing and communication projects and activities, and identifying opportunities for further development.
- Consolidating the leadership of VMU in the context of the Eastern Partnership by continuing to support the Ukrainian academic community and by developing the activities of the Centre of Ukraine and the Mariupol State University Centre.



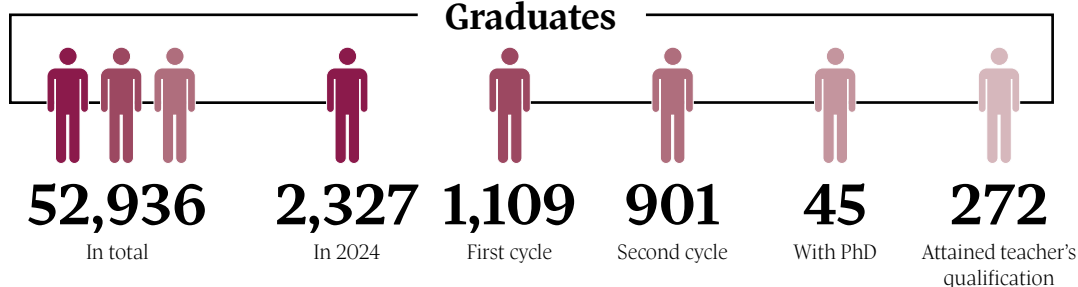
University Community in Harmony and Consolidation



Students



Graduates

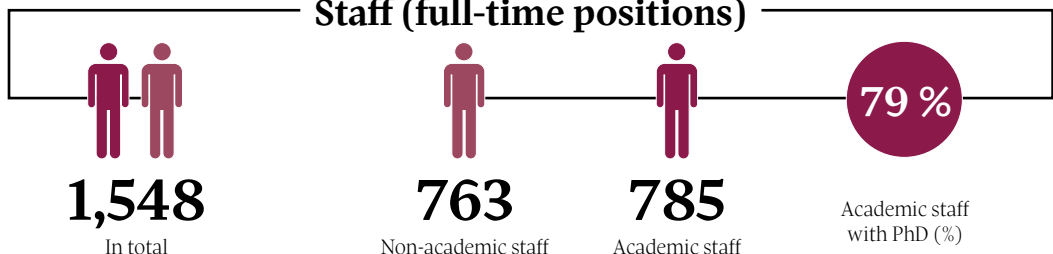


Academia cum laude students **11**

Members of the Lithuanian World Community who are involved in WLU activities **38**

Diaspora students **65**

Staff (full-time positions)



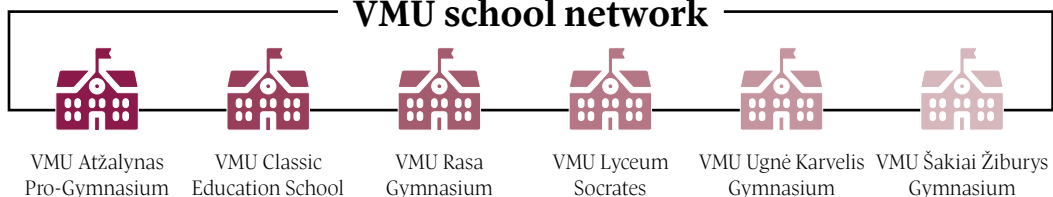
Funded by projects:

Full-time positions of academic staff – **108**

Full-time positions of administrative staff – **63**

Foreign teachers visited VMU in 2024 **351**

VMU school network



VMU-named classrooms were established in 8 schools:

- VMU Creative Industries classroom, VMU German Studies classroom, VMU Natural Sciences classroom at Kaunas Jonas Jablonskis Gymnasium
- VMU Artes Liberales classroom, VMU Bilingual Education (German) and Entrepreneurship classroom, VMU Natural Sciences (STEAM) classroom at Kaunas Steponas Darius and Stasys Girėnas Gymnasium
- Natural Sciences, Creative Media, and Entrepreneurship classes at President Valdas Adamkus Gymnasium
- VMU University classroom at Ariogala Gymnasium in Raseiniai District
- VMU Philosophy classrooms at Pakruojis Atžalynas Gymnasium, Radviliškis Lizdeika Gymnasium, Šiauliai University Gymnasium
- VMU SMART and VMU Multilingualism Classes at Kaunas Santara Gymnasium

University Community in Harmony and Consolidation

The merger with the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences and the Aleksandras Stulginskis University led to a special focus on community cohesion and synergy in VMU strategic documents. Community cohesion and consolidation are based on the principles of inclusion, tolerance, and cooperation. Community cohesion and synergy are to be achieved by respecting the diversity of the community, ensuring human rights, dignity, non-discrimination, equality of opportunity and diversity on the basis of gender, age, race, religion, language, culture, disability status, socio-economic and other grounds. In order to ensure the well-being of the members of the community, emphasis is placed on the development of a motivating work and study environment at the University and on the effectiveness of internal and external communication.

Community coherence and synergy

Development of equal opportunities and diversity. In order to achieve community cohesion and synergy within the University, activities to ensure gender equality and equal opportunities for all members of the community at VMU continued. Measures to promote respect for diversity and inclusion at the University were applied in accordance with the strategic documents of the University, such as VMU Strategic Action Plan 2021–2027, Human Resources Management Policy 2022, Gender Equality Plan 2021–2025, VMU Disability Policy 2021, VMU Procedures for the Prevention of Sexual Harassment and Gender-based Violence 2023, and VMU Academic Ethics Code of Conduct 2023. The Disability, Community Welfare, and Equal Opportunity Coordinators participated in in-service training and delivered trainings to the community on the topics of discrimination prevention, inclusion and diversity, and community welfare.

The Employee Well-being Survey (hereinafter, the survey) was conducted for the second time in October–November 2024, using the innovative “UNLOCK Tests” platform. A total of 2,048 University employees, including 186 foreign employees, were included in the Survey. 634 employees (31%) participated and completed the full questionnaire, of which 24 employees completed the questionnaire in English. There was a noticeable decrease in participation compared to 2022, when the participation rate was 37%. In response to the weaknesses highlighted by staff in the first survey (2022), the focus was on staff incentives, internal communication and dissemination of information, and community mobilisation and inclusion. The survey showed that actions to improve employee well-being and inclusion were reflected in rising strategic indicators: employee job satisfaction increased by more than 2% and the employee empowerment indicator rose by 4% (from 72.13% to 76.15%). The overall engagement indicator increased by 3.13% and the employee diversity and inclusion indicator increased by 3.58%. Also in 2024, the results of the survey showed an improving microclimate and growing employee loyalty to the University. More and more University employees felt that the working atmosphere was supportive, and that their physical and emotional well-being is cared for. This was reflected in a 4.84% improvement in the assessment of the microclimate (from 69.99% to 74.83%) and an increase of more than 4% in staff loyalty to the University (from 78.48% to 82.81%). It is noteworthy that the change in the index rose from a negative (-3.6%) to a positive level, 34.38, when the average in Lithuania is only 14.87. It is also worth noting that most of the indicators in the 2024 survey exceeded not only the University's previous results, but also the overall Lithuanian average. The lowest scores in the 2024 survey were for the workload, overtime, and remuneration indicators. This reflects an increasing workload and demands on staff, which leads them to expect appropriate remuneration that is more in line with their responsibilities, job competences, and experience.

The staff at VMU (1,548 positions in total) averaged 1,975 employees, of whom 64% (1,264) were women. In 2024, there were 243 students enrolled in doctoral studies, of whom 137 were women. In an organisation with a majority-female population of staff and students, we can be pleased with the improving trends in representation and governance, with women's representation and participation in decision-making. For example, more than half of the members of the Senate in 2024 were women, and in the University Council's term of office from 2020 onwards, the 11 members included five women, including the Chair of the Council. Another indicator, the relatively small gender pay gap, also pointed to a favourable working environment for women (the average remuneration in November 2024: EUR 2,595.29, women: EUR 2,681.50, men: EUR 2,456.37).

The cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic, and racial diversity of the University community was associated with a high level of internationalisation. As of December 2024, there were 171 foreign citizens working at VMU. As of December 2024, there were 33 Ukrainian citizens working at the University: 22 women and 11 men. The high number of persons of different nationalities and the multicultural environment within the community at VMU continued to encourage additional focus on building an inclusive organisational culture and bilingualism, increasing the availability of information in English, and organising awareness-raising events in English as well as in Lithuanian. Guidelines on inclusive and gender-sensitive language and communication were being developed in order to mainstream the principles of inclusion and diversity in the organisation's daily and public communication. It should be noted that an increasing number of elements in the electronic employee self-service system (including the intranet) were more and more available in English. Important documents were translated as a matter of course and newsletters in English were made ever more common—the whole community was encouraged to contribute more to the creation of content and the translation of news and announcements into English.

Vytautas Magnus University, protecting and defending human rights, continued to cooperate with national and international human rights organisations, organising awareness-raising events and discussions. Prof. Dalia Leinartė is a member of the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). Prof. Milda Ališauskienė continues to coordinate the work of the Organising Committee of the National Human Rights Forum (NHRF). Prof. Artūras Tereškinas, together with Indrė Kaminckaitė, hosts LRT's podcast "72 atspalviai", devoted to gender, gender identities, gender behaviour, and issues of exclusion (migration, disability, LGBT). The University also implemented national and international projects aimed at improving gender balance, reducing exclusion, and increasing inclusion.

Disability, the policy of inclusive opportunities, and its implementation. In 2024, 17 different activities were organised (2022—15, 2023—18) for students with disabilities and individual needs, and for the community at VMU and society at large to reflect on and implement the disability policy "University of Inclusive Opportunities". Among others, it would be worth highlighting the third "Disability Forum: Inclusive Higher Education 2024", held on 22 May, which aimed at discussing the current situation, issues, and challenges of enhancing the professional identity of students with disabilities and individual needs in specific fields of study, as well as a meeting with Prof. Theresia Degener, former Chair of the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Systemic changes related to increasing the inclusion of students with disabilities or individual needs were implemented, such as the creation of the "University and Disability" section on the intranet for VMU staff; the completion of the development of the system for identifying the needs of students with disabilities and individual needs in the study process (NeSIS), and, in collaboration with VMU Innovative Studies Institute, the introduction of accessibility settings on the main menu bar in the virtual learning environment "Moodle", in order to increase accessibility.

In 2024, 147 students with disabilities or individual needs were studying at VMU, accounting for 1.7% (1.6% in 2022, 1.6% in 2023) of the total number of students studying at the University (8,742). The largest number of students with disabilities or individual needs was studying at the Faculty of Social Sciences (29), the lowest number was at the Music Academy (1). In 2024, the largest single group of students with a disability of some type had a moderate disability (61, ability range rated at 30–45%), followed by students with severe disabilities (36, ability range rated at 0–25%), followed in turn by students with mild disabilities (24, ability range rated $\geq 50\%$). A similar trend was observed for some time. The number of students with individual needs increased from 17 (2023) to 24 (2024).

Students with disabilities are encouraged to take part in Erasmus+ exchanges, making use of additional funding. Support can be tailored to individual needs, depending on the nature of the disability: for additional costs of tools and/or services or for the living and travel expenses of the accompanying person during a mobility visit.

Volunteer activity. 163 students signed new volunteering contracts in 2024 (192 in 2022, 174 in 2023), bringing the total number of volunteers (taking into account the graduation of some students) to 499 (295 in 2022, 429 in 2023), but the number of volunteer hours decreased to 8,279 (2022—16,697; 2023—23,487), because the number of events requiring volunteers decreased to 27 in 2024 (2022—33; 2023—30) due to the fact that some events were held virtually or did not take place. Thus, on average, one volunteer volunteered 17 hours per year in 2024. The highest number of volunteering hours collected by one person in 2024 was 148 hours and the lowest number was 4 hours.

International Volunteer Day was celebrated on 5 December. Representatives of the University administration celebrated the day with the most active volunteers of the University in an informal meeting. On the same day, a video congratulating the volunteers was shared on the University's Instagram account and on the Facebook page "For VMU Students".

The University continued its volunteering-mentoring project "Lodestar", involving two schools: VMU "Atžalynas" Pro-Gymnasium and VMU Ugnė Karvelis Gymnasium. University and school students participating in the project (6 pairs in 2022, 12 pairs in 2023, 9 pairs in 2024) spent at least two hours together each week doing homework or going to cultural and educational activities.

Student mentoring programme. Thirty-eight first-year mentors (33 in 2022, 37 in 2023) helped VMU first-year students to successfully integrate into the University and the campus at the event "Intro to Studies 2024". The mentors received specialised training, were introduced to the academic departments and the opportunities available to students and were actively involved in the organisation and delivery of the individual events of "Intro to Studies 2024". The annual event provided new students with the opportunity not only to get to know the University and its structure better, but also to network with fellow students, mentors, and other members of the community.

Fostering multilingualism. Since 2002, VMU Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) has been the most effective university unit in Lithuania for improving multilingual competences, a leader in the field of foreign language teaching, assessment of linguistic competences, and research on the development of linguistic competences, offering a wide range of 33 languages: English, Arabic, Czech, Danish, Estonian, Esperanto, Farsi, Spanish, Italian, Japanese, Georgian (Kartvelian), Chinese, Korean, Croatian, Latvian, Polish, Lithuanian Sign Language, Latin, New Testament Greek, Norwegian, Portuguese, French, Russian, Romanian, Biblical (Classical) Hebrew, Serbian, Finnish, Modern Hebrew, Swedish, Turkish, Ukrainian, and German.

As part of its mission to encourage internationality, VMU IFL 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 cycles, for the academic and the non-academic community, for the general public to learn languages, and ensures opportunities for language learning throughout life.

In 2024, a competent, multilingual, and multicultural team of 57 teachers, 28 in English and 29 in other languages, of whom 11 taught their native language, ensured the quality of language teaching.

Internal communication

As part of the continuity of strategic plans and in order to improve internal communication and employee engagement, the MELP mobile app, focusing on employee benefits and recreational information and employee recognition, was launched to the community in the summer of 2024, and began to function on the staff intranet in the autumn, using the Microsoft platform, with the main purpose of communicating about topics of interest to the community, sharing information among community members, and making the University's internal documents accessible.

Between September 2024 and January 2025, more than fifty internal communication messages were shared on the intranet about staff events, trainings, invitations to join scientific project activities, changes in internal procedures, and the opportunity developed for staff to quickly and easily find needed documents, FAQ and other information. The intranet also provided newly-hired staff with a "A Practical Guide for New Staff Members" to help them settle into their job.

Regular community newsletters continued to be the main internal communication tool.

This year, as the University celebrated the 35th anniversary of its re-establishment and of *artes liberales* studies in Lithuania, and in an effort to strengthen internal communication and culture, the community was invited to get to know each other better. What do students, faculty, and staff do in life, not only at the University, but also in their free time? What hobbies give us joy; what activities fill our spare minutes? Ten video recordings were created for a special series, "VMU People and 35", featuring candid encounters with the people of the University, all united by the spirit of *artes liberales*.

Emotional and physical well-being of the community

Strengthening psychological well-being. In line with the objectives of VMU Strategic Plan 2021–2027, a strong focus was put on enhancing the emotional and physical well-being of the University community in 2024. At VMU Psychology Clinic, 799 individual consultations with a psychologist (145 virtually, 654 face-to-face with a psychologist) were provided; a series of seminars was organised to strengthen the psychological well-being of the community (students and staff); an emotional support group for staff was set up, a psychological support and self-awareness group was set up for students identifying as LGBTQ+; monitoring of the psychological well-being of the students of the University and the factors relevant to it was conducted. Psychological help was provided in Lithuanian, English, and Russian. 98% of clients who completed feedback questionnaires indicated that they were very satisfied or satisfied with the services provided by the Psychology Clinic; 96.6% indicated that they found the services very useful or useful; 96.6% would recommend the services to others.

Health promotion and physical activity. VMU Sports Centre offered various activities to improve the wellness of the University community: physical health assessment, evaluation, consultations; a wide selection of physical activities (a variety of workouts); theoretical lectures on wellness and physical activity.

Events and initiatives initiated or carried out by the Sports Centre were related to health promotion and physical activity. A Sport and Health Week was organised on 8–12 April to celebrate World Health Day. Throughout the week, various competitions took place at the Sports Centre, and during the main Health Day, all those who wanted to learn about themselves and their physical condition had the opportunity to take a variety of tests free of charge in the Physical Activity and Wellness Studio, located in the foyer of the first floor of the main University building at K. Donelaičio g. 52. On 18 May, the Sports Centre organised the Agriculture Academy centenary run (a distance of 1,924 m) with 175 participants. On 1 June, together with the Kaunas District Municipality Sports Department, the Sports Centre organised a run for the district community in Zapyškis (300 m, 1 km, 3 km, 5 km) with 282 participants. The Sports Centre invited the community to join the #walk15 higher education national physical activity challenge, the aim of which was to join with others in one's higher education institution by walking, being physically active, and thus forming a community to promote a healthy and high-quality lifestyle, all while being a part of VMU.

Healthy University Network activities. VMU was and is a member of the Health Promotion Universities Network, which implements VMU Health Promoting University Programme 2022–2026, approved on 1 March 2022. In 2024, VMU organised various activities including the provision of drinking water to athletes, the development of sports infrastructure (a beach volleyball court, a 3x3 basketball court, a baseball field), wellness lectures and seminars, virtual sessions for exercise and psychological support for the community.

University alumni community

Activities for alumni were organised and carried out by the University directly or in cooperation with VMU Alumni Club, whose activities are curated by the Student Affairs Department (SAD).

In 2024, 2,260 alumni joined the community of VMU alumni (2,177 in 2022; 2,006 in 2023), bringing the total number of VMU alumni to 52,936 persons.

In 2024, periodic newsletters (19 in total, 25 in 2022, 18 in 2023) were sent to all VMU alumni and specifically to the members of VMU Alumni Club, containing relevant information, invitations to participate in events, and other information about the University. In order to bring together the alumni community of the University, VMU Alumni ID platform was further expanded, with the aim of maintaining and strengthening the relationship with alumni around the world, as well as providing all the relevant and necessary information for alumni in a concentrated and one-stop shop. After the launch of VMU Alumni ID platform, a total of 1,417 alumni joined the platform (679 in 2023 and 738 in 2024). In 2024, VMU Alumni ID platform was updated, and new features were introduced to make the platform more user-friendly, attractive, and informative. An active promotional campaign for the interactive VMU Alumni ID platform continued: a 48-second video "Join VMU Alumni ID" was created and was viewed more than 40,000 times. The Alumni ID platform is continuously publicised on special stands located on campus. In addition, for the 2024 alumni events, a 3-metre-long photo wall was produced, which, together with the previously produced stands, was used not only for the Alumni Day events, but also for graduation ceremonies and other alumni events.

The most significant events organised and dedicated to alumni in 2024 are VMU Alumni Picnic and the excursion "Kaunas Courtyards. The unseen side of the city where you studied", virtual learning "VMU—your lifelong learning partner", Alumni Day at the event "VMU Connections" and the concert celebrating the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of VMU.

Activities of VMU Alumni Club. The most important events and activities organised by VMU Alumni Club in 2024 included: VMU Alumni Vilnius Day, the theme of which was "Academic Community and Politics for Lithuania", the traditional alumni party outing together with LHSU and KUT, which were held as part of the centenary celebration of the Agriculture Academy in 2024, the discussion "VMU Alumni Class: Two-Way Street" on "VMU Connections: Alumni Day", and the afterparty "VMU person's poetry and AI".

In 2024, 24 new members joined VMU Alumni Club, bringing the total number of members to 840 (792 in 2022, 816 in 2023).

Community participation in organisations

In 2024, 37 student organisations were active at VMU (in 2022, 36; in 2023, 37).

VMU awarded targeted support to student organisations through a project competition, which was aimed at promoting and fostering student initiatives and activities, expanding cooperation and human resources potential, creating or developing scientific, artistic, study organisations, cultural, social, sports, civic, and other initiatives, promoting the name of the University. Organisations were encouraged to commemorate the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment of Vytautas Magnus University by highlighting the longtime close relationship between the University community, the city, and national society.

In 2024, based on the results of VMU Student Organisations Project Competition and the need, the amount of EUR 16,030 (EUR 14,400 in 2022; EUR 14,690 in 2023) was allocated for the implementation of 7 projects (5 in 2022; 10 in 2023).

Activities of VMU Student Representative Council

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:

- To educate students on AI, two discussions and a virtual initiative were organised to educate students on the fair and ethical use of AI in the study process.
- More than 50 exams were observed to ensure academic integrity while taking exams.
- Students were involved in the update of the procedure for allocating VMU tuition assistance. Students initiated a change in the definition of a multi-child family.
- The project "Be a Student for a Day" involved more than 100 motivated school students from all over Lithuania. School students had the opportunity to come to the University for a week, attend lectures, and try out student life for themselves.
- The project "Experience, Feel, Understand" involved 50 students. The project gave the University community the opportunity to learn about the everyday difficulties of people with disabilities and how everyone can contribute to making others' everyday lives easier.

- Improvement of the student representative system: 6 meetings with student representatives (members of faculty councils, study programme committees and class representatives) were organised, the competences of student representatives were improved, and their knowledge was tested.
- On International Students Day, the initiative “Student, Run the University for a Day” was organised with the participation of 10 students. During the initiative, students had the opportunity to try out the University’s leadership jobs, identifying problems and finding solutions.
- On World Mental Health Day, the walk “Path of Knowledge” was organised with the participation of 46 students. During the initiative, students carried out a variety of tasks to get to know each other, build trust, and improve interpersonal communication skills.
- The weekend “Balanced First-Year Student” was organised with more than 140 students participating. During the get-to-know-each-other event, students had the opportunity to learn more about the University, its values, and principles, and to improve their personal skills, teamwork, and public speaking.
- 4 planned checks of dormitories were carried out to assess residents’ compliance with the dormitory rules.

Concert activities of VMU Chamber Orchestra

In 2024, VMU Chamber Orchestra, in cooperation with Lithuanian professional music festivals, Kaunas State Philharmonic Orchestra, and other institutions, performed at 22 concerts (22 in 2022, 20 in 2023) in Lithuania (Kaunas, Vilnius, Plungė, Klaipėda, Kupiškis, Varėna, Švenčionys, etc.). The orchestra has performed at the Pažaislis Music Festival, the International Festival “Operetta at Kaunas Castle”, the contemporary music festival “Up Close”, the Tyzenhauzas Music Festival, etc.

Among the highlights of the year were a concert programme performed together with well-known national artists on TV3 television, the national awards “Honour of Lithuania”, a concert at the largest Baltic video game exhibition “GameOn” at the Litexpo Exhibition Hall, and the final performance at the “VMU Connections” event.

The Chamber Orchestra not only took part in the events, but also itself organised the XIII International Chamber Music Festival “Avanti”, during which 8 concerts were performed free of charge for the audience, featuring professional performers from Lithuania (Klaipėda, Vilnius, Kaunas) and abroad (Ukraine, the USA, Argentina). The Chamber Orchestra organised master classes for stringed-instrument players, and made professional recordings, including the works of composer and saxophonist Liutauras Janušaitis and the CD “Works by Lithuanian Composers for French Horn” by French horn player Andrius Dirmauskas (released in December 2024).

Further development of activities:

- Striving 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 value-based organisational culture of VMU.
- Responding to community needs by assessing the results of the survey, designing targeted activities and responsibilities.
- 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.
- Encouraging community volunteering, initiating and implementing volunteering projects, sharing good volunteering practices through an intranet platform and community events.
- Developing the conditions for personalities and talents to flourish, giving an opportunity to any member of the University community to propose ideas, express opinions, and build the University of the future.
- Maintaining leadership in student sport achievements.
- Developing relationships with business and non-governmental organisations, creating joint social projects, organising events relevant to the whole of Lithuania, thus seeking recognition of VMU as a reliable social partner.
- Improving internal communication, developing physical activity and wellness activities and other benefits packages for community members.
- Encouraging staff in academic and non-academic departments to improve their skills through the Professional Competence Development Centre, the Erasmus programme, and other training courses.
- Developing support measures for organisations at VMU and creating an enabling environment for their activities, encouraging greater community involvement.
- Implementing VMU Disability Policy, responding to the needs of people with disabilities, improving the environment for study and work, and improving educational activities.
- Mobilising and strengthening the alumni community in Lithuania and abroad through the efficient use of VMU alumni ID platform, promoting the involvement of alumni in the activities of VMU Alumni Club or other VMU alumni communities, increasing participation in the community and academic life of the University.

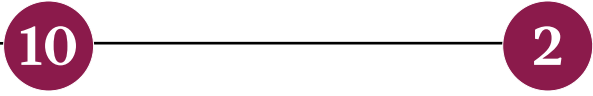


International Research University



Published monographs, studies	25
Science and art prizes, other major awards	31
Number of research institutes	6
Number of priority science and arts research clusters	46
The University's Research Fund was allocated EUR	380,4
Number of ongoing scientific projects	329
The value of contracts for ongoing scientific projects EUR	396,7 mln. (VMU share – 64,2 mln.)
Number of fields of doctoral studies	24
Number of doctoral students on 1 October 2024	243
Number of doctoral students who defended their dissertations	45
Number of dissertations defended since the start of the doctoral programme	975
Patents	5

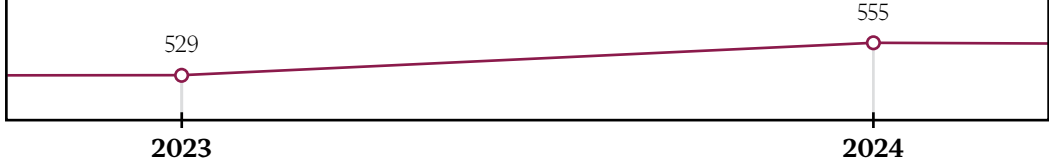
Participation of VMU research infrastructures in the national and international ecosystem of research infrastructures



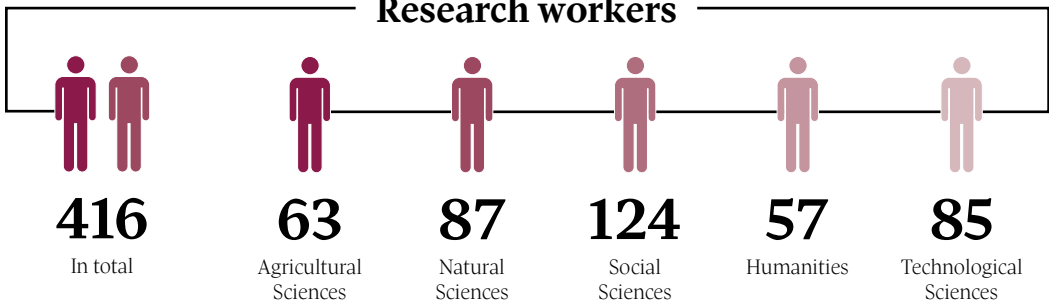
VMU research infrastructures in the Lithuanian Research Infrastructure Roadmap

VMU Research Infrastructure Lithuania's full membership of the International Research Infrastructure

Number of research articles published in Q1-Q4 quartiles of scientific journals refereed in Clarivate Analytics Web of Science and/or Scopus databases



Research workers



International Research University

In order to rationally plan and organise the research activities of the research institutes of VMU, the Senate of VMU has approved the activity plans for the research topics funded by the research institutes' budgets for 2024. To implement these plans, recruitment to additional researcher positions in the institutes was carried out.

In order to participate in international research infrastructures and contribute to the development of open science, VMU, independently or in consortium with other Lithuanian research and study institutions, has added 8 new research infrastructures to the Lithuanian Research Infrastructure Roadmap.

In 2024, more than 320 international and national science projects, excluding business, were running. Project activities focused on international science and education projects. VMU researchers actively participate in calls for proposals under the EU's "European Horizon" programme for research and innovation and are successfully involved in research project consortia. In 2024, the University launched 8 successful projects under the "European Horizon" Programme (14 projects were funded in total in 2024).

In 2024, 23 "Horizon 2020" and "European Horizon" projects were implemented, of which three "European Horizon" projects are coordinated by VMU. In total, the University implemented 3 projects under the LIFE Programme of the European Union in 2024, and one project under the LIFE Programme—"Complex approach to habitat conservation by demonstrating closer-to-nature forestry practices on Natura2000 areas" (LIFE23-NAT-LT-LIFE ForestHabitatLT)—was launched.

Analysing the number of projects to be carried out in 2024 by the academic units of VMU, the largest number of projects is carried out by the Agriculture Academy, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Education Academy, Faculty of Humanities. A number of projects are run by research institutes. Most research projects are carried out by V. Kavolis Institute, the Institute of Bioeconomy Research, and the Institute of Natural and Technological Sciences.

Researchers and teachers were encouraged to strive for scientific excellence, in particular to prepare and publish papers in recognised international journals. In 2024, science-business-industry partnerships and closer cooperation with international organisations were pursued. It also promoted the awarding of research and experimental development, innovation orders and contracts to economic entities, and publicised scientific work, emphasising VMU's competence leadership. The value of R&D projects and contracts with economic operators signed in 2024 amounted to EUR 4.81 million. The University is becoming an increasingly important business partner or service provider in R&D projects, and the expertise and experience of its researchers help to create innovations for Lithuanian and foreign markets. In 2024, more than 30 R&D research projects and contracts were requested, and more than 40 public procurement tenders were launched. The majority of public procurement and commercial bids were successful, with 62 contracts signed for EUR 3.337 million and R&D projects for EUR 1.435 million.

Priority research areas, participation in international and national research programmes, scientific projects and commissioned research, monographs, articles and their citations in Clarivate Analytics Web of Science (CA WoS) and Scopus databases, patents registered with the State and International Patent Office, conference presentations, conferences and seminars organised, their relevance to the University's mission and strategic goals, concerts and exhibitions, cultural awards received are important indicators of scientific and artistic activity. In 2024, the aim was to have a greater international, socio-economic and cultural impact on the development of the country in a global context and to focus more on unique projects with a higher scientific and artistic added value. Particular attention was also paid to finding synergies between research teams working in different units in existing and new project activities.

Research and artistic results

The increase in the quality of scientific output is reflected in the growth in the number of articles published by the University's researchers in high-level international journals. For instance, the number of articles published in CA WoS and/or Scopus-referenced scientific journals with a citation index has increased by a factor of 1.38 over the last 5 years, from 402 (in 2020) to 555 (in 2024).

The effectiveness of the incentive system for the most significant scientific results is confirmed by the upward trend in the number of articles in the Q1-Q2 quartiles of scientific publications. The number of articles in scientific journals of this level has increased by more than 1.5 times: from 268 articles (in 2020) to 400 articles (in 2024). The involvement of the University's researchers in a growing network of partnerships, international programme projects, university alliances and other activities is also reflected in the production of joint research papers with foreign researchers. In collaboration with researchers from other foreign institutions, 46% of the articles published in 2024 will be in citation-oriented journals. To achieve the strategic goal of becoming an international research university, even more significant international cooperation should be encouraged.

In 2024, the University published more than 1900 different scientific papers, registered 5 patents/inventions, published more than 92 popular science articles and 74 journalistic articles. A noticeable trend shows that researchers are focusing more on higher-level scientific articles in journals with citation impact, while fewer less significant publications are being published.

In 2024, 725 works of artistic production will be registered at the University (cf. 797 in 2023): 622 concerts and musical performances (557 in Lithuania, 65 in foreign countries: Latvia, Estonia, Moldova, Poland, Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Denmark, USA, Belgium, Spain, South Korea, Czech Republic), 39 art exhibitions (32—in Lithuania, 7—in foreign countries: Belgium, France, Poland, Turkey), 29 photography exhibitions (21—in Lithuania, 8—in foreign countries: 5 design works, music for 2 films, 1 performance and 1 exhibition, 18 advertising clips, 2 video films (presented in Croatia and Italy), 5 CDs and one vinyl record.

In 2024, Professor Romualdas Požerskis of the Faculty of Arts held solo exhibitions abroad and participated in group exhibitions. His solo exhibition of photographs, “The Road to Freedom”, commemorating the 35th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, opened at the Consulate of the Republic of Lithuania in Valencia, Spain. Prof. Požerskis’ photographs were exhibited at major international photography events in France: the series “Restless Travellers” presented at the festival “Photaumnales Diaphane” in Berck-sur-Mer; the inclusion of the author’s photographs from the series “Old Towns of Lithuania” in the group exhibition “The Forms of Things, The Forms of Skulls, Forms of Love” at the photography fair “Paris Photo” in Grand Palais, Paris, can be considered as an exceptional achievement; the group exhibition “Human Lithuania” at the “24g” Gallery in Paris featured works by Prof. R. Požerskis from the cycle “Parish Festival”. The exhibition “Human Lithuania” was also presented at the “Spiral Garden” Gallery, Tokyo, Japan.

In 2024, Dr. Titas Petrikis, professor at the Faculty of Arts, composed the soundtracks for the Lithuanian films “Tasty” (dir. Eglė Vertelytė) and “A Bet Between Friends” (dir. Justinas Krisiūnas), and the theatre play “The Wind Cutlet” (dir. Albertas Vidžiūnas).

Professor Artūras Dambrauskas from the Music Academy was appointed artistic director of the 100th Anniversary Song Festival “May the Green Forest Grow” (29 June–6 July). The professor also took part in the Song Festival as chief conductor. This event was also conducted by Rolandas Daugėla, Assoc. Prof. at the Music Academy, and a student Artūras Vrublevskis. The volunteer coordinator was a student Ausma Sakalauskaitė.

On 13–20 April, the Music Academy hosted the 12th International Balys Dvarionas Competition for Young Pianists and Violinists. 72 contestants took part in the competition, competing for cash prizes and a concert at the Lithuanian National Philharmonic Society.

The Simeon Hamburg Symphony Orchestra, performing works by J. Ibert, L. van Beethoven and F. Mendelssohn, was conducted by Vilmantas Kaliūnas, Associate Professor of Partnership at the Music Academy, at the Elbphilharmonie & Laeiszhalle Philharmonie.

On 12–14 June, the “Vilnius” State Choir performed in Austria (Graz, Weiz and Hartberg), conducted by Artūras Dambrauskas, Professor of the Music Academy.

On 4 March, Lecturer Kostas Smoriginas gave a concert together with the Württemberg Philharmonic Orchestra at the Stadthalle in Roitlingen (Germany) (conductor Ariane Matiakh).

On 8–14 April, the International Music Festival “Olympus Musicus” featured a concert by Professor Donaldas Račys and Associate Professor Ramutė Kanėnaitė. The teachers also took part in the jury of the International Music Competition held at the Festival.

In 2024, VMU Art Gallery “101” organised exhibitions of drawings, photography, painting and interdisciplinary art, accompanied by various educational activities. 6 workshops/educations, 1 art therapy (led by art therapist Milda Butkeviciūtė), 3 discussions with the authors of the exhibitions (Aušra Andziulytė and Jovita Aukštikalnytė-Varkulevičienė, Rimgaudas Barauskis, Artūrs Raila). Around 20 students (volunteers and trainees) were involved in the activities of the Gallery.

Twelve exhibitions were held at VMU Art Gallery “101”: Jonas Lukšė’s Kaunas Modernism Architecture Drawings Exhibition (curator Milda Gineikaitė), Elena Krukonytė’s “Portraits of My Peers”, Aušra Andziulytė’s, Agnė Kulbytė and Jovita Aukštikalnytė-Varkulevičienė’s “Abstraction and Ekphrasis” (curator Tomas Genevičius), Romualdas Požerskis’ “Noises and Trash”, the exhibition “Synergy” of the students of VMU’s study course of Creative Photography (teachers R. Požerskis, T. Pabedinskas), VMU New Media Art Programme First Cycle Thesis Exhibition “Another Brick in the Wall”, VMU Lithuanian Language and Culture Course Participants’ Exhibition “Hints about Kaunas” (curator Milda Gineikaitė), Agota Bričkutė’s “Illuminated Shadows”, Titas Jurjonas and Gabrielius Riauba’s “Only You in My Eyes” (Interdisciplinary Arts Festival JA FEST, coordinated by Arnis Aleinikovas), R. Požerskis’ “Kaunas Old Town 1974–1981”, Rimgaudas Barauskis’ “Narindatė” (VDA second cycle thesis, Supervisor Prof. Artūras Raila), A. Raila, M. J. Talmantas and M. Strolia’s “Bardo. Three States” (curator Jovita Ambrazaitė).

Every year, VMU Theatre hosts the private evening “Persona Grata”, which has become a successful event in the repertoire and the theatre’s calling card and attracts a large audience. On 10 May 2024, the event was attended by R. Samuolytė, a theatre and cinema actress who was awarded the Lithuanian National Prize for Culture and Art, and the winner of the prestigious national theatre and cinema awards “Silver Crane” and “Golden Stage Cross”, and on 20 November 2024, the entrepreneur, writer, and author I. Dilys was a guest.

The play “The Accidental Man” (directed by J. Vaitkus, actors G. Piktytė and A. Dapšys), which is a favourite of the audience and visitors of VMU theatre, was performed several times in the year 2024 at the request of the audience (on 15 March, 3 May, 11 October, 27 November 2024).

Recording, compiling and disseminating the results of research and artistic activities

One of the most important sources for recording, collecting and disseminating the output and activities of science and art (hereafter referred to as science) at VMU is the University's Research Management System (VMU CRIS). The System not only ensures the accumulation of information on science and art, but also its long-term preservation, increasing the dissemination of the University's science nationally and internationally. VMU CRIS is an important part of the University's scientific ecosystem, enabling scientific knowledge created at the University to be found and accessible not only to the scientific community, but also to the general public, and promoting the re-use of knowledge. VMU CRIS is not only a technological tool, but also a strategic part of the University's scientific management, contributing to more efficient administration of scientific activities, promotion of open science, improvement of the University's quality of activities, scientific progress and public welfare.

The System describes various scientific entities (also called entities, databases, collections). These are entities for researchers, departments, publications (PDB), data, theses and dissertations (ETD), projects, scientific events, journals, conferences. The logical patent database is identified in the System.

At the end of 2023, a new entity, Journals (<https://www.vdu.lt/cris/explore/journal>), was created based on the original model developed by the Library, and 2024 was devoted to collecting and organising the metadata and archives of the journals currently published and those previously published. In the year under review, information on all journals was stored in VMU CRIS. The University's journal publishing and archiving strategy was implemented—publishing journals on various platforms, but at the same time preserving their archives in VMU CRIS. This has not only increased their accessibility and visibility but also ensured that the University's scientific information will be stored, accessible and secure for the future.

In 2024, 22 periodical scientific journals, 4 continuing publications, and 27 previously published journals are available in VMU CRIS. 16 of the current journals are published solely by the University of Applied Sciences and 6 are published jointly with other institutions. A total of 10 VMU journals are registered in the DOAJ Open Access Journal Index. "Sherpa Romeo", which compiles and presents the open access policies of publishers and journals from around the world, reflects 14 VMU journals. 12 journals are indexed in the European Humanities and Social Sciences Index ERIH PLUS. The University's journals are indexed in 30 international databases, and 9 journals are indexed in CA WoS and/or Scopus databases. All of the University's journals are open access, and 15 of them are diamond access (a model of academic publishing where journals and platforms do not charge authors or readers fees). There are 17 journals in the field of HSM (8 in the humanities, 9 in the social sciences) and 5 in the field of natural sciences, technology, medicine and health, and agricultural sciences (3 in the agricultural sciences, 2 in the technological sciences).

In 2024, another new entity was created, based on the journal model, to provide access to and wider dissemination of information about the University's conferences (<https://www.vdu.lt/cris/explore/series>). Information on 12 ongoing conference series was produced, the latter linked to 92 scientific events via interactive links, the events linked to 62 conference publications, providing access to 4100 presentations.

At the end of 2023, VMU Library has implemented the possibility to export and synchronise key researcher profiles and research output information from VMU CRIS to the international open science infrastructure ORCID. In 2024, 157 researchers benefited from this innovation. This option has significantly reduced the manual process of completing and updating the ORCID profile, saving time and avoiding duplication of work. In VMU CRIS, authors with a validated ORCID are shown with a green iD icon on the researcher profile page and in other contexts related to the author, indicating that the iD assignment has been validated. This and the profile export option in Lithuania are only available to VMU researchers. ORCID identifiers were created by 1,154 researchers (90%). The ORCID profile helps to increase the international visibility of researchers and to better identify their research results.

In addition to ORCID, other unique international identifiers for researchers—Scopus ID, Researcher ID, Google Scholar ID, etc.—were also taken care of, which are important not only for individual researchers but also for the University as they provide reliable identification of the researcher and the institution, increase visibility, contribute to open science, and facilitate identification and evaluation of research activities. In 2024, the following information was collected and linked in VMU CRIS researcher profiles: the Scopus Author ID (in 582 researcher profiles), Web of Science Researcher ID (in 341 profiles), LinkedIn ID (in 124 profiles), Google Scholar ID (in 65 profiles). In order to increase the visibility of the University's researchers through the identifiers, the Library has organised training sessions on the study course, produced guidelines available on the Library's website, and provided one-to-one consultation on how to create and manage identifiers.

In 2024, the users of VMU CRIS system had access to almost 132,000 (124,000 in 2023, 116,000 in 2022) metadata records of the University's publications, journal articles, theses, doctoral dissertations, other publications, and scientific research data. The growth rate of content published in VMU CRIS is one of the University's quality indicators. Compared to 2023, the CRIS content development achieved a value of 6% in the reporting year. The annual target is 5%.

The Publications Database (PDB) contains over 78,000 (75,000 in 2023 and 72,000 in 2022) scientific publication records. In 2024, over 3,000 (3,210) publication metadata were recorded.

The collection of final theses and doctoral dissertations (ETDs) contains over 27,000 (2023—25,000, 2022—23,000) records (19,588 second cycle theses, 5,773 first cycle theses, 1,492 doctoral theses and abstracts, and 571 professional

studies theses). The collection grew by 2275 ETDs during the reporting year.

VMU CRIS repository is expanded annually with full-text documents. In total, the repository already holds almost 54,000 (47,000 in 2023, 39,000 in 2022, 35,000 in 2021) full-text documents (779 e-books, 54 e-journal archives, almost 20,000 articles, over 27,000 ETDs, 380 datasets). 81% of the full-text documents stored in the repository are accessible online. The reporting year enriched the repository with 7,000 full-text documents (79 e-books, 3,000 e-articles, 2,275 ETDs, 314 research data).

Nearly 8,000 researcher profiles were created in VMU CRIS, of which 1,280 were active employees of the University in 2024. Around 70% of researchers' profiles (80% in the University's strategy monitoring indicator) are completed with detailed information on their professional and scientific teaching qualifications, recognition, participation in organisations, guest lectures, courses taught and other activities. Researchers' profiles are supplemented with scientometric data (citation rates, h-index) from Scopus and CA WoS databases.

In the reporting year, VMU CRIS system provided access to 1234 (1007 in 2023) information on projects implemented/ongoing at the University, information on 178 units (including 44 research clusters). In 2024, a total of 1,064 University scientific events (conferences, seminars, debates, etc.) were covered. 292 scientific events were described in the reporting year.

In 2024, the activity of users of VMU CRIS increased significantly. The number of actions performed in the system more than doubled to 3.3 million, up from 1.4 million the previous year. Particularly striking was the increase in the number of page views and full-text downloads: page views rose from 886,000 to 1.8 million, while downloads increased from 509,000 to 1.5 million. This reflects the ongoing engagement of users and the increasing use of the science management system.

The global visibility of VMU CRIS content is increasing through various dissemination channels such as Google, Google Scholar, OpenAire, eLABa and others. Almost 86% of users in 2024 accessed the content of VMU CRIS through these external systems and other complementary channels such as OpenDoar, ROAR and social networks. This shows that these dissemination channels significantly increase the visibility, reach and accessibility of the University's research output in the global arena.

Two versions of DSpace-CRIS were implemented to support the maintenance and development of VMU CRIS: version 2023-02-02 (released on 9 February 2024) and version 2023-02-06 (released on 7 November 2024). During the implementation process, local VMU CRIS improvements were incorporated into the core DSpace-CRIS software, system errors were fixed, additional software was installed, and the local VMU system configuration was applied. Basic software was updated with Node.js, Angular, etc. Fixes were installed for basic software such as Debian Linux, Apache Tomcat, Apache Solr, etc.

For the dissemination of VMU CRIS as an important part of the University's research ecosystem, a presentation "Vytautas Magnus University Research Management System: A CRIS solution shared with other universities in Lithuania", authored by V. Kučiukas and L. Bloveščūnienė, was prepared for the euroCRIS conference (held in Vienna, Austria, 15-17 May 2024) on modern scientific information systems.

Since 2012, the University's research output has been given unique and persistent DOIs. It gives publications an official, reliable identifier that indicates that the research is peer-reviewed and published. This gives the University's researchers greater authority and confidence in their research and helps to ensure that research papers are properly cited. The unique DOI prefixes attributed to VMU and recognised in the digital space are: 7220, 15544, 15823. A total of 2,118 DOIs were assigned to identify digital documents published at the University in 2024 (up from 216 in 2023). The number of DOIs granted in 2024 is almost 10 times higher than in previous years. This is due to the fact that many DOIs were given to digitised journals, conference proceedings and other academic publications of the University from previous years, in order to ensure their accessibility and preservation in VMU CRIS. DOIs were issued for 14 journals (cf. 2023: 12, 2022: 15) and their 2,084 articles (cf. 2023: 166, 2022: 1,170); for 28 books; and for 6 scientific datasets. A total of 5,725 information resources published by the University can be found on the World Wide Web under the DOI of VMU. The University's output is also published by commercial publishers who assign their own DOIs to the University's journals (5 journals are published). The number of University journals with a DOI from a commercial publisher in 2024 was 103, and 815 in total.

Funding and promotion of research and artistic activities

Salaries for academic staff rose by 10% from autumn 2020, then by 10% each year thereafter, and by a further 18% from September 2024, after a rise to 10% in January.

According to the current flexible bonus methodology, for high scientific output and academic performance, teachers and researchers are rewarded with monthly research (for scientific output) and academic performance (for other scientific and didactic activities) bonuses to the teacher's or researcher's position, ranging from a monthly bonus of 0.9 BMS (the University's approved base bonus coefficient of EUR 57) to a monthly bonus of EUR 13.8 BMS per full-time equivalent.

The University's Competitive Research Promotion Fund for 2024 amounted to EUR 380,400. The Research Fund was used for the development of the University's clusters, departments and institutes of the Agriculture Academy, for the

competition of projects of clusters, institutes and equivalent units, for the competition of doctoral students' field trips, for the promotion of top-level scientific production, for the dissemination of science and for the publicity of the priority areas, and for the promotion of the research activities of doctoral students.

EUR 218,000 was awarded to 376 teachers, researchers, and doctoral students for the production of top-level scientific output, the execution of R&D orders from businesses, the most significant international research projects. Funds for staff and doctoral students were transferred to research clusters, institutes and AA units. These funds can be used in a variety of ways: for research trips and other research-related needs, for teachers' and researchers' bonuses, and for doctoral student scholarships.

A single one-off promotion of 1.5–2 BMS per month was awarded for 13 original science promotion articles.

EUR 100,000 were allocated to support the development of research clusters, departments and institutes of the Agriculture Academy. Clusters and other research units used these funds to reimburse the costs of organising and participating in scientific conferences, publishing scientific publications, publishing research papers in recognised scientific journals referenced in the Scopus and CA WoS databases, and carrying out research.

This year, the University's Science Fund announced a call for projects for the University's clusters, institutes and their equivalent units. A total of EUR 30,000 was allocated for the competition from VMU Research Fund. There were 42 applications: 11 in the Social Sciences, 13 in Humanities, 9 in Natural Sciences, 4 in Technological Sciences, 4 in Agricultural Sciences and 1 in Arts. The University's panel of experts in scientific fields recommended 24 applications to the Rector for funding.

In 2024, the call for funding for teachers, researchers and artists to attend prestigious international conferences (art workshops) in foreign countries is re-established. The competition's budget amounted to EUR 33,000. The competition, which was announced twice in 2024, attracted 69 applications: 34 in the social sciences, 12 in the humanities and 23 in the natural sciences, technology and agriculture. Funding was granted for 47 visits by teachers and researchers.

EUR 40,000 in financial support from the University Research Fund was granted to first- and second year full-time doctoral students and first, second and third year part-time doctoral students enrolled in state- and EU-funded doctoral programmes. This financial contribution aimed to improve doctoral students' scientific qualifications, disseminate research results, and increase regional and international mobility. In 2022, the update of the Regulations on the Promotion of Doctoral Research Activities for Doctoral Students increased the amount of the promotion funds available to doctoral students over the entire duration of their doctoral studies, from EUR 600 to EUR 1,000 in the humanities and social sciences, and from EUR 1,500 to EUR 2,100 in the life sciences, agriculture and technology.

EUR 20,000 was allocated from the University's Research Fund for doctoral students' research trips. In 2024, 42 doctoral students submitted applications for the competitions: 21 in Social Sciences, 5 in Humanities, 10 in Natural Sciences, and 6 in Technology. Funding was awarded to 29 doctoral students.

National and international projects

The total number of VMU projects in 2024 remains similar to that of each year. However, there was an overall decrease in 2023, but this is due to the cyclical nature of the project pipeline, linked to the funding periods of the international and national programmes and to the programming periods, one of which ended in 2014–2020, while the new funding period of 2021–2027 has started to gain momentum. Over 320 international and national research projects, not including business, are ongoing.

VMU researchers are actively participating in the EU Research and Innovation Programme “European Horizon” calls and are successfully involved in research project consortia. In 2024, the University launched 8 successful projects under the “European Horizon” Programme (14 projects funded in total in 2024).

The University coordinates 3 projects under the “European Horizon” Programme on smart forestry, the ethics of communication technologies and migration issues. A total of 23 “Horizon 2020” and “European Horizon” projects were running in 2024.

The European Union LIFE Programme project No. 101147231 “Complex approach to habitat conservation by demonstrating closer-to-nature forestry practices on Natura2000 areas” (LIFE23-NAT-LT-LIFE ForestHabitatLT) was launched. The coordinating authority for the project is the State Forest Enterprise. In total, the University was running 3 LIFE projects in 2024.

VMU researchers launched 2 new COST activities. For the European Intergovernmental Cooperation in Science and Technology Programme 2024, researchers represented VMU in 18 thematic activities.

A total of 14 Erasmus+ projects were launched in 2024. 59 Erasmus+ projects were ongoing in 2024.

In 2024, the University implemented more than 100 projects administered by the Research Council of Lithuania (LRC). Researchers were actively involved in calls for proposals launched by the Research Council of Lithuania. Active participation in traditional measures was complemented by the results of a new call for proposals—the war against Ukraine caused by the Russian Federation led to the creation of a new measure by the Research Council of Lithuania (State Orders)—support for Lithuanian research and study institutions employing researchers from Ukraine. In 2024, 6 researchers from Ukrainian universities, funded by the Research Council of Lithuania, started working at VMU under this measure.

As every year, VMU researchers actively participated in the call for proposals by the Research Council of Lithuania. 55 applications were submitted for funding and 9 projects were successful (714 applications in all were received by the Research Council of Lithuania).

14 doctoral candidates started their independent research activities at VMU under the call for applications for funding post-doctoral internship projects announced by the Research Council of Lithuania. With this programme, the Research Council of Lithuania promotes the development of a system of post-doctoral traineeships for young researchers and improves the scientific qualifications of trainees.

VMU researchers took part in the NORDFORSK programme. The research funding organisation of the Nordic Council of Ministers, NORDFORSK, brings together research and innovation funding institutions from Denmark, the Faroe Islands, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden. In 2024, two research projects from VMU received funding.

VMU Agriculture Academy actively submitted applications to the National Paying Agency's calls for proposals, resulting in the launch of 5 projects. Additionally, 5 projects were launched under the measure "Support for Applied Research" of the Agricultural, Food, and Rural Development Promotion Programme.

Analysing the number of projects to be carried out in 2024 by the academic units of VMU, the largest number of projects is carried out by the Agriculture Academy, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Education Academy, Faculty of Humanities. A significant number of projects were implemented by research institutes, with the majority of research projects carried out by V. Kavolis Institute, the Bioeconomy Research Institute, and the Institute of Natural and Technological Sciences.

Commercialisation of R&D

The Communication and Technology Transfer Centre (hereinafter referred to as the CTTC) implements the University's strategic objectives for the commercialisation of research activities. The CTTC team develops R&D services and fosters synergies between science and business in developing innovative solutions. In 2024, more emphasis was placed on the development of entrepreneurial skills, intellectual property, project development skills and the presentation of products developed at the University. The activities of the CTTC team, such as training, meetings of the Innovation Potential Working Groups and ongoing advice (on intellectual property, search for funding, marketing, communication and technology transfer and commercialisation of innovations), continue. The experience gained by the CTTC led to an increase in revenues from new products, innovative technologies and methods developed at the University in collaboration with economic operators.

The CTTC team has become an active participant in R&D promotion events, actively presenting research results, patents, prototypes and other innovations to the public and private sectors as well as to the general public. The commercialisation of the University's academic and non-academic achievements was presented at exhibitions and international events with foreign participants. CTTC continues its activities in the Lithuanian Social Innovation Cluster, the "University Industry Innovation Network, Europe's premier association of Knowledge Transfer professionals (ASTP)", "TTO Lithuania" and "TTO Baltic".

A total of 16 companies were active in the Business Incubator. This year, MB "Mamanoriudar", UAB "Rūgsta", MB "Real cacao", UAB "Longevity lab" became new members, while UAB "Metsolar" operated on a post office box basis. UAB "Nanologistics", a startup based in the incubator of VMU CTTC, won the category of Newcomer of the Year 2024 in Kaunas Startup Awards. Meanwhile, UAB "Nando" won the "Growth of the Year" category.

The importance of intellectual property and commercialisation was given greater prominence at VMU, contributing to a better understanding of these topics among the community. The seminar "Commercialisation of Intellectual Property: what can business gain?" was held at VMU Multifunctional Science and Studies Centre. During the event "VMU LabTour Returns: Discover the Agroinnovation Centre for Business", the University's guests had a unique opportunity to visit the newly opened VMU Agroinnovation Centre. The annual hackathon "EkoHack: The Fertilizer Sustainability Challenge" took place. The first place was awarded to the team "Engineers for Nature". The winners were awarded prizes worth EUR 1,500, established by UAB "Agrochema". VMU student team "B-Oil" competed in the international "Entrepreneurship" hackathon.

In order to promote more active cooperation between researchers of the association "Santakos slėnis" and research and study institutions and to develop the competences of young researchers, VMU launched a call for applications for funding joint research projects. A total of 9 applications were submitted and 3 were funded.

In line with the University's key priorities — the commercialisation of scientific output and the development of R&D activities in collaboration with businesses — the implemented R&D policy and commercialisation strategy are delivering positive results. In 2024, the total value of R&D projects and service agreements signed with economic entities amounted to EUR 4.81 million. The overall increase in the number of signed R&D and service agreements was influenced by the University's active participation in public procurement as a service provider. University researchers actively participated in the "Inobrandā" and "Inopazanga" calls and, together with CTTC, secured eight projects worth EUR 8.973 million for product development in collaboration with Lithuanian companies. The projects are being implemented across various fields— from biotechnology to sustainable agriculture and the development of new products. In 2024, nine spin-off company applications were also submitted with the aim of commercialising products and technologies developed at the University. Seven teams were invited to the second stage of the competition, where

they will continue developing their products and bring them to market. Active participation was also observed in the “Inostartas 2” funding measure.

Within this measure, seven commercial proposals for R&D services were submitted, totalling EUR 0.5 million. In 2024, support was requested for more than 40 R&D projects and contracts, and participation took place in over 50 public procurement tenders worth more than EUR 15 million, with the value of successful tenders amounting to EUR 4.81 million. Additionally, more than 50 meetings with economic entities were organised, during which commercial proposals were presented. The majority of public procurements and commercial proposals were successful—62 contracts worth EUR 3.337 million were signed, along with projects totalling EUR 1.435 million.

Doctoral studies

The University has the right to doctoral studies in 24 science fields and cooperates with 17 Lithuanian higher education and research institutions. VMU's membership in the Transform4Europe consortium allows an increase in the internationalisation and quality of doctoral studies. The consortium partners plan to develop joint doctoral study programmes, promote doctoral students' internships, organise an annual conference for doctoral students from the partner universities, to organise summer and winter schools, seminars, and refresher courses for doctoral students and their scientific advisors. Currently, an inter-institutional cooperation agreement on the implementation of doctoral studies has been signed with Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, and negotiations are underway to conclude similar agreements with other consortium partners. The University's doctoral students actively participate in activities organised by the alliance specifically for doctoral candidates.

In 2024, the University was awarded 58 doctoral study places financed by the state budget—14 of them were won by researchers, their themes won in competitions announced by the Research Council of Lithuania, and 3 doctoral places were won together with businesses. Seven first-year doctoral students from Lithuania and abroad finance their doctoral studies with their own funds.

In 2024, 14 international doctoral students began their studies at the University: one Ukrainian citizen in the field of Environmental Engineering, one Pakistani citizen in Biochemistry, one Georgian and two Chinese citizens in Education, one Israeli citizen in History and Archaeology, Azerbaijani and Ukrainian citizens in Communication and Information, Turkish and Indonesian citizens in Mechanical Engineering, one Azerbaijani citizen in Forestry, one Ukrainian citizen in Political Science, one Indian citizen in Psychology, and one Ukrainian citizen in Law. International students account for 22% of all newly admitted doctoral candidates (compared to 14% in 2023). In total, 243 doctoral students were enrolled in the autumn semester.

In 2024, 78 doctoral students participated in internships, seminars, conferences, and other academic events at universities and research institutions abroad, 14 of them remotely. The University admitted three doctoral students with visiting doctoral student status, and 18 doctoral students participated in mobility under the Erasmus+ student exchange programme.

A total of 45 doctoral dissertations were defended at the University: 9 in the natural sciences, 10 in the humanities, 17 in the social sciences, 7 in the technological sciences, and 2 in the agricultural sciences. Of these, 4 dissertations were prepared in English. Two doctoral students defended dissertations prepared as a collection of published articles.

The ratio of enrolled doctoral students to awarded doctoral students is an important indicator of the quality of doctoral studies. In 2024, the doctoral study period and the deadline for defending the doctoral dissertation ended for full-time doctoral students admitted to the University in 2019. Out of 53 individuals admitted to full-time doctoral studies, 25 (47%) successfully defended their doctoral dissertations within the designated period.

Since the launch of the doctoral programme, the University has trained 975 researchers.

Partnerships

The University cooperates with Lithuanian and foreign higher education and other institutions by publishing scientific journals. Cooperation is established with the following institutions: Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, Kaunas University of Technology, Lithuanian Energy Institute, Lithuanian Institute of Agrarian Economics, Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry, Lithuanian Emigration Institute, Klaipėda University, Institute of Lithuanian Language, Lithuanian Institute of History, Vilnius University, Lithuanian Olympic Academy, Estonian University of Life Sciences, Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, Latvian State Forest Research Institute “Silava”, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Universidad de los Andes, Dublin City University, University of Illinois at Chicago, Riga Technical University.

A significant achievement in 2024 was the signing of a new cooperation agreement with MIT. VMU became the coordinator of the cooperation consortium with MIT. The agreement aims to promote joint scientific and artistic research, innovation, and technology projects with MIT researchers, as well as to implement the objectives of the MIT MISTI programme.

VMU also collaborates with Startup Wise Guys, one of the most active acceleration funds in Europe and Africa, which has invested in more than 400 early-stage B2B startups across SaaS, Fintech, cybersecurity, XR, sustainability, Web3, and

Proptech sectors in over 60 countries.

The University is a member of the open platform Crowdhelix. Crowdhelix is an open innovation platform that builds international networks between researchers and innovation-driven companies, with the aim of initiating pioneering projects, primarily within the EU's "Horizon Europe" programme.

Researchers from the Agriculture Academy participate in the activities of the international research infrastructure—Infrastructure for Analysis and Experimentation on Ecosystems (AnaEE).

VMU participates in the CLARIN-LT Research Infrastructure Network, a research infrastructure for researchers, teachers, and students in the social sciences and humanities for a wide range of digital language resources and technologies. CLARIN-LT activities include conducting applied and interdisciplinary research, promoting the international mobility of researchers, providing information about the language data and tools stored in CLARIN repositories, organising high-level national and international scientific events, providing advice to researchers, and collecting Lithuanian language resources and language research tools.

VMU researchers also participate in the European Innovation Partnership for Agricultural Productivity and Sustainability (EIP-AGRI) innovation network, established by the European Commission to promote innovation in the agriculture and forestry sectors, as well as to bridge the gap between research and practice. EIP-AGRI was created as a new approach to help the agriculture and forestry sectors become more productive, sustainable, and capable of addressing current challenges such as increased competition, volatile market prices, climate change, and stricter environmental regulations. Within the EIP-AGRI network, VMU is implementing a project funded by the European Commission.

VMU's participation in the European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) also contributed to the development of partnerships through the implementation of the project "Implementation of the Lithuanian Membership Plan in the European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium" (No. VS-3).

Professor Tomas Krilavičius, Chair of the Council of the Institute of Natural and Technological Sciences Research, is a member of the European AI research laboratories consortium CLAIRE, President (Chair of the Board) of INFOBALT, a member of the NATO Science and Technology Organisation (STO), the Board of the Lithuanian Artificial Intelligence Association, the Information and Communication Technologies Working Group of the Innovation Agency, and the International Association of Engineers (IAENG).

Professor Rūta Petrauskaitė, Director of the Institute of Digital Resources and Interdisciplinary Research, serves as an expert for European Commission research projects and as an expert for the Humanities in the European Research Area (HERA) programme. Senior researcher Dr. Ineta Dabašinskienė is Vice President of the Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (AABS), a member of the International Association for the Study of Child Language (IASCL), the Early Language Learning Research Association (ELLRA), as well as a board member of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES), the European Linguistic Association (ELA), the European Association for International Education (EAIE), and the European Women Rectors Association (EWORA).

Dr. Anna Sylwia Czyz, Senior Researcher at Vytautas Kavolis Institute for Interdisciplinary Research, is President of the Association of Art Historians in Poland.

Assoc. Prof. Rasa Pakeltienė from the Faculty of Bioeconomy Development at the Agriculture Academy is the Secretary General of the ICA Association for European Universities of Life Sciences, Chair of the ICA Board European Committee, and a member of the European Commission's European Economic and Social Committee leadership groups for bioeconomy, biodiversity, and climate.

Researchers of the Agriculture Academy participate in the network of Universities of the European Capitals of Culture (UNECC), the Central and Eastern European Initiative for Knowledge-Based Bioeconomy Development in Agriculture, Aquaculture, and Forestry (BIOEAST), and the activities of the Bio-based Industries Consortium (BIC).

VMU participates in the European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium (ESS ERIC) and implements the project "Implementation of the Lithuanian Membership Plan in the European Social Survey European Research Infrastructure Consortium" (No. VS-3).

Active participation also continues with key Lithuanian business collaboration organisations: the Lithuanian Responsible Business Association (with participation from Andrius Šmitas, a doctoral student at the Department of Psychology), Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts, the Lithuanian Confederation of Industrialists (VMU is a non-associated member), the "Infobalt" Association (Prof. Tomas Krilavičius is the President), the European Digital Innovation Hub EDIH4IAE.LT, the Lithuanian Biotechnology Association (with participation from Prof. Virginija Kargytė), the Hydrogen Energy Association, among others.

Another important part of scientific partnerships is participation in research infrastructures, the number of which continues to grow each year. Currently, the most significant ones include: "Nemunas Valley", "Santakos slėnis", Kaunas Science and Technology Park, Transform4Europe, CLARIN, EIT HEI, among others.

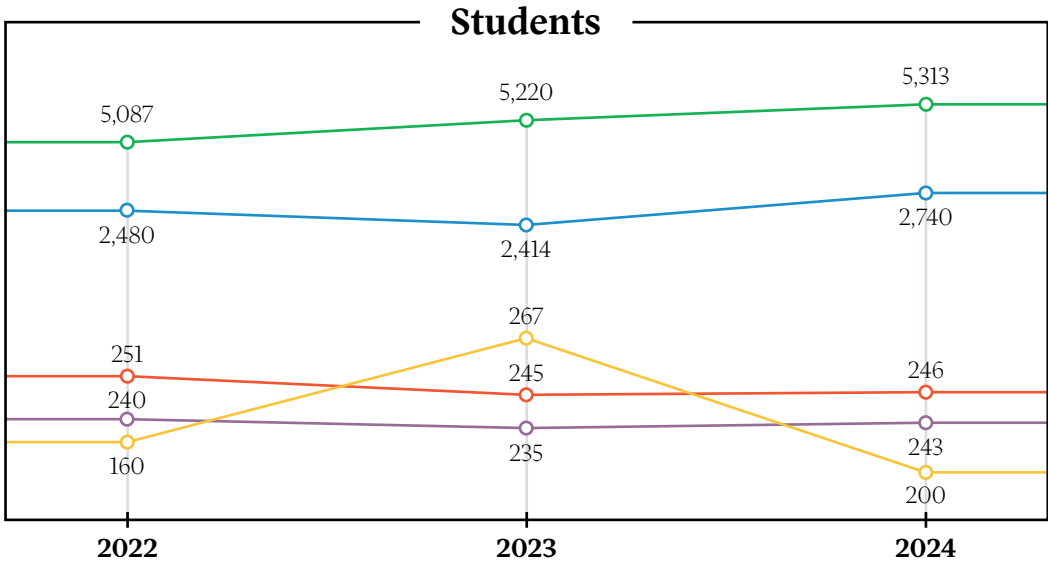
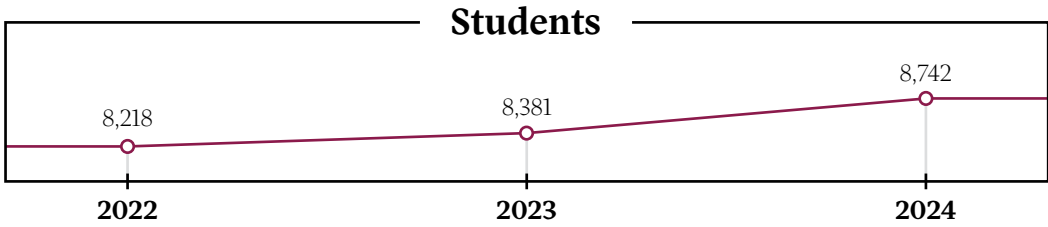
Further development of activities:

- Experts of the Comparative Expert Evaluation of R&D conducted in 2023 recommended that R&D evaluation units related to scientific fields should have clear activity guidelines and strategic plans for developing research topics, forming research groups, enhancing research quality and internationalisation, and attracting talent, with the goal of achieving international recognition and leadership in R&D activities. In 2024, action plans for research topics funded by the budgets of the University's research institutes were prepared, and improvement groups related to R&D and artistic fields were formed to develop and monitor the activity improvement plans of the evaluation units. In 2025, further integration of R&D and artistic activity quality improvement measures into the activity plans of academic departments, doctoral studies, and study committees will be carried out, along with monitoring of the indicators set out in the improvement plans of R&D and artistic evaluation units, in preparation for the next Comparative Expert Evaluation of R&D and Expert Evaluation of Artistic Activities to be held in 2028, covering the period of 2022–2027. The following aspects are also important for the further development of activities:
 - Continuous monitoring of the implementation of the action plans for research topics funded by the budgets of research institutes is essential, particularly with a focus on achieving significant R&D results (such as publications in prestigious scientific journals relevant to the evaluated research fields, invited presentations at prestigious international conferences abroad, the quality of doctoral students' articles, successful applications for internationally competitive postdoctoral fellowships, coordination of R&D projects, opening of research data based on FAIR principles, promotion of open science and citizen science, etc.), as well as ensuring timely responses.
 - In relation to the inclusion of VMU's research infrastructures (RI) in Lithuania's 2024 Research Infrastructure Roadmap, key priorities will include ensuring the sustainability of the RIs, enhancing the competencies of RI researchers, and providing open access services at an international level, among other objectives.
 - As a member of the CoARA coalition, which aims to contribute to the implementation of the Agreement on Reforming Research Assessment, VMU will prepare an institutional action plan in 2025 to promote higher research quality and greater impact. It is important to review the procedures for evaluating the quality of R&D and artistic activities, as well as the procedures for certification, recruitment, and promotion of academic staff, ensuring the diversity of significant R&D activities, and incorporating criteria of quality and impact, among other aspects.
 - It is important to continue discussions with University researchers regarding the prevalence of articles published in journals of controversially regarded publishers. Researchers will be encouraged to publish their research findings in top-tier scientific journals recognised by the international academic community in their respective fields.
 - In doctoral studies, it is essential to ensure a high standard of doctoral students' scientific publications, as, according to international experts, this reflects the institution's potential, future prospects, investment in talent attraction, succession development, and its impact on the advancement of R&D activities.
 - The opening of research data in accordance with the FAIR principles, drawing on the experience of other European countries, could be fostered already at the doctoral study level by integrating it into the preparation of doctoral work plans, research methodologies, and research data management plans.
 - The promotion of artistic research and artistic activities is of particular importance, especially in preparation for the Expert Evaluation of Artistic Activities in 2028 during the 2022–2027 period.
 - The opportunities offered by the European university alliance partnership Transform4Europe (T4E) should be fully utilised by promoting joint doctoral programmes with universities in Europe and beyond, fostering the development of entrepreneurship, open science knowledge, and innovations together with and for the benefit of regions, in collaboration with various non-university stakeholders. Additionally, efforts should be directed towards strengthening inter-institutional and interdisciplinary cooperation and networking, as well as enhancing ties with business associations and enterprises, non-governmental organisations, public sector institutions and schools.
 - It is important to encourage the preparation of research projects and the involvement of VMU researchers in emerging consortia within the "Horizon Europe" programme. In 2025, special attention will be given to the coordination and implementation of large-scale projects awarded under the "Horizon Europe" programme.
 - Research with potential for patentability, based on the concept of open innovation, should be further developed by encouraging active participation in international open innovation platforms. This would facilitate engagement in research activities and the development of new technologies or products in collaboration with international companies and academic partners.
 - Orders and contracts for scientific and experimental development as well as innovation with Lithuanian economic entities should be encouraged, along with fostering closer cooperation with non-governmental and other organisations.
 - It is important to actively pursue the commercialisation of products developed at the University by establishing new enterprises or licensing the developed products to young start-ups. Efforts should be made to actively involve VMU students in start-up activities.
 - In 2023, five interdisciplinary/transdisciplinary institutes were established at the University. In 2025, efforts will be directed towards expanding the activities of these institutes by engaging in and initiating new national and international projects.

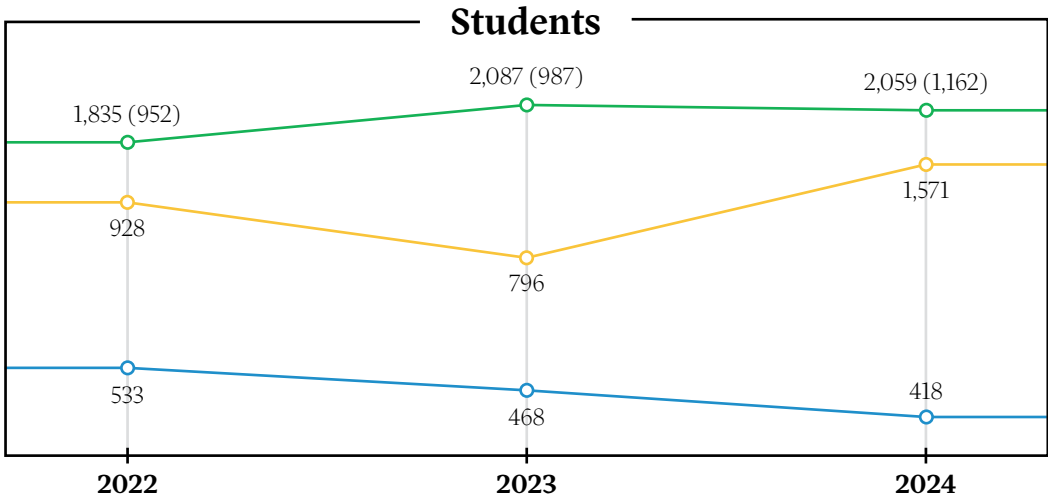
- It is important to optimise resources by identifying key representative events and placing greater emphasis on unique projects that offer higher added artistic value and significance.
- The internationalisation of doctoral studies should be promoted through doctoral student mobility in long-term internships, with the awarding of the European Doctorate certificates.
- The internationalisation of doctoral studies should also be actively promoted by participating in “Horizon Europe” Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (MSCA) projects dedicated to doctoral studies and post-doctoral research activities.
- Young researchers and doctoral students should be encouraged to actively participate in the joint research project calls of the “Santakos Valley” association by submitting interdisciplinary project proposals in collaboration with colleagues from KTU, LSMU, and LEI.
- It is important to encourage researchers, teachers, and students to strive for the highest scientific achievements, particularly by preparing and publishing articles in publications indexed in CA WoS and Scopus databases.
- The activities of artistic groups should be optimised, taking into account their purpose and representativeness. Without duplicating activities, appropriate conditions should be created to support the expression of amateur artistic activities within the University community.
- In 2024, VMU became the leader of a science-business-industry consortium. This consortium was established to initiate joint activities with researchers from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the MISTI (MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives) programme. The main goal for 2025 will be to explore the opportunities offered by MIT MISTI, establish direct connections with MIT researchers, and prepare at least several Global Seed Fund applications for the MIT MISTI LT programme by December 2025.

Studies “360°”

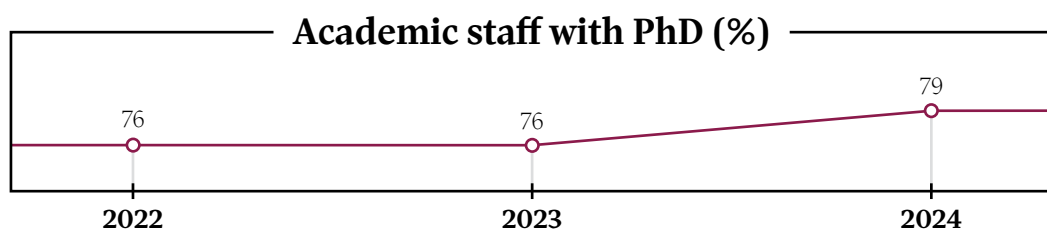
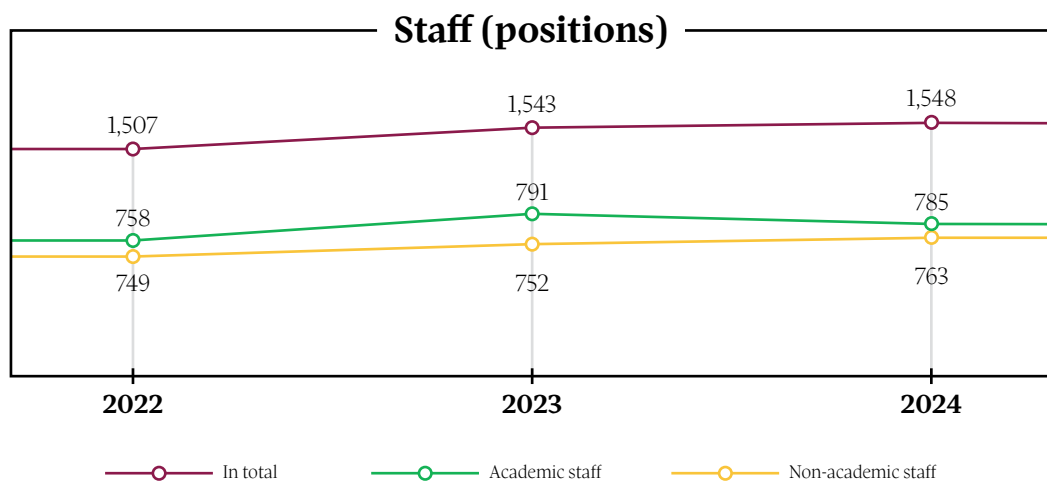
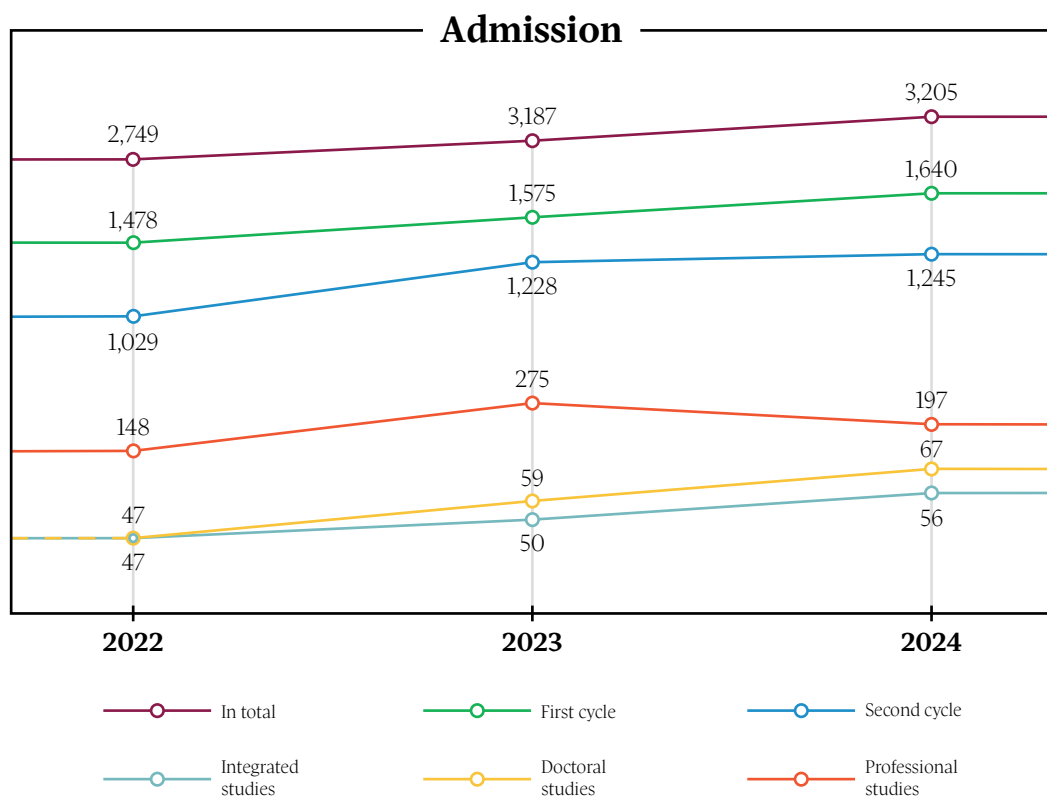


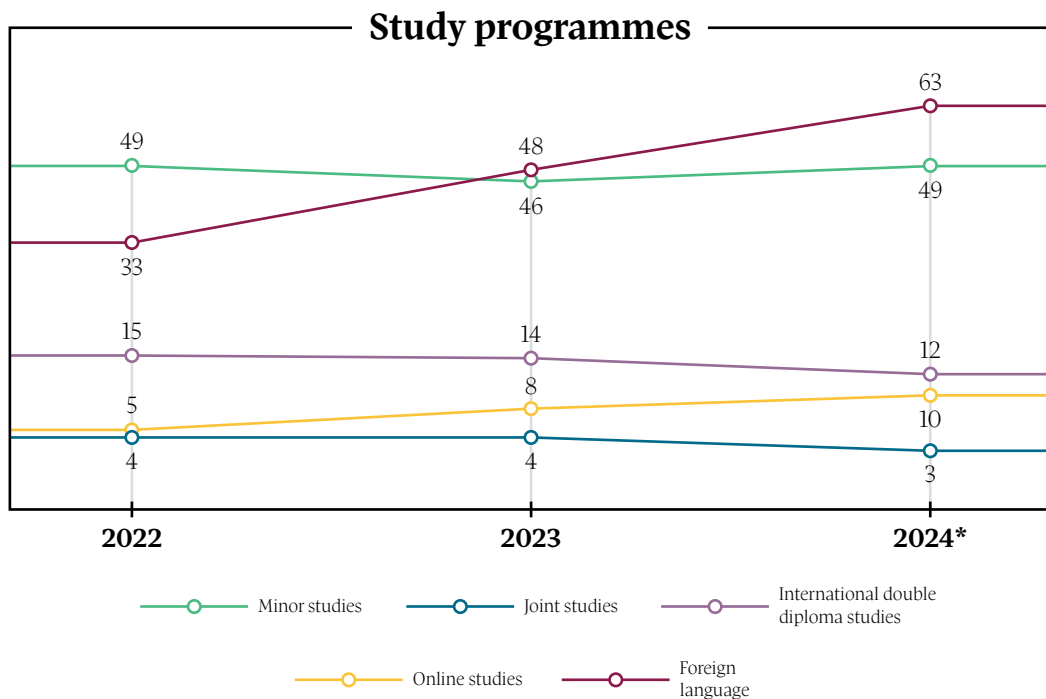
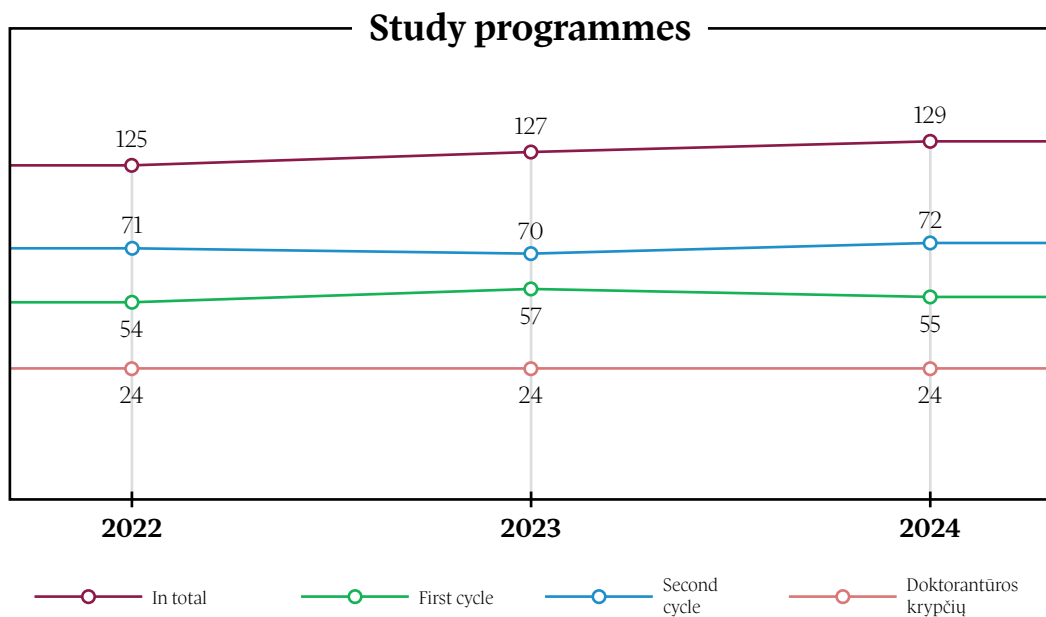


—○— First cycle —○— Second cycle —○— Doctoral studies
—○— Integrated studies —○— Professional studies



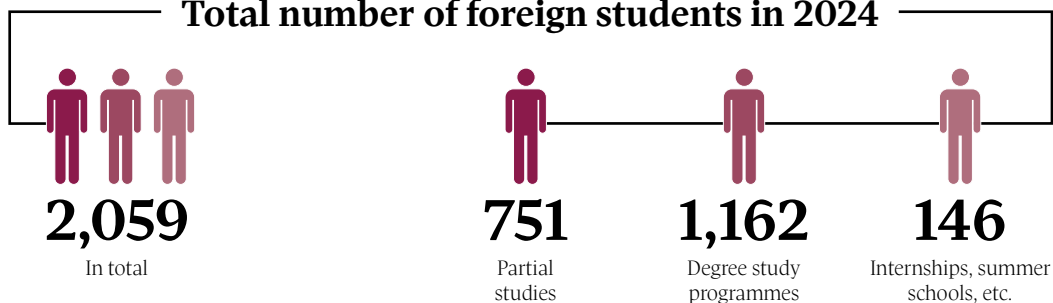
—○— Incoming foreign students at VMU (among them the number of students in degree study programmes) —○— Minor studies —○— Unclassified students



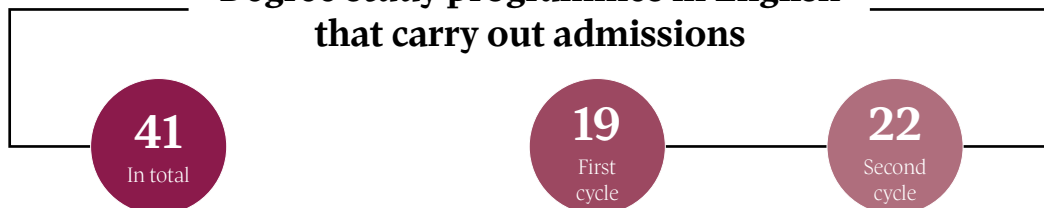


*In 2024, one integrated study programme and one professional study programme were carried out.

Total number of foreign students in 2024



Degree study programmes in English that carry out admissions



79

Number of countries
from which incoming
foreign students at VMU
are enrolled in degree
study programmes

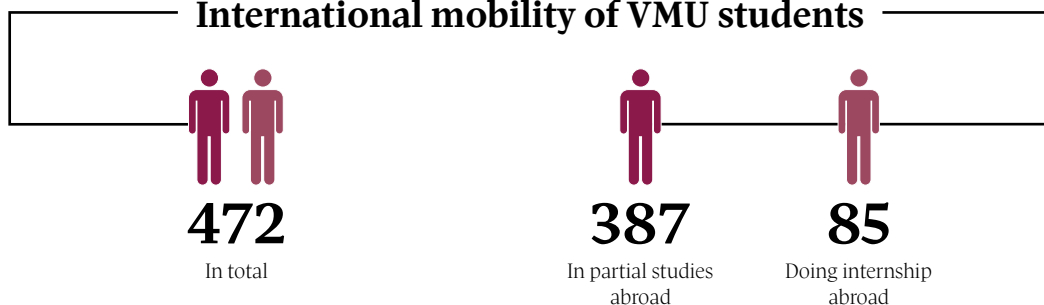
33

Number of
foreign languages
available for study

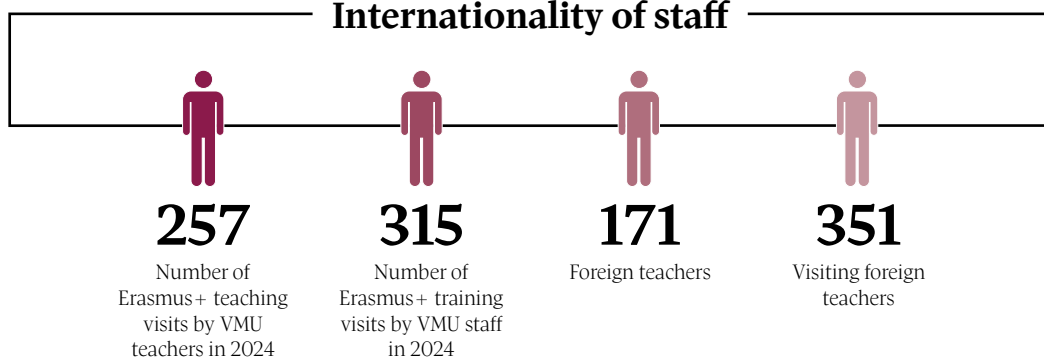
84

Number
of partner
countries

International mobility of VMU students



Internationality of staff



Studies “360°”

In 2024, marking the 35th anniversary of the re-establishment and the *Artes Liberales* concept in Lithuania, Vytautas Magnus University achieved its best results in the field of studies since the re-establishment period. In 2024, the highest number of students in the University's history was **admitted across all study cycles**, with 3,205 first cycle students beginning their studies. The highest number of international students enrolled in full-degree studies was achieved, totalling 1,162 students. The highest number of individuals studying separate study courses was also recorded in 2024, with a total of 1,571 students. A record number of students were enrolled at Vytautas Magnus University, totalling 11,064.

In implementing the recommendations of the international institutional evaluation, an action plan for performance improvement was prepared, with a primary focus on the development of a quality culture. A Teaching Innovation Promotion Fund was established, and a Teaching Innovation Competition was organised for the first time.

The Student Social-Emotional Well-Being Programme was launched, alongside the advancement of study individualisation, modernisation, and the digitalisation of processes. For the first time, digital minor certificates and diplomas in Braille were issued.

Remarkable achievements were recorded in student sports—as many as eight students participated in Paris Olympic Games, and the 3x3 basketball team, which included three University students, won an Olympic bronze medal. The student 3x3 basketball team became World University Champions for the second time.

As of 1 November 2024, Vytautas Magnus University began its one-year presidency of the Transform4Europe (T4EU) Alliance. Among the key objectives of the presidency are the initiation of joint study programmes across all study cycles, as well as active participation in the activities of the Transform4Europe Alliance in the field of studies. Students were also provided the opportunity to integrate courses offered by “Coursera” into their studies.

Innovativeness, flexibility, and accessibility of studies

Admission to studies. Based on the number of students admitted to first cycle and integrated study programmes this year, VMU remains among the leading universities in Lithuania and holds the position of the university with the highest number of first-year students in Kaunas. This year, more than 8,000 candidates meeting the admission requirements expressed interest in enrolling in the University's offered first cycle study programmes, which is 12% more than in previous years.

In 2024, during the general admission process to Lithuanian higher education institutions, 26,137 individuals holding secondary education diplomas submitted applications via LAMA BPO (compared to 27,547 in 2023). However, during the main admission period to universities and colleges this year, 19.4 thousand applicants in Lithuania received offers to study—nearly two thousand fewer than last year. This decrease is attributed to more competitive admission results due to better performance in state exams and the harmonisation of requirements for both state-funded and non-state-funded study places, which increased competition for state-funded spots and resulted in some candidates not being admitted to their preferred programmes. There was particularly high competition for state-funded study places, which were sought by all applicants meeting the admission requirements—totalling more than 17,000 candidates. For instance, in previous years, a score of 5.4 points was sufficient to obtain state funding when applying for life sciences, engineering, or agricultural sciences programmes. However, this year, a minimum score of 6.5 points was required, while in certain fields such as accounting, finance, marketing, and management, the minimum competitive score reached as high as 7.7 points.

In 2024, admission at Vytautas Magnus University was carried out for 46 **first cycle and integrated study programmes**, with a total of 1,385 students admitted (905 to state-funded places and 480 to non-state-funded places). Compared to 2023, the number of individuals with prior education obtained at Lithuanian institutions admitted to first cycle and integrated study programmes at VMU increased by 1.4%, while the number of those admitted to state-funded places grew by 0.9%.

Based on the total number of students admitted during the general admission process to first cycle and integrated study programmes, Vytautas Magnus University ranks third among all Lithuanian universities. In 2024, Vytautas Magnus University attracted 10.57% of all students admitted to state-funded places at universities, compared to 10.53% in 2023.

The highest number of first-year students—as many as 143—began their studies in the Psychology study programme, which is also ranked among the top ten most popular study programmes in Lithuania. The “Marketing”, “Business Administration”, “Law and Finance”, as well as “Multimedia and Internet Technologies” study programmes also attracted significant interest, with admissions to these programmes increasing by as much as 50%.

The most popular study programmes with the highest number of students admitted to state-funded places are: “Psychology” (89), “Subject Pedagogy” (71), “Special Educational Assistance” (62), “Creative Industries” (42), “Public Communication” (37), “Biology and Genetics” (33), “Primary Education Pedagogy and Early Foreign Language Teaching” (32), “Multimedia and Internet Technologies” (30), “Agronomy” (38), and “Sports Studies” (27).

The largest increase in the number of applicants was recorded in the Faculty of Economics and Management (56.3%), the Faculty of Informatics (35.4%), and the Faculty of Law (35.3%). However, a decrease in applicant numbers was observed in the Faculty of Humanities (25.0%), the Faculty of Engineering at the Agriculture Academy (21.7%), and the Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology (18.5%).

In 2024, Vytautas Magnus University conducted admissions for 12 study field groups, 40 study fields, and 62 **second cycle** study programmes, with 1,245 students admitted—an increase of 1.4% compared to 2023. A total of 926 individuals were admitted to full-time study programmes (463 to state-funded studies and 463 to non-state-funded studies), representing an increase of nearly 7% compared to 2023. An analysis of admissions to study programmes shows that the highest number of students were admitted to the following programmes: “Educational Management” (150), “Health Psychology” (56), “Marketing and International Commerce” (40), “Applied Informatics” (34), and “Performing Arts” (33).

The highest number of students admitted to part-time second cycle studies were in the following programmes: “Health Psychology” (46), “Business Logistics” (37), and “Business and Entrepreneurship” (28). In 2024, 19 students were admitted to the international study programme Sports Business Management, implemented in cooperation with Euroleague.

A total of 112 foreign citizens were admitted to second cycle study programmes (compared to 111 international students admitted in 2023). The highest number of international students were admitted to the Faculty of Bioeconomy Development and Management at the Agriculture Academy (17), the Faculty of Humanities (18), and the Faculty of Informatics (18).

In 2023, 273 students were enrolled and studying in **complementary programmes** designed to prepare graduates with a first cycle degree from colleges or other fields of study for study in the second cycle.

In 2024, 418 students were enrolled in **minor study** programmes (468 in 2023). The most popular minor study programme at the University remains the minor study programme “Pedagogy”, which provides a teacher’s professional qualification, with 106 students enrolled. The minor study programme “Marketing” offered by the Faculty of Economics and Management is also popular, with 52 students enrolled. Other popular minor study programmes chosen by students include “Business Administration” (26 students), the Entrepreneurship Academy programme (25 students), “Psychology” (19 students), and “Sports Studies” (16 students). In total, 49 minor study programmes were offered to students, with students enrolled in 44 of them. The minor study programme “Performing Arts” at the Music Academy offers as many as eight specialisations.

The **studies of individual courses or modules**, based on the highly successful and popular Artes Liberales concept, are particularly well-received. These studies attract school learners aiming to better prepare for university studies or acquire additional competencies, as well as students, graduates, and members of the general public. Compared to 2023, the number of participants has almost doubled, increasing by 97.36%, with 1,571 individuals currently enrolled (796 in 2023). An important share of participants consists of those enrolled in the retraining modules of the Education Academy, school learners studying at VMU, and unclassified students of supplementary programmes. The most popular modules offered at the Education Academy were the “Speech Therapy” module—167 participants, the “Special Pedagogy” module—146 participants, and the “Preschool and Pre-primary Education Pedagogy” module—75 participants.

Internationality of studies. In 2024, the total number of incoming international students (including those participating in exchange, short-term and full-time studies) **reached 2,059** (2,089 in 2023; 1,835 in 2022). Of these, 1,162 foreign nationals from 79 countries were enrolled in first and second cycles and doctoral study programmes (987 students from 81 countries in 2023; 952 students from 80 countries in 2022). In 2024, 426 foreign nationals were newly admitted to full-time studies, representing a 24% increase compared to the previous year (343 in 2023). The highest number of foreign students were enrolled in the Faculty of Bioeconomy Development at the Agriculture Academy (217), the Faculty of Informatics (207), and the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy (182).

The most popular study programmes among foreign students were: “Logistics and Commerce” (48 students), “Business Administration” (37), “Information Systems” (30), “Business Logistics” (26), and “Accounting and Finance” (26).

In 2024, a total of 472 VMU students participated in various programmes and international study exchanges (for partial studies), internships, and short-term courses (365 in 2023). This accounts for 5.8% of the total number of VMU students, exceeding the strategic goal of having more than 5% outgoing students. In 2024, 897 international students arrived at VMU through short-term study exchanges and courses under various programmes, representing a 17.7% decrease compared to the previous year (1,090 in 2023).

In 2024, 234 students from 19 different Programme countries (EU, EEA, and candidate countries) came to VMU for semester- or year-long studies under the Erasmus+ programme, which is 15.22% fewer than in 2023 (276 students). The most significant number of Erasmus+ students at VMU in 2024 came from Spain (63 students), France (40 students), Italy (31 students), and Turkey (27 students). Additionally, during the spring and autumn semesters of 2024, 79 students arrived at VMU for studies under the Erasmus+ programme from Partner countries (outside the EU/EEA), compared to 72 students in 2023. In 2024, the highest number of students came to study at VMU from Kenya (7 students), Nigeria (6), Bosnia and Herzegovina (5), and Kazakhstan (5).

In 2024, 48 students came to VMU for partial studies under bilateral agreements, including 20 from Japan, 10 from Kazakhstan, 5 from Georgia, and others. Since 2022, VMU students have had the opportunity to participate in short-term (from 5 to 30 days) study and internship mobility programmes. Comparing 2024 to 2023, the number of VMU students participating in short-term study and internship mobility under the Erasmus+ programme nearly doubled, and compared to 2022, it increased more than elevenfold. In 2024, 158 students participated, compared to 84 in 2023 and only 14 in 2022.

In 2024, VMU organised seven Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes (BIPs)—six for students and one for staff—attracting 134 students and 16 staff members from 13 foreign countries. For comparison, in 2023, six Erasmus+ Blended Intensive Programmes organised by VMU attracted 106 students and 15 staff members from 7 countries.

In 2024, under the Erasmus+ exchange programme, 155 VMU students went to universities in Programme countries (EU, EEA, and candidate countries) (133 in 2023), while 28 students participated in studies at Partner countries' universities (28 in 2023). Additionally, 20 students went abroad under bilateral exchange agreements with a VMU mobility grant (15 in 2023).

In 2024, under the Erasmus+ programme, 75 VMU students undertook internships in Programme countries (EU, EEA, and candidate countries) (70 in 2023). Additionally, 38 VMU graduates used internship opportunities in 2024 (48 in 2023), with students completing internships in as many as 20 different Programme countries. Students also chose to complete internships in Partner countries. In 2024, Erasmus+ internships were successfully completed in Australia (1), Indonesia (2), Japan (1), the Republic of Korea (2), and Taiwan (1).

Since 2017, VMU has been granted the right to carry out the recognition and evaluation of qualifications acquired abroad, with the International Cooperation Department responsible for its successful implementation. In 2024, the International Studies Office issued a total of 630 academic recognition decisions for qualifications obtained in 76 different countries. Individual recommendations from the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC, in Lithuanian) were sought in only 12 cases, while 618 cases were reviewed, and recognition decisions were made internally at VMU. Accordingly, in 2023, 675 qualifications obtained in 72 different countries were evaluated, while in 2022, 774 qualifications were assessed, with as many as 51% of them originating from Ukraine.

Number of students. As of 1 October 2024, 8,742 students were enrolled at the University, marking *the highest number of students in the past five years*. In 2024, 5,313 students were enrolled in first cycle studies, representing an increase of 1.78% compared to 2023. In 2024, 246 students were enrolled in integrated law studies, showing a very slight increase of 0.4% compared to the number of students in 2023. In 2024, 2,740 students were enrolled in second cycle studies, representing a 13.5% increase compared to 2023. Vytautas Magnus University ranks second in Lithuania by the number of students enrolled in professional pedagogy studies, with 200 students currently studying in this programme. The highest number of students were enrolled in the Education Academy (1,753), the Faculty of Social Sciences (1,037), and the Faculty of Economics and Management (936). By the total number of students across all study cycles, Vytautas Magnus University ranks *as the second-largest university in Lithuania*.

In 2024, degree-awarding diplomas were issued to 1,109 first cycle study graduates and 901 second cycle study graduates. Additionally, 272 study certificates awarding a teacher's qualification were issued in 2024. In total, 2,282 graduates received the University's first and second cycle diplomas, as well as study certificates awarding qualifications, representing a 12.75% increase compared to 2023. In 2024, the *first digital minor study certificates* were issued to all students who completed minor studies. Since its re-establishment, Vytautas Magnus University has awarded diplomas to more than 50,000 graduates (52,936 in total).

Development of lifelong learning opportunities. The University *offered 283 non-formal adult education activities for the public* (287 in 2023), with 14,052 participants involved (15,931 in 2023). In 2024, the non-formal education activities were of longer duration and primarily focused on the development of high-value competencies. The non-formal adult education activities encompass a particularly wide range: seminars, training sessions, courses, educational activities, creative workshops, lectures, conferences, masterclasses, and other initiatives organised by the University's academic and non-academic units. A total of 84 non-formal adult education programmes were registered in the National Register of Programmes and Qualifications (compared to 48 programmes in 2023). In 2024, the majority of non-formal adult education activities were conducted for the general public (90), representatives of the agricultural sector (22), educators (33), and representatives of the business and public sectors (13). The majority of non-formal adult education activities for the general public were offered by the Centre for Professional Competence Development, the Institute of Foreign Languages, and the Faculty of Humanities. For representatives of the agricultural sector, activities were primarily offered by the Centre for Business and Social Partnership, while for educators, they were provided by the Institute of Professional Development.

Participants in non-formal adult education activities could choose from a wide variety of activities covering a broad spectrum of areas. The public showed strong interest in the Centre for Professional Competence Development's training sessions on artificial intelligence (190 participants), as well as topics such as "Digital Tools for Educators of Educational Institutions" (169 participants) and "Artificial Intelligence for Productivity Enhancement: Tools, Methods, and Strategies" (115 participants). For war refugees, the Centre for Lithuanian Studies and International Programmes at VMU Education Academy offered Lithuanian language and culture courses, attended by 214 participants. Representatives of the agricultural sector participated in various specialised training sessions, such as "Cultivation and Use of Perennial Grasses for Energy Purposes" (375 participants), "Enhancing the Competitiveness of Farms" (270 participants), and "Organisational and Technological Solutions for Sustainable Forestry and Timber Utilisation in Private Forest Holdings" (225 participants). Most non-formal adult education activities for educators are offered by the Institute of Professional Development at VMU Education Academy, with one of the most popular being the national programme "Implementation of the Life Skills Study Course in Basic Education" (198 participants).

Long-term courses awarding a *sports coach qualification* were successfully implemented for the second consecutive year. In collaboration with sports studies teachers and partners, courses were developed to provide qualifications for high-performance coaches, high-performance instructors, physical activity coaches, and physical activity instructors. In 2024, 62 participants attended these courses (64 participants in 2023).

The dissemination of lifelong learning at the University is carried out by VMU Centre for Professional Competence Development and other units. The public is invited to actively participate in the offered seminars, training sessions, and courses in 2024. VMU experts actively developed new programmes and implemented existing ones. Programmes are developed based on market needs, supported by market analysis and surveys of existing programme participants' opinions. The communication area has been strengthened, providing a centralised platform where all key learning programmes can be found at mokymosiakademija.vdu.lt. Additionally, the public can stay informed by following VMU Centre for Professional Competence Development on social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

To enhance the accessibility of lifelong learning activities for representatives of the business and public sectors, in cooperation with partners and within the framework of the project “Digital Transformation of the Industry, Agriculture, and Energy Sectors in Lithuania (EDIH4IAE.LT)”, a total of 35 free training sessions were offered in 2024, covering five modules: artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, process digitalisation, digital solutions in marketing, and digital solutions in agriculture. A total of 1,632 participants took part in the training sessions. **The topics related to artificial intelligence attracted** particularly high numbers of participants, including sessions such as “Cybersecurity and Personal Data Protection: Essentials and Practical Application in Organisations”, “Practical Training on Creating Interactive Content”, “AI-Powered Marketing: ChatGPT Masterclass for Creative Leaders”, “(Generative) Artificial Intelligence and Neuromarketing Tools/Platforms for Business”, “Principles of Successful Structuring and Communication in Organisations”, “Practical Digital Tools for Daily Work”, “Artificial Intelligence for Productivity Enhancement: Tools, Methods, and Strategies”, among others.

In 2024, a **self-directed learning model** for seven programmes was offered, providing the public with the opportunity to learn independently through VMU learning platform mokymosiakademija.vdu.lt. Additionally, **the platform for the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning** was fully digitalised and made accessible to the public, with four individuals successfully participating in the competence assessment and recognition processes.

VMU experts, in collaboration with VMU Centre for Professional Competence Development and other units, actively provided programmes on the state-funded learning platform kursuok.lt. A total of 23 programmes were offered, including: Public Speaking, Norwegian Language and Culture A1, Conflict Mediation, Improve Your English B1.2, Leadership, Danish Language A1.1, Improve Your English B1.1, Education Differently: Proactive Learning and Animal-Assisted Activities, Project Management: Opportunities and Challenges, Digital Tools for Daily Work, Psychological Capital: The Path to Success and Personal Well-being and Japanese Language. Beginner Level A1.1, Creative Public Speaking and Persuasive Communication, among others. A total of 95 Lithuanian residents received funding and successfully completed the courses.

Non-formal distance learning courses for the public were offered on the Open Studies portal openstudies.vdu.lt, developed by 148 VMU teachers and instructors from partner institutions. A total of 702 learners participated in non-formal education study courses via distance learning.

In order to meet the labour market and societal needs for skills development and acquisition of new competences, **continuous collaboration and joint initiatives with social partners** are actively maintained and developed. The annual event “Business Breakfast’24”, organised in cooperation with Kaunas Region Association of Industrialists and Employers, focused on discussions regarding the professional development of highly qualified employees, personnel development strategies, and the recognition of competences acquired independently by employees. In 2024, the event “VMU Connections’24” was organised for the first time, aiming to connect target groups such as school learners, students, employers, partners, and alumni. The event brought together over one thousand participants and more than 30 companies from various sectors. Active participation is maintained in the monthly events of Kaunas Area Industrialists and Employers Association, aimed at strengthening the cohesion between higher education and business.

In order to provide **students with additional opportunities to gain experience and competencies**, the implementation of the Transform4Europe University Alliance’s additional study model (T4EU BA Tracks) was continued. VMU offered 23 first cycle courses to students from other T4EU European universities. These courses, delivered remotely, attracted significant interest, with 118 students enrolled—a 93% increase compared to 2023. Foreign language learning remained the most popular choice.

Collaboration with other Kaunas universities was continued through the **Academic Kaunas Interuniversity Course Exchange**. A total of 58 students (71% more than in 2023) from other Kaunas universities chose VMU and were admitted as participants to study courses in languages, political science, and psychology.

Vytautas Magnus University is the **only university in Lithuania that has been collaborating with Coursera, the world’s largest learning platform, for the second consecutive year**. Students were offered the opportunity to take courses of varying durations on the Coursera platform free of charge. Throughout the year, 1,172 students took advantage of this opportunity and acquired additional competencies. Students successfully completed 253 courses, some of which were integrated into 34 study courses, allowing students to have the completed courses recognised as part of their studies. Students obtained 1,459 course-completion certificates. Business, information technology and innovation, data science, arts, language learning, health and personal development, physical sciences, and engineering were the dominant fields from which students most frequently chose courses. During these courses, students gained knowledge and understanding of specific study courses such as programming and data analysis; they also improved their language proficiency, intercultural communication, critical thinking, information analysis, technical literacy, as well as collaboration and communication skills. In collaboration with Coursera, several course modules were developed and offered to students. Upon completion, students could earn a joint VMU and Coursera-

accredited **digital badge issued via Credly**, along with individual course completion certificates. Students of the Faculty of Economics and Management were invited to complete the course series “Financial Decisions: from Bias to Rationality”, while students of the Faculty of Arts were offered “Creativity in Game Design”.

In 2024, 17 students participated in the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning. Of the 17 who applied and took part in the assessment, 16 (the same number in 2023) were successfully credited with non-formal and informal competences and study courses. 160 credits were credited in this way (6% less than in 2023). The most frequently recognised areas were public relations, journalistic and pedagogical practices, and language competencies.

Development of a culture of study quality

In 2024, the focus was on **developing a culture of quality**, with the aim of involving the whole community more actively and helping to identify the role and responsibility of each participant in the study process for developing a culture of quality. As part of the implementation of the recommendations of the 2023 international institutional evaluation, a plan of measures to improve the University's performance was developed and implemented, with a strong focus on the development of a quality culture. In order to more effectively implement strategic goals, the Study Quality Department was restructured, with strategic objectives and annual tasks for the department revised. Functions were redistributed, and a new position was created to manage quality projects. For the first time, a community-oriented event, “Quality 360°”, was organised. A Teaching Innovation Promotion Fund was established, and innovation encouragement and experience-sharing projects were organised for the community. An application was submitted to organise the European Universities Association Quality Assurance Forum.

Quality assessment and improvement. Ensuring study quality is a comprehensive activity involving the entire academic community: the continuous planning of study updates, the assessment of the need for new study programmes, constant monitoring of studies, targeted evaluation of study quality, and the improvement of study quality based on the results of these evaluations. At the University, in efforts to improve study quality, relationships with external social stakeholders are developed annually. The conclusions and recommendations provided by external study evaluation experts are taken into account, and best practices at the national and international levels are utilised as a foundation.

In 2024, a new second cycle study programme in Environmental Engineering, titled “Aquamatics”, was developed and registered. This programme will be conducted in collaboration with the Transform4Europe Alliance partner, the University of Silesia in Katowice, Poland. New short cycle study programmes in Agronomy, Plant production, and the professional first cycle programme in Plant Technology were submitted for evaluation and accreditation by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education. In response to labour market needs, the concept of the “International Business and Technology Law” programme was changed to “Financial Law”. The updated first cycle History programme has introduced a specialisation in Philosophy and History of Ideas. A specialisation in Italian language teacher training was introduced in the Study Course Pedagogy programme.

In 2024, 7 study fields were accredited, and 12 accreditation decisions were made, all of which (100%) indicate accreditation for a 7-year period. This indicates that the results of the **external evaluation in 2024 exceeded the set strategic indicator**, where more than 75% of accreditation decisions cover a 7-year period. The average score for the external evaluation of all study fields conducted by VMU in 2024 was 27 out of 35 possible points (77%), which is 1 point higher than in 2023.

In order to ensure effective quality assessment, an internal information system was developed for the collection and analysis of study-related data. The internal study quality assessment was systematically based on feedback from social stakeholders. The results of the 2022–2024 teacher surveys revealed that teachers highly rate the organisation of their work. Teachers rated their preparation for introductory classes, their communication with students and the presentation of information in a distance environment as the best. **The evaluation of study quality from the teachers' perspective reaches 90%**, exceeding the set strategic target of 85%.

In the graduate survey, students noted that the **University employs competent, professional, and engaging teachers**. Students are provided with unique opportunities to study minor study courses for free, thereby gaining additional knowledge and competencies, learning foreign languages, participating in exchange programmes, and attending lectures taught by foreign instructors. **Students appreciated the flexibility of the study programmes, the modern infrastructure of the University, and the strong community that provides support and assistance.** Students highlighted areas for improvement, such as the need to better distribute the study workload across semesters and academic years, the necessity to enhance mentoring activities to ensure faster adaptation for first-year students, further development of teachers' English language skills, and the lack of practical tasks, projects, and excursions in the learning process to help develop students' practical skills and better prepare them for the labour market.

In the graduate survey of 2024, 73.05% of students participated (70.21% in 2023, 64.54% in 2022). In summarising the results of the past three years, it is evident that the overall assessment of study quality remains consistent. In 2024, the quality of studies was rated 3.44 on a 4-point scale (86% of graduates were satisfied with the quality of the study programme), compared to 3.42 in 2023 (85.5%) and 3.44 in 2022 (86%). International students rated the quality of studies higher than Lithuanian students, with scores of 3.71 and 3.41, respectively, in 2024. In 2023, the scores were 3.52 for international students and 3.41 for Lithuanian students, while in 2022, the scores were 3.66 and 3.42, respectively (see Figure 2).

In 2024, students rated the following first cycle study programmes with **the highest scores**: “Hydrotechnical Engineering”, “Catholic Theology”, and “Society, Culture and Communication” (average score in 2024—4 out of 4). For the third consecutive year, the following first cycle programmes were among the highest-rated based on established criteria: Environmental Science and Environmental Protection (average score in 2024—3.83) and Food Quality and Safety (3.83).

The highest-rated second cycle study programmes by students were: “School Psychology”, “Industrial Ecology”, “Finance”, “Central European and Lithuanian Historical Studies”, “Agricultural Engineering and Management”, “Physical Education and Sports”, and “Hydrotechnical Engineering” (average programme score in 2024—4 out of 4).

The majority of graduating students would recommend their chosen study programme to others: in 2024, the score was 3.31 on a 4-point scale (82.75%), in 2023 it was 3.30 (82.5%), and in 2022 it was 3.32 (83%).

In the updated first-year student survey of 2024, students indicated their reasons for choosing their study programmes, expectations, opinions on the orientation week events, the mentoring programme, and student employment. The most common reason for choosing to study at the University is the interest in the study programme, which first-year students identified as the most important factor in their decision (17.6% of responses). Other reasons for choosing to study at VMU include the city where the University is located, VMU’s **strong reputation, high-quality studies, the Artes Liberales study model**, and the freedom for students to plan and select their own study courses. This confirms that students choose their studies based on prior familiarity with the uniqueness of the study programme and the University. Students also choose to study at VMU based on recommendations from friends and family. They value the opportunity to choose minor studies, the University’s internationalisation, scholarships, and other support provided by the University.

The results of the semesterly student surveys on teaching and study quality show that **students rate the quality of teaching exceptionally well**. In this survey, 19% of respondents participated in the spring semester of 2024, and 22% in the autumn semester. In 2024, the teaching rating was 9.2, and the study experience rating was 8.9. The high evaluation of teaching quality is also confirmed by the advantages of the study programme identified by students: clear, structured, high-quality, and easily accessible learning materials in the Moodle environment; interactive, practical, and creative tasks; guest lectures; team projects; and competent, motivating teachers.

In order to assess the comprehensive student experience at the University, an additional innovative student survey, “Studentpulse”, developed on an international platform, was implemented. The goal is to explore various study experiences, evaluate the learning environment, relationships with classmates and the academic community, the opportunities for balancing studies, other activities, and leisure, as well as expectations towards the administration and teachers. More than 4,500 students responded to the survey questions.

To ensure consistent monitoring of study improvement activities at the University level, improvement plans for study programmes are being developed and analysed. These plans are developed annually and include areas for programme improvement, planned actions, and their links to survey and external evaluation results. They also involve the allocation of responsibilities and time resources, as well as the assessment of the implementation of previously planned improvement actions. During the 2023–2024 academic year, 76% of the submitted improvement plans were fully implemented, 17.6% were partially implemented, and 3.4% were not implemented. The reasons that hindered the implementation of the planned actions include the high workload of students and teachers, organisational obstacles, and a lack of time.

Development of a quality culture. In 2024, significant changes in the development of study quality culture were implemented at Vytautas Magnus University. In addition to the continuous external evaluation system, which includes centralised programme evaluations, accreditations, surveys, and other quality assurance measures, internal quality culture was actively fostered: a teaching innovation competition was initiated, the event “Quality 360°” was organised in celebration of International Quality Day, and awards were presented to academic units. Additionally, regular meetings were held with faculties and academies to identify their expectations and needs in the area of quality assurance. These activities were aimed at ensuring that quality culture would become fully integrated into the University’s operations over the coming years.

In order to promote pedagogical innovations and their application in the study process, provide opportunities to share best practices, and improve teaching quality, Vytautas Magnus University Teaching Innovation Promotion Fund Regulations were approved in 2024. Based on this, the “Teaching Innovation Competition” was organised in September–October. A total of 36 applications were submitted, showcasing various creative and innovative ideas on how to improve study quality. 18 winners were selected, whose works stood out for their originality and potential to improve the study process. The competition winners were selected by a committee consisting of VMU teachers, staff, students, and social partners. Teachers were awarded for innovative initiatives in six categories:

- Active Teaching Methods – The team of teachers from the Education Academy – **Assoc. Prof. Ilona Tandzegolskienė-Bielaglovė, Assoc. Prof. Nijolė Čiučiulkienė, Prof. Sigitas Daukilas, and Heather Godfrey Gaddis** – for creating and presenting video reports.
- Digital Learning Technologies Using Artificial Intelligence – Teacher **Vaida Misevičiūtė** from the Institute of Foreign Languages for the effective integration of AI in the language learning process.
- Innovations for Assessing Student Achievement – Teachers **Assoc. Prof. Rasa Nedzinskaitė-Mačiūnienė and Assoc. Prof. Eglė Stasiūnaitienė** from the Education Academy for the virtual escape room for self-assessment of study achievements.

- Encouraging Entrepreneurship – **Assoc. Prof. Vyktintas Baublys** from the Faculty of Natural Sciences for the project “Biotechnological Product”.
- Inclusive and Personalised Teaching Methods – **Austėja Pečiurienė** from the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy for the innovation “Work in a Team – Like in Real Life”.
- Co-teaching and Co-creation – **Assoc. Prof. Evelina Bendoraitienė and Assoc. Prof. Asta Gaigalienė** from the Faculty of Economics and Management for the hackathon – a problem-solving-based learning method.

In 2024, **for the first time, awards were presented to recognise the achievements of faculties in various areas of quality culture**, such as academic integrity, the synergy of studies and research, the involvement of social partners, internationalisation, ensuring multilingualism, community spirit, personalised studies, ensuring sustainability, study innovations, and more.

Some of the nominations were based on formal criteria, while in certain areas, academic units conducted self-assessments and expressed their views on how they identify themselves and in which areas they are most effective in developing quality culture. These awards not only highlight achievements but also encourage all VMU units to strive for even higher quality standards.

Help and support for students

In order to achieve strategic goals and enhance the support and assistance provided to students, continuous quality surveys of the services offered are conducted, with areas for improvement being identified. Having analysed the results of several years of ongoing research, it was identified that the greatest influences on academic success are students' mental health, social well-being, and involvement in university life. Therefore, the monitoring and support system for students' studies was improved, with a primary focus on enhancing students' social and emotional well-being. After restructuring the functions of the Student Centre, the position of Student Well-being Coordinator was established, **a support system for students** was created, a peer-to-peer help model was prepared for implementation, individual consultations were introduced, and a crisis management group was formed.

To enhance students' readiness for the labour market, a new concept career event, “VMU Connections'24”, was organised. The event was attended by more than 30 companies, over 2,000 school learners, students, graduates, and social partners. Students are offered modules on the Coursera learning platform for additional competences in preparation for the labour market.

In order to provide opportunities for talented students, study support funds were being developed, attracting business patrons. In celebration of the 35th anniversary of the Re-established University and the Artes Liberales concept in Lithuania, the **Artes Liberales Scholarship Fund** was established, and through a competition, four of the most talented students received scholarships.

Student career planning and monitoring of graduates. The Career Centre provided advice to students on targeting career goals, career planning (including opportunities for employment and internships, minor studies, and the choice of second cycle degree programmes), and changes in the study programme. The Centre also assisted in preparing resumes and cover letters, necessary for seeking internships, job positions, or applying for nominal scholarships.

In 2024, a total of **149 individual career consultations** were held at the Career Centre, targeting various groups: international students seeking internship and job opportunities in Lithuania; graduates planning their future career paths; school learners interested in choosing study programmes; and career specialists aiming to enhance their competencies and working methods.

As an initiative of the Career Centre, two virtual seasonal bilingual (English and Lithuanian) *Catalogues of Internship and Volunteering Offers* were published. In 2024, The Career Centre staff conducted various career-related seminars, including the seminar “Teachers' Day at VMU”, aimed at Lithuanian career specialists, “First Steps of a Career Specialist” (55 participants); 35 (online and in-person) seminars, attended by 1,355 school learners; and 9 workshops on career planning and implementation topics within VMU Education Academy's Career Specialist Qualification Development Programme, with 32 career specialists participating.

In 2024, the Career Centre organised 5 ongoing events, including the informal lecture series “Towards Yourself 2024”, consisting of 6 seminars organised by the Career Centre (183 students participated); the online event “Summer Season Opportunities Fair 2024” (51 students participated), which featured 3 organisations and a student who participated in summer work projects; in collaboration with VMU International Relations Department, 2 English-language seminars were organised for VMU students and graduates (76 students participated); during the orientation week “Introduction to Studies at VMU”, the Career Centre's activities were presented to first-year students (61 students participated: 48 in English, 13 in Lithuanian); and an online training cycle “Prepare for VMU Career Days 2024” was created for students and graduates. The cycle consisted of 9 seminars, 3 of which were in English. A total of 221 participants attended the training sessions.

In 2024, in collaboration with the International Relations Department, the “Internship Programme for Foreign Students in Lithuania” (UPinLT), funded by the Education Exchange Support Fund, was implemented. Based on this, VMU allocated project funds to finance scholarships for internships of foreign students and graduates in companies and organisations operating in Lithuania.

In 2024, VMU Career Centre continued its collaboration with the Idialogue career mentoring platform, which brings together the University community: teachers, non-academic staff, alumni, and students. They are invited to register in the system and become mentors or mentees, thereby providing opportunities for individuals to gain knowledge in specific professional fields.

To streamline the internship organisation process, an information system for signing student internship agreements (SPIS) was **created and implemented**. This significantly simplified the process of creating and managing internship contracts for those responsible for internship coordination in academic units, as well as for the students and the organisations hosting the internships. Since the system's implementation (in the autumn semester of 2024), 914 study internship agreements were signed. In the future, the system is planned to be expanded to include the creation of other types of internship agreements (such as additional, voluntary, international, and graduate internships), thus centralising the entire process of creating and managing internship-related contracts within the University.

In 2024, the Career Centre, in collaboration with the Study Department, conducted university-level surveys on the quality of students' (graduates') studies and their current career situation and plans. According to the graduate survey data, 53% of graduates' jobs are directly related to their completed study programme, with the most substantial connection observed among professional studies students (78%) and second cycle students (52%). According to the graduate survey data, 93.07% of respondents were employed at the time of the survey, with all those not working indicating that they were either actively seeking employment or planning to start soon. The trends in 2024 showed that graduates most often chose jobs in various sectors, including the public sector, education, healthcare, and business, which primarily aligned with trends from previous years. The most popular employment sectors in 2024 were: education, training, and teaching; healthcare; government institutions (such as the Parliament, ministries, and local government); social care and welfare; sales and commerce; law (courts and legal services); logistics and transportation; agriculture and forestry; and information technology (IT).

When comparing the 2023 Graduate Survey data with that of 2024, the Year After Graduation Graduate Survey data shows that respondents' opinions regarding the knowledge acquired at the University have changed. The nature of the work being performed **has positively shifted, and salaries have increased proportionally. Additionally, there is greater satisfaction with the current career situation.**

According to the Employment Service data from 1 February 2024 and 1 July 2024, the number of graduates registered with the Employment Service one year after graduation, based on their completed study programmes, accounted for 4.09% (82) of all those who graduated in June 2023 and January 2022 (2,006).

Financial and social support

In order to provide opportunities for the most talented students to study at the University, develop study fields important to both the community and the University, enhance internationalisation, and contribute to increasing access to higher education, 1,590 scholarships were allocated in 2024 to cover study costs for individuals facing social exclusion. A total of 1,150 students received these scholarships (some students received the scholarships for two semesters).

In implementing the talent support system, the University provided tuition fee discounts to students admitted to study at the University from the Study Support Fund. Additionally, other tuition fee discounts were granted. In 2022, the largest portion of tuition fee discounts, awarded without a competitive process, was for foreign students (EUR 1,186,723). In 2024, scholarships to cover study costs continued to be the largest source of funding (EUR 2,089,176).

In 2024, more than EUR 210,000 was allocated for one-time scholarships (compared to EUR 156,139.00 in 2023) from the state budget, the University's own funds, transfer funds, and/or project funds. To encourage students to achieve excellent academic results and actively participate in scientific, artistic, and community activities, named scholarships were awarded:

- LR Presidents' Scholarships: In 2024, Margarita Kalinka (Education Academy, 4th year) was awarded the President of the Republic of Lithuania Algirdas Brazauskas Scholarship;
- February 16th Act of Independence Signatories' Scholarships: Vytautė Petrikonytė (AA Faculty of Agriculture, 1st year) and Danielė Vaičiulytė (Education Academy, 1st year);
- University Honorary Scholarships: In 2024, 8 students were awarded University Honorary Scholarships: Ugnė Aleksiejūnaitė (Faculty of Arts, 3rd year), Agnė Gintalaitė (Faculty of Humanities, 2nd year), Kamilė Jasnauskaitė (AA Faculty of Agriculture, 3rd year), Paulius Katiliavas (Music Academy, 4th year), Audrius Knašas (Faculty of Economics and Finance, 3rd year), Karolis Orlauskas (Faculty of Law, 5th year), Patrikas Stankevičius (AA Faculty of Bioeconomy Development, 3rd year), and Aida Vasiliauskaitė (Education Academy, 4th year);
- Scholarships for Achievements in Science or Artistic Activities: In 2024, 25 students were awarded scholarships (compared to 14 students in 2023).

In 2024, 7 benefactors established new named scholarships (UAB "Nordzucker Business Services", V. Čekanauskas Scholarship, UAB "Baltic Agromachinery", UAB "Ivabaltė", UAB "Ginalas", VšĮ "ACME Geri Darbai", Lithuanian Hunters and Fishermen Association). Among them, UAB "Nordzucker Business Services" provided the greatest support, allocating EUR 3,500 to 5 students. In total, in 2024, 19 individual physical and legal entities provided support to 51 students of the University, with a total amount exceeding EUR 50,000.

In 2024, 47 University students who actively participated in various projects were awarded scholarships for exceptional activities, including conducted research, scientific publications, and other significant achievements in the academic field.

In 2024, housing fee discounts, awarded without a competitive process, were mostly granted to international students, particularly Ukrainian citizens studying at VMU, under the Rector's exception. These discounts were also given to VMU staff members and participants of seminars and conferences residing in VMU dormitories, taking into account cooperation agreements and commitments and encouraging active participation. A total of 365 students received these discounts.

In 2024, the University allocated more than EUR 4 million for student encouragement and support, providing discounts on fees. These funds were allocated to help students reduce their financial burden, encourage their academic activity, and ensure access to higher education.

From 2022 to 2024, the total amount of funds allocated for student encouragement and support through fee discounts steadily increased, from EUR 4,168,744 in 2022 to EUR 4,337,676 in 2024. This growth was primarily driven by the increase in tuition fee discounts, from EUR 3,400,255 in 2022 to EUR 3,770,019 in 2024. The amount of housing fee discounts for dormitory accommodation decreased from EUR 768,489 in 2022 to EUR 567,657 in 2024.

In 2024, a total of 8,742 students studied at VMU, of which 830 students (10%) received one-time scholarships. Out of approximately 1,320 students living in dormitories, 428 students (33%) received a housing fee discount.

Raising state funds for student support and aid

In 2024, the Disability Rights Protection Agency under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania (ANTA) allocated payments to support students with disabilities, covering special needs and partially compensating study expenses. The total amount was EUR 79,188 (for 99 students), of which EUR 5,984 covered study expenses (19 students), and EUR 73,204 was allocated for special needs (70 students).

The State Studies Foundation (SSF) implemented the European Union project "Inclusive Higher Education" No. 01-018-P-0001, under which targeted payments were made to students with disabilities from the European Social Fund and the national budget of the Republic of Lithuania. In 2024, the total amount was EUR 112,860 (for 95 students).

SST provided support by awarding social scholarships to VMU students (a total of 446 students):

- In 2024, social scholarships were awarded to 208 students from low-income families (who are either living with others or living alone and have the right to receive or are receiving social assistance under the Republic of Lithuania's Law on Monetary Social Assistance to Low-Income Residents) (compared to 192 students in 2023);
- In 2024, social scholarships were awarded to 105 students with a work capacity level of 45% or lower or with a severe or moderate disability, as determined by the regulations (compared to 99 students in 2023);
- In 2024, social scholarships were awarded to 133 students who were no older than 25 years and who, until reaching adulthood, were under guardianship (care) as determined by law or whose parents (or the sole surviving parent) were deceased (compared to 131 students in 2023).

SSF awarded scholarships equivalent to 3.25 BSB to Lithuanian expatriates studying at VMU (21 students in 2024 compared to 12 in 2022 and 2023). However, no VMU student was awarded a partial reimbursement of the tuition fees for those who had completed mandatory military service or basic military training.

Students submitted applications to the State Studies Foundation for loans granted under preferential conditions to cover tuition fees, study abroad expenses, and living costs. Although SSF provided loan opportunities to 373 students, the majority of the loans were allocated for tuition fees (291 students), while 82 students received loans for living expenses.

Improving infrastructure for studies and student well-being

In 2024, the building at S. Daukanto g. 28 was fully renovated, and starting from the autumn semester, ***the study process returned to innovative classrooms and spaces designed for student teamwork and/or individual work.*** The concept of Quiet Rooms was implemented in this building to meet the needs of students, with single, double and quadruple Quiet Rooms available on each floor.

In 2024, the relocation of the Faculties of Science and Informatics to the Academy's campus was completed, and the new laboratories and classrooms were finalised. ***The only STEAM didactics centre*** in Lithuania, the Education Academy's Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Laboratories in Kaunas and Vilnius, opened in September.

In order to increase the accessibility of the University's entrances and spaces for people with disabilities, in 2024, an accessibility analysis of the Education Academy building and its entrances for individuals with disabilities was conducted. Additionally, three rooms adapted for people with physical disabilities were created in VMU Student Dormitory No. 5 (Universiteto g. 8, Akademija, Kaunas District).

The renovation of the dormitories has begun, with some dormitories having individual floors renovated (*further details can be found in the Infrastructure Development and Improvement section*).

Since 2020, a continuous survey has been conducted to evaluate the accommodation services provided in the dormitories. The goal is to give dormitory residents the opportunity to express their opinions on the quality of the services provided, thus contributing to the improvement of these services.

The living conditions in the dormitories, the quality of the services provided, and other related issues were evaluated on a 5-point scale, with a total of 437 residents providing their ratings (compared to 167 in 2023). For the second consecutive year, the work of the Room Inspection Commission received the highest rating, with a score of 4.27. Compared to the 2023 survey data, the evaluation of the dormitories improved, with an increase of 0.96 points. In 2024, residents felt safer in the dormitories and were pleased with the quality of the internet connection, compared to 2023.

Developing teachers' competences and collaboration

In 2024, VMU Centre for Professional Competency Development offered the community more than 144 learning activities through in-person, online, and hybrid formats, as well as 16 self-paced learning activities in the system, which include learning recordings for personal development. Considering the needs of VMU community, the training addresses general, professional, and specialised competencies. In collaboration with the Institute of Innovative Studies, digital competence training is organised. As in previous years, significant attention is given to the improvement of language competencies, for which learning programmes are offered by the Institute of Foreign Languages. The training was also carried out as part of project activities, in collaboration with various partners, and the Transform4Europe training activities continue.

In 2024, **2,883 participants took part in the learning activities** (compared to 2,770 in 2023). The most active participants in the training were academic staff from the Faculty of Agriculture, the Education Academy, the Faculty of Natural Sciences, the Faculty of Humanities, the Faculty of Social Sciences, and the Institute of Foreign Languages. Non-academic staff were most active from the Library, the Study Department, the Botanical Garden, and the Human Resources Department. The learning curriculum is created based on the community's needs, while maintaining a balance between the needs of academic and non-academic staff. In 2024, 30% of the training topics were dedicated to academic staff, 30% to non-academic staff, and 50% of the issues were oriented towards both target groups. Among these, about 5% of the training topics were intended for students and academic and non-academic staff from external organisations. A total of 35.1% of teachers participated in professional development activities (compared to 34.9% in 2022).

In 2024, **the "Self-Learning" platform was developed**, offering training on topics such as: "Artificial Intelligence (AI) for Increased Productivity: Tools, Methods, and Strategies", "AI-Driven Marketing: ChatGPT Masterclass for Creative Leaders", "Preparing and Updating Course Descriptions", "OxSico Text Similarity Checking System with AI Recognition", and others. A total of 16 topics were developed for academic and non-academic staff.

As part of the project "Enhancing VMU's International Competitiveness within the Transform4Europe Alliance Network of European Universities", unique training topics were offered: "Leadership and Management Training" (17), "Data Management with Various Digital Tools for Administrative Work in Higher Education" (22), "Leadership and Management Training" (24), and "Science Communication" (18).

The following training topics were offered to staff from all universities within the Transform4Europe Alliance: "Team Building and Conflict Resolution", "Artificial Intelligence Tools in Practice", "Skills for a Balanced Life: Mindfulness, Resilience, and Healthy Lifestyle", and others. A total of 862 employees participated in the training.

In 2024, **the opportunity for self-development through the Coursera.org** platform was offered, allowing teachers to choose any training courses. Some of the training courses were integrated into the study courses taught by the teachers. Employees participated in 132 training programmes on Coursera.org. On the Coursera.org online learning platform, employees chose topics such as "AI For Everyone", "Engage and Assess Students with Quizizz", and others.

In 2024, employees had the opportunity to apply to **VMU Professional Development Fund**, which financed 18 applications (out of a total of 27 submitted) (compared to 19 applications funded in 2023). Teachers chose training in various organisations and primarily gained international experience. The training programmes chosen by teachers were related to enhancing teaching competencies: innovative teaching methods; effective listening, reading, and speaking skills in both informal and formal settings; research data processing methods; the use of digital tools in the learning process; emotional intelligence; and language courses. Examples include "Italian Language Course (Elementary level) (Italy)", "REI Certified Forest Therapy Guide Training 2024 (Poland)", "International Mediation (Germany)", "Digital Tools for Humanists Summer School 2024 (Italy)", "Rediscovering the Roots of Democracy: from Ancient Greece to the European Union (Greece)", "Managing a Diverse Classroom: Facing Upcoming Challenges (Turkey)", and "Advanced Longitudinal Modelling in Mplus" (Netherlands).

To ensure the effectiveness of the training, participants can evaluate each session through a quality questionnaire and also provide suggestions for future topics. Data from 2024 shows that the training content was rated 4.7 points, the competence of the instructor was rated 4.9 points, the duration of the training was rated 4.7 points, the tasks during the training were rated 4.6 points, the timing of the training was rated 4.7 points, and the usefulness of the training materials was rated 4.6 points. This year's participant survey results showed that the training and its content are highly valued for their quality and relevance. The training on psychological topics, general skills development, and fostering creativity receive the most attention. Additionally, participants are increasingly expressing a need for training on artificial intelligence (AI), particularly its practical applications.

In 2024, the Institute of Foreign Languages (IFL) continued the tradition of enhancing the language competencies of both academic and non-academic VMU staff. Employees had the opportunity to explore Spanish language and culture, thereby developing their intercultural competence. In 2024, short seminars lasting 2–4 academic hours were held to deepen very specific English language skills (e.g., writing abstracts or using AI in language lectures). These seminars also provide an opportunity to communicate in English and maintain the proficiency level of the language.

In 2024, the “Language HUB” initiative continued—weekly informal conversations in a non-native language on relevant topics for academic and non-academic University staff. A total of 36 VMU staff members participated in this activity.

The Institute of Innovative Studies at the Education Academy carried out professional development activities under the “Digitally Competent Teacher” programme, offering short online training sessions for VMU teachers and staff, as well as for staff, managers, and teacher trainers from other higher education institutions, vocational education, and general education in Lithuania and abroad. A total of 423 VMU teachers and 3,772 participants from other educational institutions took part in the training.

Mobility of teaching and non-teaching staff. In 2024, the number of Erasmus+ teaching visits to universities in Programme countries (EU, EEA, and candidate countries), during which VMU teachers went to give lectures at partner universities, increased by 6.28% compared to 2023, from 191 visits in 2023 to 203 visits in 2024. In total, over the past three years, VMU teachers have participated in 551 Erasmus+ teaching visits. In 2024, 291 Erasmus+ staff training visits were also implemented (compared to 336 in 2023).

In 2024, 24 VMU staff members participated in Erasmus+ learning visits to universities in Partner countries (compared to 49 in 2023). Additionally, 54 VMU teachers went on Erasmus+ teaching visits to universities in Partner countries (compared to 64 in 2023). Over the past three years, the highest number of VMU staff teaching visits were to universities in Georgia (16), Albania (8), Indonesia (7), Montenegro (7), and South Korea (7).

VMU academic units are provided with the opportunity to invite teachers from companies or organisations in foreign countries (professionals). During these types of visits, guests share their experiences, and students are introduced to the practical application of the theoretical knowledge they acquire. In 2024, 29 employees from foreign companies/organisations came to VMU to lecture (compared to 32 in 2023). In total, VMU hosted 514 visits from foreign teachers, researchers, and other staff in 2024 (conferences, lectures, Kavolis Professorship, Erasmus+ learning and teaching visits, etc.).

In 2024, 34 teachers from Erasmus+ Partner countries visited VMU for teaching visits (compared to 37 in 2023). Additionally, 31 staff member from Erasmus+ Partner institutions visited VMU for learning visits in 2024 (compared to 47 in 2023).

In 2024, VMU International Relations Department organised the “International Staff Week”. This event was aimed at teachers and administrative staff from VMU’s partner universities abroad. During the International Staff Week, visiting teachers gave lectures to VMU students, and administrative staff participated in training sessions, sharing their experiences in the field of higher education internationalisation. In 2024, 112 teachers and administrative staff from 41 countries took part in this event week.

An ecosystem for personalities and talents to flourish

Academia cum laude activities. The goal of *Academia cum laude* is to create opportunities for students to explore various academic and cultural combinations, aiming not for narrow specialisation but for the ability to think more broadly and interdisciplinarily—interdisciplinary interactions are ensured through the combination of different scientific fields. 40 mini *Academia cum laude* involves 30 curators (tutors)—top-level internationally recognised VMU professors, scientists, researchers, artists, and experts in their fields, not only in Lithuania but also abroad.

Academia cum laude brings together highly motivated students with a wide range of interests. In 2024, 12 students chose individual studies. The small number of students allows *Academia cum laude* to remain focused, making it a community that prioritises the individual needs of students. **Individual studies for students covered topics such as civil society, Soviet studies, human rights, sociolinguistics, literature and culture, cultural metaphorisation,** and cultural management. In the summer of 2024, graduation certificates were awarded to the seventh cohort of *Academia cum laude* students.

The Academy continued its collaboration with partners in Lithuania and abroad, with teachers from the USA, the Netherlands, other Lithuanian universities, and invited professors of Vytautas Kavolis Interdisciplinary Professorship participating in open lectures and cultural events.

Academy students participated in the student creative group “Declamationes”, led by Professor Irena Buckley. In this group, students prepared artistic programmes dedicated to the upcoming M. K. Čiurlionis Year, theatrical improvisations with Prof. Gytis Padėgimas, book presentations, and participated in the “Living Manor Culture Festival” at Panemunė Castle, as well as a series of Baroque-themed events.

In 2024, *Academia cum laude* continued its collaboration with school communities and talented high school students. Members of the community gave lectures in a series of consultations for school leavers, collaborated in the implementation of the 12th VMU Kaunas History Competition. There were also ongoing activities in cooperation with the Lithuanian World University: a non-formal education programme for teachers of Lithuanian and Lithuanian language schools in Lithuania and around the world, “Challenges of Lithuanian Identity and Family Stories”.

VMU school network. VMU school network currently consists of 14 schools and gymnasiums. In September 2024, *VMU Šakiai “Žiburio” Gymnasium, established in collaboration with the Šakiai District Municipality, joined the five existing VMU-branded schools.* Currently, VMU school network consists of 6 VMU-branded high schools: VMU “Atžalyno” Gymnasium, VMU Classical Education School, VMU “Rasos” Gymnasium, VMU “Sokratus” Lyceum, VMU Ugnė Karvelis Gymnasium, and VMU Šakiai “Žiburio” Gymnasium.

This year, *new classes joined VMU-branded classes:* VMU SMART and VMU Multilingualism classes at Kaunas “Santaros” Gymnasium, VMU German Studies class, VMU Natural Sciences class at Kaunas Jonas Jablonskis Gymnasium, and the Media Creation and Entrepreneurship class at President Valdas Adamkus Gymnasium.

Intensive activities were carried out with each school throughout the year: students from VMU school network attended *Artes Liberales* group courses alongside university students in the spring and fall semesters; they also participated in preparatory courses for 10th graders and high school seniors designed to prepare for the National Secondary Education Examinations (PUPP) and state final exams. VMU teachers gave lectures to students from VMU-branded classes throughout the academic year; students actively participated in events organised by VMU. Students from the network schools actively participated in the “Be a Student for a Day” project, “Study Festival”, “VMU Summer School”, the “Smart Student Academy”, and “VMU Connect’24”. Over 70 lectures for students took place in 2024.

According to the 2024 results, among the top 60 high schools in the country with the best exam results are: *VMU “Rasos” Gymnasium* (in Lithuanian, English, Physics, History, and Computer Science), *VMU Šakiai Gymnasium* (in Lithuanian and Chemistry), *VMU Ugnė Karvelis Gymnasium* (in Chemistry), and *VMU class at Ariogala Gymnasium* (in Lithuanian and History). VMU “Rasos” and VMU Ugnė Karvelis Gymnasiums also rank among the top high schools according to the results of Olympiads.

The activities of the Gifted Children’s Academy. VMU Gifted Children’s Education Centre “Gifted” branches operate in three regions—Kaunas, Vilnius, and, following the cooperation agreement with the Tauragė Municipality, in Tauragė since January 2023. The Centre’s activities are organised based on its development plan and in alignment with the University’s objectives. In 2024, the *Centre was attended by more than 400 children* (31 groups): 55% in Vilnius, 42% in Kaunas, and 3% in Tauragė. Based on the recommendations from the 2024 activity audit, the Centre’s quantitative indicators were supplemented with a qualitative indicator—the customer satisfaction index, which will be measured every spring. To achieve quality-related goals, the Centre developed a Customer Service Standard, and regular discussions are held to assess how well it is being followed and what challenges arise.

In 2024, a *“Gifted” teacher professional development programme* was created, consisting of supervision, seminars, and a consultation cycle led by foreign researchers and a team of VMU psychologists. The centre continued its multi-year project and completed activities in the Erasmus+ project “Teachers Training Programme to Support Gifted and Talented Students (GATE)”, in which, together with project partners from Israel, Bulgaria, and Latvia, it developed teaching materials for teachers working with gifted children in schools.

In June, the first collegial feedback forum, “Education of Gifted Children: Science and Practice”, was organised, with over 400 participants. At the forum, presentations were given by foreign and VMU researchers, as well as by teachers-practitioners from the “Gifted” centre. A national professional development programme for school teams, “Inclusive School: Personalised Learning-Based Education for Gifted Children”, was developed.

Activities of the Entrepreneurship Academy. Close collaboration was established with business and public organisations (Innovation Agency, Co-working Space “Spiečius”, “Žalgiris Group”, UAB “Omniva LT”, Kaunas National Drama Theatre, “Altamedica” Medical Service Network, UAB “Eko Sesės”). A total of 22 idea projects were created and presented to these organisations, and the first holistic mentoring training programme in Lithuania was developed. A meeting was organised with participants of Kaunas startup ecosystem (Tech Park Kaunas; Kaunas IN; Kaunas “Spiečius”; Communication and Technology Transfer Centre of Lithuanian University of Health Sciences; VMU Communication and Technology Transfer Centre; Kauno kolegija “IDEA POINT”; Baltic Sandbox; Rock-IT). “Design Thinking” training and creative workshops were held for business representatives. “Coaching Buzz 2024” was organised in collaboration with the International Coaching Federation.

In 2024, approximately 700 students participated in MINDED activities. In collaboration with the Šiauliai City Municipality, the project “Millennium Schools” is being implemented, organising creative workshops aimed at promoting leadership among Šiauliai students.

In 2024, 34 students chose to study the first cycle programme in Creative Business and Innovation Design. During the internal pre-accelerator programme, 13 potential student business ideas were developed. *Creative Business and Innovation Design students implemented 6 community change projects in various towns across Lithuania:* Skaudvilė, Praveniškės, Kazlų Rūda, Babtai, Neveronys, and Zapyškis. Students organised three open entrepreneurship events with 200 participants and created 4 product prototypes, which were presented to representatives of the Innovation Agency. While working on business challenges, students participated in expert roundtables with 10 professionals from the business sector. In the spring, the updated Creative Business and Innovation Design supplementary programme was launched, available to all VMU students.

Arts, sports and other activities for university and school students

Activities for school students. In 2024, University representatives continued active communication with high school students and carried out numerous projects aimed at introducing students to the University, helping them

prepare for exams, and providing guidance on study programmes and admission procedures to higher education institutions. Students were invited to traditional events such as “Try on a Profession”, VMU Study Festival, Summer Camp, Student University, preparatory courses for PUPP and VBE, consultations on “Admission to Studies Made Simple as 2x2”, and more.

In 2024, a **new Student ID project was launched**, where students can earn additional benefits for their active participation in University activities. On the occasion of the 35th anniversary of the University’s re-establishment, a highly anticipated orientation game for students, *Artes Liberales*, was organised, designed to explore interesting spaces at the University and in the city of Kaunas.

To allow students to better familiarise themselves with academic fields and study programmes, they were offered the opportunity to attend lectures by University professors (with more than 100 different study field lectures to choose from), participate in 22 different themed tours, attend sessions on selected topics at “Experience VMU”, or invite University representatives to their school for lessons. Regular activities organised by other departments continue, such as the “Theatre and Movement Workshops” organised by VMU Education Academy’s Study Course Pedagogy programme, “Ifitorina” organised by the Faculty of Informatics, activities of the STEAM Centre, and the Smart Student Academy initiated by VMU Faculty of Agrotechnologies.

Collaboration with school career development specialists continues, providing them with tools created by University representatives: the interactive career exploration test “Career Game” and the methodological cards “Let’s Get to Know Each Other, I’m from VMU”.

The Career Centre, in collaboration with VMU Marketing and Communications Department, provided 66 services to Lithuanian students, including individual consultations, in-person and virtual seminars. The students were taught to understand themselves in order to make the right career choices and plan their careers. They also became familiar with time management, public speaking methods, and other relevant topics.

In 2024, the student ambassador programme continued, with 7 students successfully completing it. They actively communicated with representatives from their graduated schools, organised events with the help of the Admissions and Study Marketing Department specialists, and represented the University to the students of their former schools.

In 2024, VMU continued to offer 9–12 grade students the opportunity to expand their knowledge and skills beyond school by engaging in social and civic activities. Students were invited to contribute to the organisation of events by VMU Sports Centre, the maintenance of the Botanical Garden environment, various activities organised by VMU faculties and assist in the library.

The number of annual projects shows an increasing interest from students in the University’s activities: in 2024, 370 students participated in VMU student university programme, over **2,800 students attended lectures by teachers**, more than 7,000 students participated in meetings with specialists from the Studies Marketing and Admissions Department, over 3,000 students attended preparatory courses, more than 1,000 students took part in VMU Study Festival, and 102 students attended the Summer School. Active communication with students is carried out through newsletters and social media.

Artistic activities for students. The activities of the Art Centre’s collectives actively involved students, alumni, staff, and other individuals (including high school students), fostering a sense of community and collaboration across different age groups. This provides opportunities for everyone to express their creative talents and contribute to the artistic life of the University.

The Arts Centre hosted 8 art collectives and a Dance Studio, offering a total of 9 activities. Participants registered for individual collective rehearsals using an electronic registration system.

The Arts Centre activities were attended by individuals from various groups. The total number of participants in the spring semester was 168, and in the autumn semester, it was 167. In 2024, the largest VMU Arts Centre groups by membership were the academic mixed choir “Vivere Cantus” (48 members), VMU Education Academy’s song and dance ensemble “Šviesa” (30 members), and the Entertainment Dance Studio (26 members). The smallest were VMU Agriculture Academy student mixed choir “Daina” and VMU folklore ensemble “Linago”.

VMU Arts Centre groups actively represented the University at various events, organising or participating in 91 events. One of the most prominent events of the year was the 100th anniversary celebration of the Song Festival in 2024, in which 6 VMU Arts Centre groups participated, highlighting the University’s contribution to preserving Lithuanian culture and art.

The most notable achievements of VMU Arts Centre groups in 2024:

- VMU academic mixed choir “Vivere Cantus” held a successful solo concert at VMU Hall, was awarded the **“Golden Bird” award**, participated in the IX International Josef Swider Choir Festival in Poland, where they won two gold diplomas and a special prize for performing a folk piece;
- VMU Education Academy Song and Dance Ensemble “Šviesa” celebrated its 70th anniversary with special concerts in Vilnius and Akademija (Kaunas district), and actively participated in the Song Festival “May the Green Forest Grow”, where a member of the ensemble performed a solo part;
- VMU Folk Dance Ensemble “Žilvitis” held an original 11 March concert “Steps of Freedom”, participated in the Song Festival, and took part in an **international dance festival in South Korea. The ensemble won 1st place in the international competition** “Merry Christmas, Baltic Amber Riga 2024”;
- VMU Agriculture Academy Folk Music Ensemble “Ūkininkas” participated in the “Gaida” ensembles festival in Latvia, where it was chosen as the best ensemble, and also performed at the traditional “Baltic is Dancing” festival;

- VMU Agriculture Academy folk dance group “Sėja” participated in the Baltic States University folk dance event “Baltija Dejo” (Latvia) and the Song Festival “May the Green Forest Grow”;
- VMU Agriculture Academy Theatre “Jovaras” staged two premiere performances—“Journeys” and P. Rudi’s “Omelette with Mustard”.

Sports activities. In 2024, the most impressive achievements in student sports were recorded. **A total of 8 students participated in Paris Olympic Games:** Rūta Meilutytė, a student of the Public Relations programme (swimming), Kotryna Teterevkova, a student of the Physical Education and Health programme (swimming), Mindaugas Venckaitis, a student of the Physical Education and Health programme (Greco-Roman wrestling), Giedrius Bieliauskas, a student of the Business Administration programme (rowing), and Evaldas Džiaugys, Aurelijus Pukelis, and Šarūnas Vingelis, students of the Physical Education and Health programme (3x3 basketball), **who won an Olympic bronze medal.** The 3x3 basketball team, consisting of Rokas Jocy, Gabrielius Čelka, Augustinas Mikšas, and Nojus Lebskas, became **World University Champions for the second time.** During the 2023–2024 sports season, 196 VMU athletes participated, winning a total of 42 medals, including 25 gold, 10 silver, and 7 bronze. Based on student achievements, Vytautas Magnus University ranked 1st among all higher education institutions in Lithuania and 4th–5th among European universities (for more details, see *Sports Achievements*).

In 2024, 14 different recreational sports activities were conducted, including volleyball, athletics, beach volleyball, badminton, basketball, 3X3 basketball, physical training, wellness exercises, functional training, chess, intensive Zumba, Pilates, e-sports, and athletic conditioning. These activities were led by 11 coaches working at the Sports Centre. Through the electronic registration system, VMU students, staff, alumni, and other individuals (including schoolchildren) could register for various sports and physical activity activities organised by the Sports Centre. In total, 1,220 individuals registered for these activities in 2024.

The largest portion of participants consisted of students (1,070), while the number of staff, alumni, and other individuals was significantly smaller. The number of participants in the fall semester (645) was higher than in the spring semester (575). The most popular activity in 2024 was physical training (wellness) with 627 participants across both semesters. Other popular activities included basketball (72 participants), football (37 participants), intense Zumba (57 participants), and functional training (53 participants).

Leadership in teacher training

VMU Faculty of Education ***maintained its leadership position in 2024 as the largest teacher training centre in Lithuania.*** It is the largest division in the University, with 1,753 students across all levels of study and 827 teachers participating in retraining programmes. There is very close collaboration with municipalities, and in 2023–2024, agreements were signed with almost all municipalities for teacher training. The initiatives for training young teachers continue in various municipalities through the “Young Teacher Club” initiative, where students interested in the teaching profession prepare for their studies. An education-focused class was established at Kaunas Maironis Gymnasium. In response to the shortage of teachers, Spanish language teacher training began in 2023, and starting next year, an Italian language pedagogy specialisation will be introduced. In collaboration with the Faculties of Nature, Informatics, Engineering, Forestry, and Ecology, the **STEAM Didactics Centre** opened in 2024, offering qualification courses for teachers, activities for students, teachers, and pedagogy students, as well as conducting scientific research in the field of STEAM didactics. At the end of the year, the **Robotics and Artificial Intelligence Laboratories** for training preschool and pre-school education teachers were opened in Kaunas and Vilnius.

Admission to studies in education. In 2024, the Faculty of Education admitted 297 first cycle students, 255 of whom enrolled in pedagogy-related programmes. Among the most popular programmes **at the University, the Teacher Education programme** ranked second in the top ten in 2024.

Among the educational science programmes that were admitted to in 2024, the Teacher Education programme also attracted the most students. A total of 103 students were admitted to this programme.

As in the previous year, the education-related programmes were chosen by students who scored the highest (100 points) on their national exams, with 12 students being admitted.

In 2024, a total of 199 students were admitted to the second cycle programmes at the Faculty of Education, with 40 students from other faculties also choosing the supplementary Pedagogy studies.

In 2024, 167 students were admitted to the full-time professional Pedagogy programme, with thirty students receiving funding for their studies from the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport through the development project “Continue: Come, Improve, Contribute!”.

Admission to further training and retraining activities. In 2024, 53 events were offered to pedagogical staff: 18 seminars, 19 modules, 9 courses, and 7 conferences, with 3,284 participants from all over Lithuania (288 course participants, 1,333 seminar and conference attendees, and 695 national programme participants). The training sessions are organised in live, online, and hybrid formats.

In 2024, the Academy implemented 4 nationally accredited qualification improvement programmes by the Ministry of Education, Science, and Sport, namely: “Implementation of Life Skills as a Study course in Primary Education”, “Inclusive Education with Universal Design for Learning Access”, “Lithuanian Language and Literature Didactics”, and “Development of Mathematical Thinking: Theoretical Insights and Practical Application in Schools”. A total of 690 participants completed these programmes. Additionally, 6 more National Qualification Improvement

programmes were accredited in 2024. The implementation of National Qualification Improvement programmes is funded by the European Union's economic recovery and resilience plan "NextGenerationEU" funds.

In collaboration with the Vilnius Education Progress Centre "Edu Vilnius", VMU AA is implementing the project "Studies for Teachers", aimed at teacher training, retraining, and attracting teachers to schools in the city of Vilnius. In 2024, 227 participants completed study modules in this project. The most popular choices in the retraining studies remain modules in early childhood and preschool pedagogy, as well as educational support (speech therapy, special education). The studies are financed by the budget of the Vilnius City Municipality.

A total of 433 participants were accepted into the "Continue: Come, Improve, Contribute!" retraining programme. A total of 19 modules were created this year to meet the challenges of the project and the needs of the participants. The most popular retraining programmes continue to be Primary Education Pedagogy and Pre-primary Education, Preschool Education Pedagogy and Pre-primary Education, and Special Education.

Further development of activities:

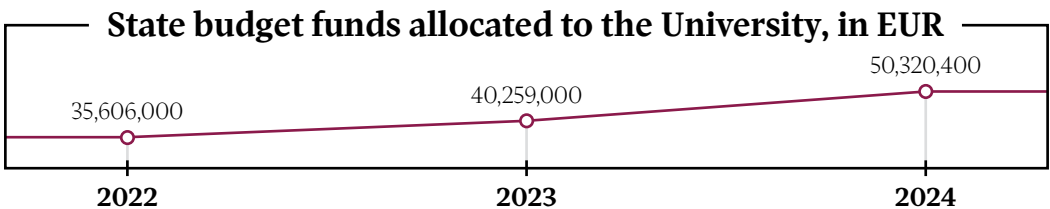
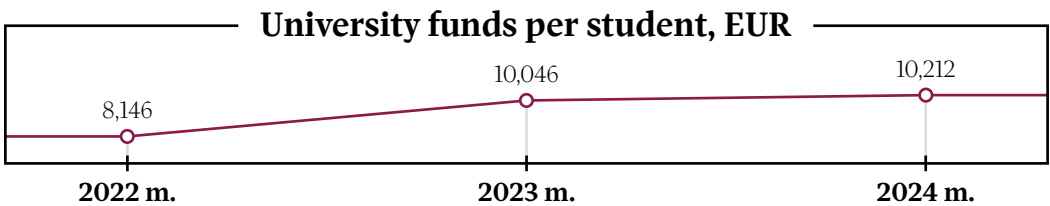
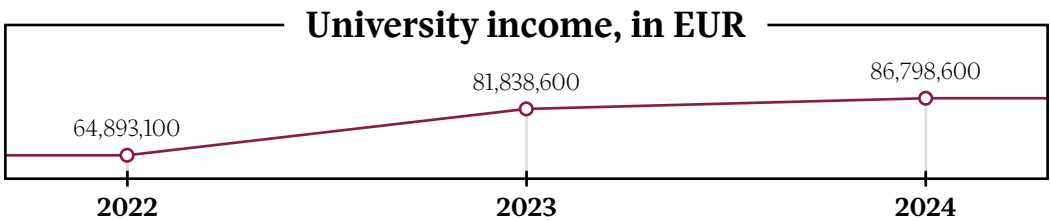
The significant results achieved in 2024 compel not only to maintain them but also to aim for even more ambitious projects in the coming year, focusing on uniting the community to reach the set goals while minimising potential disruptions in their implementation. The following activities are planned:

- Continuing developing the *Artes Liberales* studies as a unique study model, addressing labour market and societal needs, with the goal of maintaining the University's leadership position in the field of studies.
- Developing the culture of study quality at all levels of the University, aiming to fully empower all participants in the study process to engage and ensure continuous development.
- Striving for greater efficiency in the implementation of innovations in the study process by enabling a larger number of teachers to enhance their competencies and develop innovations.
- Increasing the faster implementation of artificial intelligence tools in the study process, with a greater focus on developing higher-level student competencies.
- Continuing the process of restructuring and modernising study programmes to maintain the highest possible number of applicants.
- Strengthening the support provided to students to improve their social and emotional well-being, helping them achieve better academic results—2025 will be declared the University's Year of Student Well-being.
- Developing a model for early student engagement in scientific research and artistic activities.
- Improving the student mobility promotion model to increase the international mobility of the University's students and enable all departments to participate.
- Encouraging students to actively participate in activities that provide additional competencies, the recognition of informally and self-acquired competencies, other activities that complement the study process, and University life.
- Increasing the internationalisation of the Teacher Training Centre by developing joint study programmes and/or programmes that offer international certificates.
- Developing the awareness of lifelong learning activities among the general public.
- Enhancing collaboration with business partners, actively involving them in the study process.
- Strengthening VMU school network by actively participating in improving the quality of education in schools and enhancing students' readiness for university studies.
- Developing conditions for students to achieve the highest sports, arts, science, and academic results at both national and international levels.

Integrity of Self-governance and Responsibility



Library's Collection	1,934,997
Number of printed and electronic documents acquired	976,608
Number of printed documents acquired	5,521
Number of electronic documents acquired	971,087
Number of publications published	120
Number of databases subscribed	76
Use of electronic information resources (downloads)	2,6 mln.
Documents downloaded and read by one student	296
Number of printed documents issued per student	5
University Library	7
Total area of the University premises per student	18,47 m ²



Stakeholders of VMU and the value of their contributions (in 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	31-12-2023	24,277,900
		31-12-2024	24,277,900

Average salary of the University staff in EUR

	2022	2023	2024
Academic staff	2,353	2,610	3,071
Other employees	1,217	1,358	1,652
Total of all employees	1,828	2,039	2,423

Integrity of Self-governance and Responsibility

Continuous improvement of the governance of the University is a strategic planning and management principle outlined in the objectives of VMU Strategic Plan for 2021–2027. The University has consistently improved its organisational structure and governance model in pursuit of the University's strategic objectives, taking into account the views of the community, the identity and administrative experience of the units, and a thorough analysis of the financial and other resources necessary for the administration of activities. VMU is increasingly promoting the principles of a sustainable university in its research and study activities, in the management of its infrastructure, and in its communication with the public.

Creation of a balanced structure of study and research units

Structural changes at the University. A new *Department of Sports and Physical Education* was established at VMU Education Academy, bringing together staff working in the study programmes Sports Studies, and Physical Education and Sport. The study programmes help students to acquire and develop knowledge of an integral approach to human development, combining high-performance sport with personal development, physical development, practical training, social integration, communication, and recreation. Sports Studies at VMU is a unique study programme in Lithuania, as it is based on the principles of the American Sport Education Programme and is characterised by broad-based coach training. This study programme is the only one in the country that prepares coaches for all sports. The staff members of the Department actively participate in various international and national research and socio-educational projects, and share their experience in public events for students, parents, teachers, and communities.

The Department of Educational Support, Physical and Health Education was renamed the *Department of Inclusive Education and Educational Support*. The Department brought together staff working in the study programmes Special Educational Support (specialisation: Speech and Language Therapy/Special Pedagogy), Inclusive Education: Socio-Educational Industries, and Speech and Language Therapy. The Department conducts research and experimental development activities in the fields of special education and its transformation, inclusive and personalised education, positive socialisation, and complex support and prevention for learners and families. By integrating the results of applied research and research-based practical experience into studies, the teachers of the Department contribute to the training of highly qualified teachers, special educators, speech and language therapists, and social workers.

The Public Institution Forest 4.0 was established as a centre of excellence aimed at transforming forest environment monitoring, data collection and analysis, ensuring meaningful use of the collected data. The Public Institution is associated with the Forest 4.0 project, which has a budget of nearly EUR 20 million (EUR 9.9 million funded by the European Commission and an equal amount provided by Lithuania). The duration of the project is 6 years. Forest 4.0 aims to support Lithuania's Smart Specialisation Strategy by developing an innovative, forest-based bioeconomy in Lithuania and promoting the digitalisation of forestry operations. Forest 4.0 seeks to contribute to the implementation of the European Green Deal and some United Nations Sustainable Development Goals by promoting the research-based sustainable management of forests and advancing a circular, sustainable bioeconomy through the use of innovative data collection and processing programs. The Advanced Forestry Centre of Excellence will carry out cutting-edge research. The newly established Centre of Excellence for Forestry-Related Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things Technologies will develop and promote innovative, data-driven solutions for forest management across the entire value chain—from forest resource management to final products. The Centre of Excellence will aim to bring together and engage stakeholders not only in Lithuania but also worldwide.

Ensuring the effective use of infrastructure

Development of resources for learning, studies, and research. The Library sought to ensure optimal information provision for studies and accessibility of information resources and services necessary for the research activities conducted at the University; to strengthen the capacity of the academic community in the areas of information management and research communication; to create, develop and modernise an advanced library infrastructure; and to promote the implementation of Open Science initiatives at the University.

In 2024, the total Library collection consisted of nearly 2 million documents: almost 1 million printed documents and nearly 1 million electronic documents, showing a 23% growth compared to previous years. The number of subscribed databases was 76 (compared to 63 in 2023 and 58 in 2022). The number of electronic databases and electronic documents increased significantly due to the newly acquired 13-database package for Asian studies. In 2024, for the first time in the Library's history, the number of electronic resources exceeded the number of printed resources. The distribution of the Library collection was as follows: 49.81% printed documents and 50.19% electronic documents. Printed documents accounted for 0.6% of all documents acquired that year. The number of documents per student was 221 (compared to 210 in 2023 and 206 in 2022). The growth compared to previous years was over 10%.

In pursuit of the University's strategic objective to improve the infrastructure necessary for studies and research, the integrated information resource search tool—the virtual library (PRIMO VE)—was further developed. This tool centralises the search and access to information resources, bringing together various library-managed and created resources with external academic sources into a unified search system. It enables users to easily find the Library's printed and electronic resources, licenced databases, VMU CRIS content, open access research publications, and over 5 billion academic sources indexed in the Ex Libris Central Discovery Index.

Electronic information resources are becoming more important due to their relevance, novelty, and quick access, leading to a continuous rise in their usage. In 2024, the number of views and downloads of electronic resources reached 5.5 million (compared to 3.9 million in 2023), which shows an increase in their usage by 41%. A particularly significant increase was observed in the use of the University's research management system (VMU CRIS) resources, which increased by 139%. The use of databases also increased significantly (by 27%), while the use of the virtual library remained stable, with a slight growth by 1.8%. In 2024, considerable attention was also given to ensuring academic integrity, which led to the extensive use of plagiarism detection tools. Over the year, more than 19,400 works were checked, which is 88% (9,000) more than in previous years. These indicators clearly show that the importance of electronic resources is steadily increasing, and their use is becoming an integral part of academic activities. The increasing availability of information and the application of technological solutions not only facilitate studies and research but also promote the quality and ethical use of information.

The modern academic library is not only a physical space where users can read, study, or access printed resources, but also a virtual platform that provides access to information from anywhere. The total number of virtual and physical visits to the Library per year reached over 980,000 (984,308) (compared to 830,923 in 2023 and 1,013,939 in 2022). These data show that both virtual and physical Library services are becoming increasingly popular. The rapid growth of virtual visits (to Library-managed websites) by 48.8% reflects the increasing demand from users to conveniently and quickly access electronic information and resources remotely.

Users were mainly interested in information about VMU CRIS, information resources in licenced databases, archiving of final theses, citation styles, and bibliographic references. They also watched video tutorials prepared by the Library on information resources and library services. The number of physical visits also increased by 16%, which suggests that the Library remains an important meeting and learning space for the academic community. Users actively visited the seven service units of the Library and used the increased number of (1.43%) open-access collections, self-service devices, and systems for borrowing, renewing, or returning publications (14,000 items); they also booked individual and group workplaces (3,500 reservations) through the new room reservation system.

In 2024, a total of 560 workspaces (compared to 566 in 2023) were available to users in the Library, of which 128 were equipped with computers (compared to 135 in 2023), 295 were designed to connect personal computers; 72 workspaces (in 2023, also 72) were available in 18 individual and group workplaces. A total of 16 specialised workspaces designed for visitors with disabilities were available in all units. There is a clear trend that the majority of users prefer to work on their personal computers, while the desktop computers in the Library are used less frequently. This reflects changing study and work habits, and the growing demand from visitors for flexible and customisable workspaces.

In addition to organising and providing access to printed and electronic information resources, the Library was active in raising the information literacy of the community.

Consultations and trainings on information literacy provided by the Library staff were of great importance for the Library users. In 2024, 99 training sessions (compared to 106 in 2023 and 60 in 2022) were held for the academic community of the University, covering topics such as searching for information resources, managing information, and ensuring its ethical use. The Library provided 111 (compared to 139 in 2023 and 72 in 2022) academic hours of trainings. A total of 68 face-to-face training sessions (compared to 60 in 2023 and 38 in 2022) and 31 online sessions (compared to 46 in 2023 and 22 in 2022) were held. These training sessions were attended by 1,770 participants (compared to 1,767 in 2023 and 1,067 in 2022). Although the number of training sessions decreased slightly (by 6.6%), the number of participants remained stable and even showed a slight increase.

In addition to general training sessions, the Library staff developed four specialised training programmes for the University community, focusing on researcher profiles and identifiers, research data management, and the reference management software RefWorks. The staff also responded to 19,254 informational queries (compared to 12,460 in 2023 and 12,258 in 2022) regarding resource search and management, citation styles, the archiving of theses, etc. On average, 76 user queries were answered per day.

Clearly, the consultations and training sessions provided by the Library play a significant role in enhancing users' ability to find, select, evaluate, manage, and ethically use information resources. This is evident from the continued interest of the participants and the efforts of the Library to adapt to the needs of the academic community.

In 2024, the University published 120 titles (compared to 105 in 2023), of which 100 were printed, with a total print run of 5,454 copies (compared to 86 titles and 4,683 copies in 2023). Additional print runs of 13 book titles (860 copies) were also printed.

To promote sustainability and actively implement the Green Transformation, 119 titles were published in electronic format, of which 20 were in electronic format only.

During the year, the Publishing Centre processed and published a total of 1,643.81 author's sheets of textual and visual material of research and study publications (compared to 1,598.51 in 2023). A total of 177 small-scale printing orders were registered at the operational printing press of the University, resulting in the production of 12,177 printed items.

To enhance the visibility of the University authors and improve access to publications of the University researchers, the collection of electronic versions of academic books published at Vytautas Magnus University is continuously expanded on the e-book platform <https://ebooks.vdu.lt/>. This collection covers Humanities, Social Sciences, Physical Sciences, Education, and Agricultural Sciences and currently includes 168 titles (compared to 149 in 2023), with 121 available for free reading not only to the University community members but also to all interested persons. Libraries and other institutions in Lithuania can subscribe to this collection. The printed publications of the University were available in six academic and three online bookshops.

Building and improving infrastructure. The total area of real estate owned by Vytautas Magnus University as of 31 December 2024 was **188 585,62 m²**. The total area of the premises of the University per student was **18,47 m²**.

As of 31 December 2024, the area of the premises leased under long-term lease contracts was 5,158 m², and the leased area of the engineering structures was 2,324 m². A total of 10 new long-term lease contracts were concluded in 2024. The number of long-term lease contracts in force as of 31 December 2024 was 67. In 2024, income from long-term leases amounted to EUR 292,657. This represents an increase of about 12% in income compared to 2023. In 2024, the income from organising events amounted to EUR 246,023, which is about 39% more than in 2023. The number of loan for use contracts in force on 31 December 2024 was 5. Area of premises transferred under loan for use was 4,696 m².

In 2024, VMU Asset Management Tool (System), which was designed and developed in 2023, was brought into operation at the University. This System allows for efficient and comprehensive analysis of information related to asset management, including maintenance, utility, and operational costs. It helps make decisions to optimise asset structure and reduce utility expenses and simplifies reporting to institutions. The Asset Management Tool will help asset managers better administer the assets they manage.

To help Ukrainian citizens who fled the country as a result of the hostilities, 234 war refugees from Ukraine were temporarily accommodated in the dormitories of the University and in a holiday resort in Palanga in 2024.

To increase the efficiency of the University's asset management, to modernise the infrastructure necessary for study and research activities, to create conditions for quality student accommodation, and to integrate the Agrochemical Research Laboratory into the University's activities, the investment project "Development of Infrastructure of Vytautas Magnus University" was initiated in 2024. In November 2024, the University Council made a decision to approach the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania regarding the investment of state-owned real estate, managed by the University and the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry under trust agreements, with the aim of increasing the capital of the owner of the University. The invested assets are planned to be sold through a public auction in accordance with the procedures established by law. The funds received will be used to implement an investment project aimed at achieving the following objectives: 1) building and equipping a smart farm-laboratory that meets the latest scientific, sustainability, and ecology standards; 2) establishing a modern National Laboratory for Agriculture and Environment at VMU Agriculture Academy for conducting extensive research activities; and 3) constructing a new, modern student dormitory. In December 2024, the University applied to the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania regarding real estate investment.

In 2024, the integration of the Agrochemical Research Laboratory of the Lithuanian Research Centre for Agriculture and Forestry into the University started. The University took over the maintenance and operation of the Laboratory buildings located at Savanorių pr. 287, Kaunas, and employed the Laboratory staff.

To ensure a supportive environment for studies, research and artistic activities, maintenance work on the existing infrastructure was carried out in 2024, and a new attractive and modern infrastructure of the University was created.

As part of the project "Strengthening the International Competitiveness of VMU in the Transform4Europe Alliance of European Universities", co-financed by the University and the European Union, project No. 10-005-P-0005, simple repair works were carried out in the building intended for research purposes at the address S. Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas (the area of the repaired premises was 2,700 m²). The renovated spaces now house Transform4Europe, the European University Centre, Mariupol State University Centre at Vytautas Magnus University, and other units of the University.

The lecture rooms, computer classrooms, the Assembly Hall, and the Senate Hall were renovated; furniture, acoustic rooms, and equipment for online and blended teaching/learning were acquired; a wheelchair lift was installed, and the elevator was upgraded. The renovated six lecture rooms, one computer classroom, and two lecture halls can accommodate more than 400 students at a time. The renovated premises offer more than 60 workspaces.

After the completion of the simple repair works of the administrative building at S. Daukanto g. 27, Kaunas (total area of 700 m²), the renovated premises now house Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development, the Lithuanian Emigration Institute, the Institute of Digital Resources and Interdisciplinary Research, and the National Research Infrastructure Centre for Digital Language Resources CLARIN-LT.

More than 700 metres of shelves were installed for the archives of Andrei Sakharov Research Centre for Democratic Development and the Lithuanian Emigration Institute. The renovated premises offer more than 20 workspaces.

Part of Dormitory No. 5, located at Universiteto g. 8, Akademija, Kauno r., was renovated. The rooms on the first and fifth floors, along with sanitary facilities and kitchen areas, were refurbished, and new furniture and household appliances were installed.

Part of Dormitory No. 4, located at Studentų g. 1, Akademija, Kauno r., was renovated. The rooms on the first and fourth floors, as well as the staircase, restrooms, showers, and kitchen areas, were refurbished. New furniture and household appliances were installed, which would improve the living conditions for 160 students.

In Dormitory No. 6, located at A. Vivulskio g. 36, Vilnius, two elevators were renovated/newly installed. A new fire detection and alarm system, as well as a security alarm system, were also installed.

In Dormitory No. 4, located at Studentų g. 1, Akademija, Kauno r., a new ventilation system was installed in the sanitary facilities on the second and third floors. In addition, part of the facade of the building was renovated.

In Dormitory No. 8, located at Studentų g. 5, Akademija, Kauno r., additional rooms for student accommodation were furnished on the fourth floor.

In the adapted and renovated premises on the fifth floor at Universiteto g. 10, Akademija, Kauno r. (830 m²), the following laboratories of the Faculty of Natural Sciences were established: the Microfluidics and Electrical Engineering Laboratory, 3D Printing and Prototyping Laboratory, Genetic Engineering Laboratory, Microorganism Biotechnology Laboratory, Optical and Ultrasound Spectroscopy Laboratory, Cell and Tissue Biotechnology Laboratory, Bioelectrochemistry Laboratory, Biochemistry Laboratory, Plant Analysis Laboratory, Bioanalytical Methods Laboratory, Cell Biology Laboratory, Microorganism Biochemistry Laboratory, and Non-Thermal Plasma Laboratory. The fifth floor was equipped with a cooling system.

The building at Universiteto g. 10, Akademija, Kauno r. was equipped with lighting at its entrance.

More than 500 m² of space were renovated at the Agriculture Academy at Studentų g. 11, Akademija, Kauno r., including over 20 office rooms, an assembly hall, lecture rooms, a western staircase, renovated walls, newly installed handrails, and lighting.

In the tropical garden and butterfly incubator in the Greenhouse of the Botanical Garden, located at Ž. Žilibero g. 9, Kaunas, additional electric heaters, an air conditioner, and air humidifiers were installed to maintain the microclimate.

Inefficient and energy-intensive lighting systems are being phased out in all of the buildings of the University. In 2024, around 450 bulbs and 1,725 light fixtures were replaced.

Part of the roof covering of the exhibition pavilions at Universiteto g. 10B and Universiteto g. 10C, Akademija, Kauno r., was renovated, as well as part of the roof of the research building at Studentų g. 11, Akademija, Kauno r., and Dormitory No. 4 at Studentų g. 1, Akademija, Kauno r.

A work project of major repairs of the residential building (dormitory) at Studentų g. 7, Akademija, Kauno r. (total area of 3,500 m²) was prepared, as well as a project of simple repairs of the building at Gimnazijos g. 7B, Kaunas, which includes the renovation of facades and the roof. The renovation project for the student dormitories at Vytauto pr. 71, Kaunas, (total area of 6,000 m²) was also initiated.

The project proposals for the reconstruction of the Garage with laboratory facilities at Studentų g. 15D, Akademija, Kauno r., changing its use to a residential building (dormitory), as well as the project proposals for the construction of a new dormitory, were prepared.

Activities of the Information Technology Centre. The main tasks of the Information Technology Centre (ITC) were strengthening the University's cybersecurity, modernising workspaces, increasing the level of document digitisation, and developing systems for the community.

The integration of the main VMU website and the Study Information System was completed—from now on, modules offered by Erasmus+ will be automatically published on VMU website.

A new module was created on the Student Portal, where each student can see a detailed description of their study programme based on the year of admission, including the study courses taught in different semesters, descriptions of the courses, and the assigned teachers.

A new system called "School Student ID" was created, allowing school students to join events organised by VMU and collect virtual points. Once a school student becomes VMU student, the virtual points can be used to obtain benefits.

The Learning Academy system now features a new module for the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal and informal education, along with the module "Learning Independently". The module provides VMU staff and external users with the opportunity to learn independently by accessing video materials, textual content, self-assessment tests, and exercises available in the system.

The Alumni ID system was newly integrated with live chat functionality and features a new section "Alumni Meetups".

A new feature was introduced on the Teacher Portal that allows teachers to access detailed information about students with disabilities attending their lectures, their specific needs, and ways to adjust lecture content or the learning environment to ensure full accessibility and support for such students.

A new system was developed to enable students to submit and manage their applications for the conclusion of a study practice agreement electronically. The scheduling and room reservation system was upgraded and expanded, offering enhanced security, greater reliability, and additional reporting functions.

Considering the changes in the procedures for the evaluation of students' academic achievements at the University, the calculation and display of academic debts and negative grades, and the submission of such data to the National Student Register were redesigned.

Key accomplishments of the IT maintenance team and administrators. In 2024, the technical equipment in the building at Daukanto g. 28, Kaunas, was successfully upgraded to ensure a more modern and efficient working and learning environment. New high-resolution projectors, new audio equipment, and advanced cameras were installed in the lecture rooms and learning spaces. The equipment in lecture rooms and computer classrooms is suitable for blended learning. Modern computer classrooms were set up for training sessions, seminars, and workshops.

In total, 78 workspaces were upgraded with new computers, and more than 50 workspaces were modernised. During 2024, 43 laptops were purchased for the University staff members.

To reduce vulnerability risks at workstations, the latest “Windows 11” operating system was installed on 959 computers in 2024. These upgrades represented a significant step forward in implementing innovations and improving the overall quality and security of the infrastructure. Competing licences for ArcGIS, SPSS, Adobe Creative Cloud were introduced in the computer classrooms, allowing more flexible use of the applications and centralised management of licensing.

Extension of the Document Management System. As part of the ongoing digitisation of documents, systems for employee applications for issuing employee ID cards and providing access rights were introduced and are now operational. In collaboration with the company “DocLogix”, the Public Procurement module was enhanced with new features that simplify the work of the specialists of the Public Procurement Department and procurement initiators.

Development of network infrastructure. The development of the Eduroam wireless network in the University-managed infrastructure is being carried out in a systematic manner. In total, 74 additional wireless network access points were installed in the buildings and dormitories of the University.

The reliability of the computer network was increased by installing three uninterruptible power supplies (UPS) at critical switching nodes.

To ensure the reliability of the network and the availability of services, an optical network ring was established between Vytautas Magnus University and VMU Agriculture Academy.

Maintenance of IT systems and improvement of security levels. In 2024, due to the introduction of multi-factor authentication, the number of hacks into staff and student accounts decreased. To enhance resilience against cyber threats, informational and training activities related to cybersecurity were conducted, along with cybersecurity exercises.

VMU technical support system itpagalba.vdu.lt, VMU wireless connection system <https://eduroam.vdu.lt>, the information system of the European Open Science Cloud project <https://eosclt/>, and the online learning environment “Moodle” of the Transform4Europe project were updated. Integration with other European universities was extended through the international eduGAIN.

In collaboration with VMU Faculty of Informatics, an environment and a new website for the Integrated Science, Studies, and Business Centre “Slėnis Nemunas”, aimed at developing the Lithuanian agriculture, forestry, and food sector, as well as for the international project “DiBluCa”, were developed.

Sustainability development

VMU is increasingly embracing the principles of a sustainable university, consistently integrating sustainable processes and solutions into its research and study activities, infrastructure management, and communication with the public. VMU provides data to the international organisation ranking universities on sustainability “**UI GreenMetric**”, which publishes world university rankings. The activities carried out by VMU were evaluated in six areas:

- *Infrastructure.* The University was assessed on how much attention it pays to green environmental policies, creating more green spaces and preserving the environment.
- *Energy and climate change.* The evaluation considered the use of energy-efficient appliances, smart building management, the use of renewable energy, electricity consumption, energy-saving targets, and policy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, with the aim of improving building energy efficiency and exploring alternative energy sources. This is the indicator with the highest weighting in the overall ranking.
- *Waste treatment.* The University staff, students, and the communities around the University produce a lot of waste, so it is important to focus on how the objective of reducing waste generation is implemented and how waste sorting, processing, and recycling are carried out.
- *Water use.* The evaluation looked at the University's efforts to conserve water, including the installation of water-saving equipment, the reuse of treated water, etc.
- *Transportation.* The transportation system plays an important role in determining the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, which is why it is important to encourage the use of eco-friendly public transportation and zero-emission vehicles, as well as to promote walking among students and staff, contributing to the creation of a healthier environment.
- *Studies and research.* The evaluation considered how sustainability themes are reflected in the ongoing research and studies, whether the University helps students, academic and non-academic staff understand the significance and importance of sustainability, and whether it informs other stakeholders about sustainability development.

In 2024, 1,476 universities worldwide were ranked by “UI GreenMetric”, with Vytautas Magnus University securing the 340th place among the most sustainable universities (in 2023, the University was ranked 445th out of 1,183 universities ranked).

Vytautas Magnus University is planning to place even greater emphasis on implementing sustainability principles in 2025.

Management of financial resources

To ensure the strategic objective to train specialists of the highest qualification for the Lithuanian economy, science, culture and education, and to improve the quality of its activities and the efficiency of its management, the University fosters values that support its strategic provisions.

The performance of the University in 2024 is reflected in its funding and other income, its structure and its annual outcomes. In 2024, the funding and revenue of the University amounted to EUR 86,798,600; compared to 2023, the amount increased by EUR 4,960,000 (6.1%).

The structure of the University's revenue:

- **State budget appropriations and investments:** EUR 50,320,400; compared to 2023, the amount increased by EUR 10,061,400 (25.0%). In 2024, state budget appropriations amounted to 58.0% of the total revenue of the University.

An additional amount of EUR 5,751,300 was allocated to the University in 2024, compared to 2023, for salary increases for teachers, researchers, and non-academic staff; EUR 809,000 were allocated for research; EUR 653,700 were allocated for administration and property maintenance; EUR 350,100 were allocated for scholarships and studies. In 2024, the additional funding received by the University: EUR 2,198,800 were allocated for the cost of tuition fees for students enrolled in state-funded study places and for costs related to the improvement of quality of research and studies; EUR 126,900 were used to compensate for temporary accommodation of foreigners who had fled Ukraine; EUR 51,100 were allocated for the improvement of teachers' English language proficiency; EUR 83,600 were allocated for the improvement of the quality of artistic and research activities; EUR 87,000 were used to increase the salaries of teachers, researcher workers, other researchers, and non-academic staff. Due to students changing their study programmes and those coming to study from other universities, the funding was increased by EUR 4,000.

The increase in the state budget appropriations was due to improved research performance, systematic work on the promotion of study programmes, and increased state funding for higher education.

- **targeted funds** – EUR 24,195,800; compared to 2023, the amount decreased by EUR 4,940,000 (17.0%). Targeted funds in 2024 accounted for 27.8% of the total revenue of the University. Of this amount, the University received EUR 15,059,900 from the European Union funds and other international support funds, which made 17.4% of the total revenue of the University; the state budget targeted funds for various projects amounted to EUR 8,812,300, which accounted for 10.1% of the total revenue of the University and, in comparison with 2023, increased by EUR 2,651,500; EUR 128,200 were received from natural and legal persons, which was a decrease of EUR 129,800 compared to 2023; and the University received EUR 195,400 from other and municipal budget targeted funds, i.e., EUR 19,700 less than in 2023.

The targeted funds received by the University in 2024 from the targeted funds of the state budget for the implementation of various research projects increased compared to 2023, but the overall decrease in targeted funds by 17% (compared to 2023) was due to the reduction in funding from the European Union funds by EUR 7,442,000 (33.1%) and a decrease in contributions from natural and legal persons (sponsors) by EUR 129,800 (50.3%).

- **own funds** – EUR 12,282,400; compared to 2023, the amount decreased by EUR 161,400 (1.3%). The main sources of the income of the University for own funds consisted of tuition fees for full-time and part-time studies – EUR 5,172,700; revenue generated by other studies, courses, and trainings, and study organisation services – EUR 2,294,200; revenue from outsourcing and service contracts – EUR 666,500; revenue generated by economic activity services – EUR 3,041,500; revenue from property rental – EUR 1,100,900; and revenue from the sale of property – EUR 6,600. The own funds of the University accounted for 14.2% of the total revenue of the University. The decrease in own funds resulted from a drop in revenue from training contracts, outsourcing, and economic activity services.

In 2024, the University's expenditure amounted to EUR 86,528,200. Of this amount, remuneration and social insurance accounted for EUR 58,602,600 (67.7%); scholarships accounted for EUR 6,763,100 (7.8%); acquisition of long-term tangible and intangible assets, acquisition of short-term assets, repairs and rental of assets accounted for EUR 5,351,300 (6.2%); property maintenance costs accounted for EUR 2,835,000 (3.4%); construction and renovation of buildings accounted for EUR 2,142,700 (2.5%); costs related to work trips, goods and services accounted for EUR 10,833,500 (12.5%). Compared to 2023, the expenditure increased by EUR 1,496,000 (1.8%).

Compared to 2023, expenditure on salaries and social security contributions increased by 22.2%, and scholarships by 9.1%, while other expenditure decreased by 32.2%, construction and building renovation by 57.2%, and material resources by 23.9%. The decrease in expenditure was significantly due to the cost of implementing projects under European Union funds and other international support funds. Operating expenses decreased by 0.5% compared to 2023.

The average salary of the University staff increased by EUR 384.00 (18.8%), that of academic staff by EUR 461.00 (17.8%), and that of other staff by EUR 294.00 (21.6%).

Further development of activities:

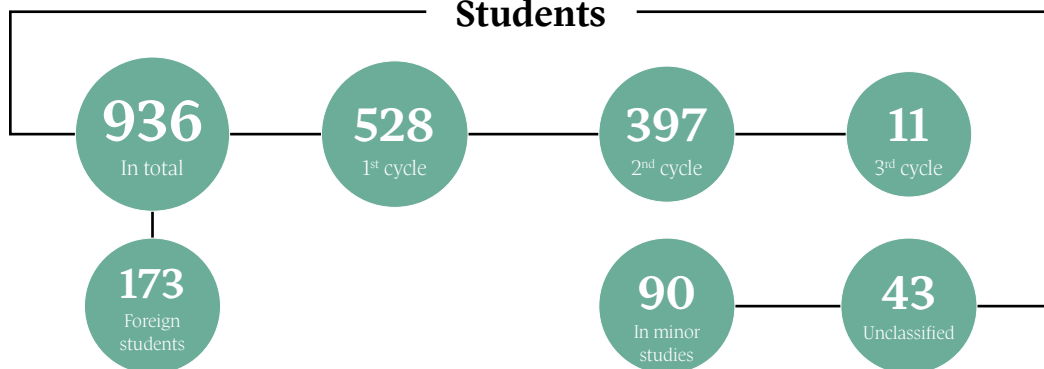
- Consistently implementing the principles of sustainability in all activities of the University, enhancing the reputation of VMU as a sustainable university.
- Increasing cyber resilience of the University.
- Improving the efficiency of the activities of the University by promoting a systemic approach to organisational development, bringing together the strengths, resources, activities, functions, structures, and processes of the units, and reducing internal competition between units.
- Continuing to encourage community involvement in decision-making, ensuring equal representation of units, empowering staff independence and autonomy, and promoting accountability and excellence in performance.
- Enhancing the professional development system for non-academic staff by placing greater emphasis on self-assessment and performance evaluation.
- Continuing to optimise the administration of the University's activities through the efficient use of the information systems in place.
- Ensuring the quality of the services provided by the Library, which can be easily accessed by all users, and increasing their popularity, by exploiting the opportunities offered by the virtual environment, responding to the demand for information resources for research and studies.
- Optimising the amount of real estate managed by VMU under the right of trust to ensure efficient asset management.
- Developing the activities related to the effective management of the University's assets by using asset management tools.
- Developing ongoing and new projects related to the modernisation of the infrastructure of the University and its adaptation for modern and high-quality studies and research.



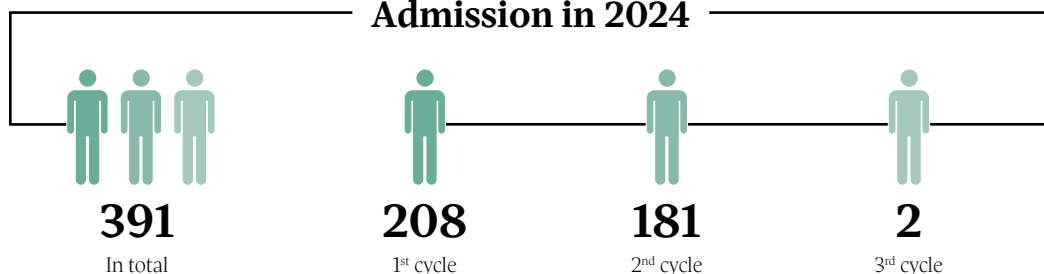
Faculty of Economics and Management



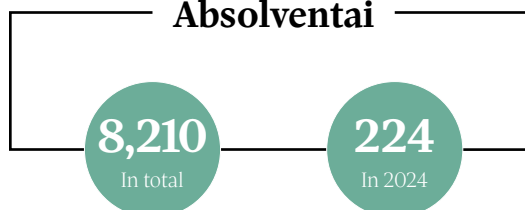
Students



Admission in 2024



Absolventai



Academic staff (positions)	40
Academic staff with PhD (%)	85
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	24
Number of projects	10
Visiting teachers	15

Study programmes

First cycle

Economics
Economics and Finance
Creative Business and Innovation Design
Marketing
Business Administration

Second cycle

Finance
Marketing and International Commerce (LT/EN)
Advertising Management
Corporate Strategic Management
International Economics (LT/EN)
**Postgraduate Master's degree study programmes:*
Marketing and Sales
Business and Entrepreneurship
**Executive Master's degree programmes:*
BMI International Executive Master of Business Administration (EN)
Sports Business Management (EN)

Fields of third cycle studies

Economics
Management



Dean Assoc. Prof. Rita Bendaravičienė

Address K. Donelaičio g. 52, 44244 Kaunas

Key events of 2024

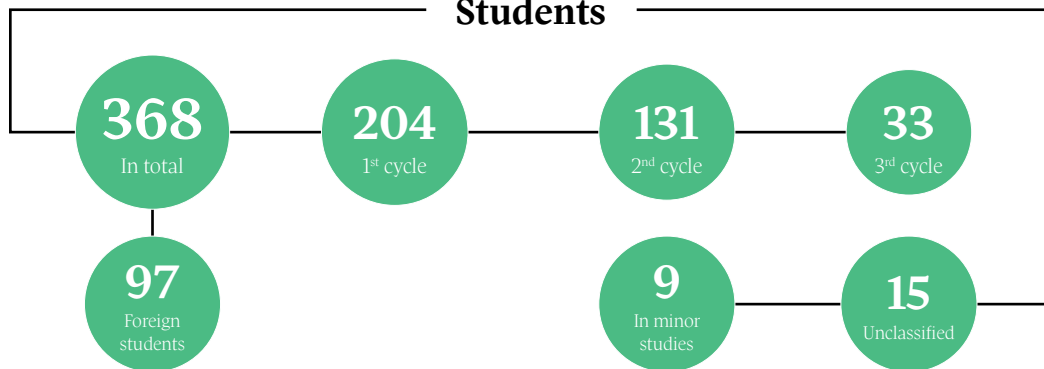
- At the 17th Eduniversal World Convention of Business Schools, held in Guadalajara, Mexico, from 20–23 November 2024, VMU Faculty of Economics and Management was awarded three palm leaves award as Excellent Business Schools with Reinforcing International Influence for the tenth consecutive year.
- Starting from 1 February 2024, a postdoctoral fellowship research funded by the Research Council of Lithuania was started at VMU Faculty of Economics and Management. The aim of the research is to develop a framework and methodology for preventing greenwashing in ESG reporting.
- On 6 March, the Lithuanian Energy Institute hosted the first working meeting of the “Horizon Europe” project #GIFFT, “Sustainable Glass Industry with Fuel-Flexible Technology”, with partners from Germany, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and Lithuania.
- On 15-16 March, the hackathon HACK4PLANET: FROM SUSTAINABILITY TO CREATIVITY was held, and on 7 June, the hackathon HACK4GreenLt took place.
- The CMA scholarship programme is carried out in partnership with the IMA (Institute of Management Accountants) and is globally recognised. The value of the scholarship is about USD 2,000. In 2024, six students from the Faculty of Economics and Management received this scholarship: four first cycle students and two second cycle students.
- Starting from 2024, all full-time second cycle study programmes at VMU Faculty of Economics and Management offer the opportunity for students to choose double diploma studies. This strategic step is part of the Faculty's objective to expand internationalisation and provide students with a competitive education.
- In September, researchers of VMU Vytautas Kavolis Transdisciplinary Research Institute, led by Prof. Renata Legenzova, started a three-year research aimed at assessing the impact of small entrepreneur socialisation on the financial resilience of young small businesses (SOPFA).
- The researchers of the Faculty of Economics and Management Prof. Renata Legenzova and Assoc. Prof. Asta Gaigalienė were appointed as associate members of the Coordination and Monitoring Council for the Public Financial Education Action Plan 2024–2028, representing Vytautas Magnus University. The Council includes representatives from four Lithuanian ministries, the Bank of Lithuania, the State Tax Inspectorate, ILTE, the Association of Lithuanian Banks, Vilnius University, Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, and Junior Achievement Lithuania. The Council is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of Public Financial Education Action Plan 2024–2028.
- On 6, 8, and 9 November, the Faculty of Economics and Management hosted an event as part of the international Erasmus+ project “ImpactFinance”. The event focused on the topics related to sustainable personal finance management and the development of new educational tools aimed at helping young people better understand and manage their finances responsibly. The winning team—“Masters of Investment”—won a trip to Greece.
- During their studies, students worked on tasks presented by various organisations, such as “Žalgiris Kaunas”, “Omniva”, “Altamedica”, and the National Kaunas Drama Theatre, and presented the results to representatives of these organisations.
- Collaboration began with the Innovation Agency and its established co-working space “Spiečius”. The students of the Faculty worked on tasks provided by the Innovation Agency and created tools to promote youth entrepreneurship and support the inclusive education reform. The students organised three events and created four product prototypes. Throughout the entire process, the students had the opportunity to use “Spiečius” space for free.
- Representatives of the Faculty of Economics and Management participated in various school student entrepreneurship competitions (e.g., in Kaunas Veršvai Gymnasium, Kaunas Erudito Lyceum, etc.), evaluated companies founded by school students for learning purposes, provided feedback, and offered consultations for further business development.
- ICF Lithuania, together with VMU Minded, organised the biggest coaching conference in the history of Lithuania “Coaching Buzz 2024”, which took place for the first time in Kaunas on 23 November. More than 200 participants had the opportunity to gain knowledge from over 30 presentations and interactive workshops.
- In 2024, the following three students defended their doctoral dissertations and obtained their PhD degrees: Evelina Savickaitė-Kazlauskė, Edita Kondrotienė, and Najab Babayev.
- The Faculty of Economics and Management, together with VMU Investment Club, organised the event “Investments and Taxes” on the occasion of Global Money Week.
- In 2024, 62 representatives of companies and organisations gave lectures at the Faculty of Economics and Management.



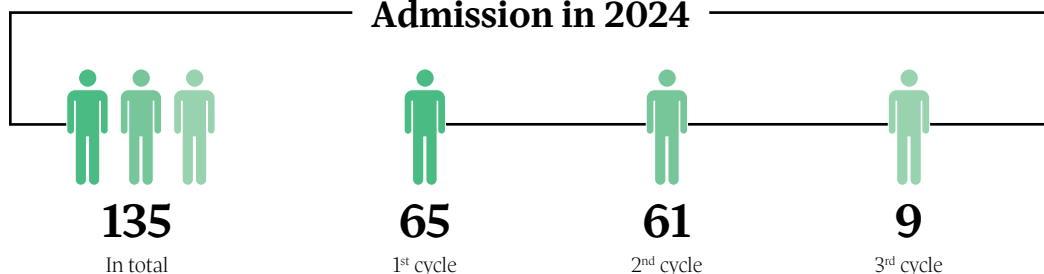
Faculty of Natural Sciences



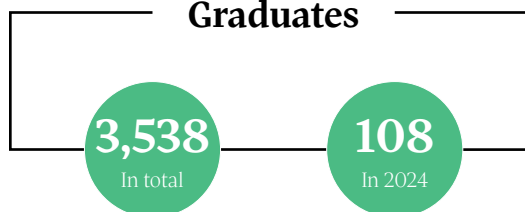
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	43
Academic staff with PhD (%)	94
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	73
Number of projects	41
Visiting teachers	7

Study programmes

First cycle

Environmental Science and Protection
Biology and Genetics
Biotechnology

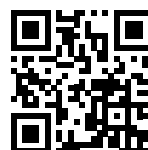
Second cycle

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

Fields of third cycle studies

Natural Sciences

Biology
Biophysics
Ecology and Environmental Science
Biochemistry



Dean Prof. Saulius Mickevičius

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

Key events of 2024

- Prof. Saulius Mickevičius, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, joined the Working Group for the Development of the Use of Alternative Proteins in Lithuania, established by the Ministry of Economy and Innovation.
- Rasa Žukienė, Associate Professor at the Department of Biochemistry, became the Education Ambassador of the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS).
- Algimantas Paulauskas, Professor at the Department of Biology, became a member of the board of the European Bison Conservation Center and the Chairman of its branch office in Lithuania.
- Ona Ragažinskienė, Professor at the Department of Biology, became a member of the Board of the European Council's Cultural Heritage 48th Route of Historic Pharmacies and Medicinal Gardens association, Aromas Itinerarium Salutis (AIS).
- On 12–14 April, the 24th International Scientific-Practical Conference “BaltPharm Forum 2024: Ensuring the Availability of Medicines in Crisis Situations” was held in Pärnu, Estonia. Ona Ragažinskienė, Professor at the Department of Biology, was a member of the Scientific Committee of the Conference.
- On 16–17 May, the 18th International Scientific Conference “The Vital Nature Sign 2024” was organised. The Chairperson of the Organising Committee of the Conference was Audrius Sigitas Maruška, Professor at the Department of Biology.
- Selemonas Paltanavičius, Lecturer at the Department of Biology, published his 100th book titled “Su gamta kišenėje” (With Nature in the Pocket).
- On June 11–14, the COST programme's International Doctoral School “Plasma Applications for Plants and Food Processing” was organised. The organiser of the Doctoral School was Vida Mildažienė, Professor at the Department of Biochemistry.
- The “EU Horizon” programme project “Noise and Ultrafine Particulate Matter Induced Cerebral and Cardiovascular Damage: Novel Insights from Experimental and Epidemiological Brain-Heart Axis Biomarkers and Computational Models (MARKOPOLO)” was won. The leader of VMU part of the project is Regina Gražulevičienė, Professor at the Department of Environmental Sciences.
- The ERA4Health programme project “CO-creating commuNity iNterventions on diEt and physical aCtivity to increase health equiTy in chIldren and adOlesceNts (CONNECTION)” was won. The leader of VMU part of the project is Sandra Andrušaitytė, Associate Professor at the Department of Environmental Sciences.
- The project “Striving for Gender Balance via EducaTion Reformation, 3A Factors for Advancement and Mentorship in STEM—ST3AM” was successfully won under the Erasmus+ Key Action 2 (KA2) cooperation partnerships in higher education programme. The leader of VMU part of the project is Prof. Saulius Mickevičius, Dean of the Faculty of Natural Sciences.
- Nominal scholarships established by Thermo Fisher Scientific were awarded to the following students: Soham Sameer Gupte, a fourth-year student of the first cycle study programme “Biology and Genetics”; Haroldas Sakavičius, a second-year student of the second cycle study programme “Biochemical Analysis”; and Kathiravan Murugesan and Heydar Aghakishi, second year students of the second cycle study programme “Molecular Biology and Biotechnology”.
- The positions of internships funded by the Research Council of Lithuania were won by the following students: Taisa Vashkevich, a third-year student of the first cycle study programme “Biotechnology” (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Vilma Kaškonienė, Department of Biology); Ugnė Gabrytė, a first-year student of the second cycle study programme “Biotechnology and Pharmaceutical Analysis” (Supervisor Assist. Prof. Rūta Mickienė, Department of Biology); and Ugnė Medikaitė, a second-year student of the second cycle study programme “Molecular Biology and Biotechnology” (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Indrė Lipatova, Department of Biology).
- VMU Academic Youth Science Association “Modusas”, together with VMU Faculty of Natural Sciences, organised a discussion “Women in Science: Challenges and Opportunities”. The participants of the discussion had an opportunity to learn about the dynamic world of science and the remarkable women who break stereotypes and set an example of how much women can achieve in science and business.

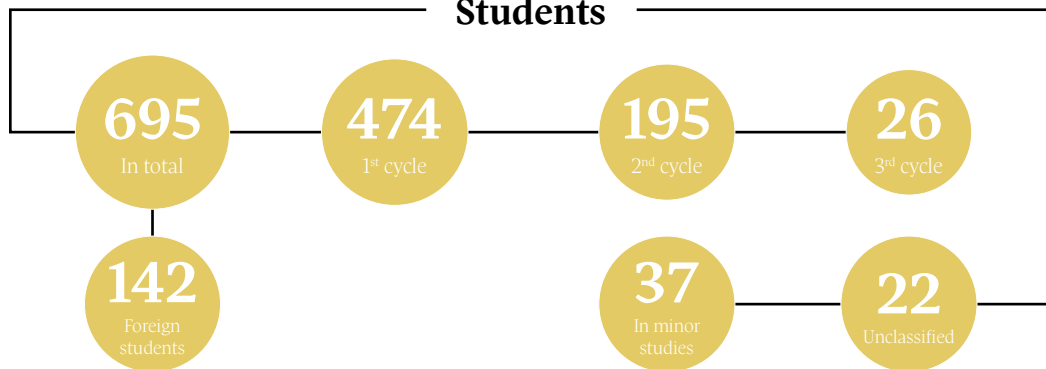


VDU AJMD
MODUSAS

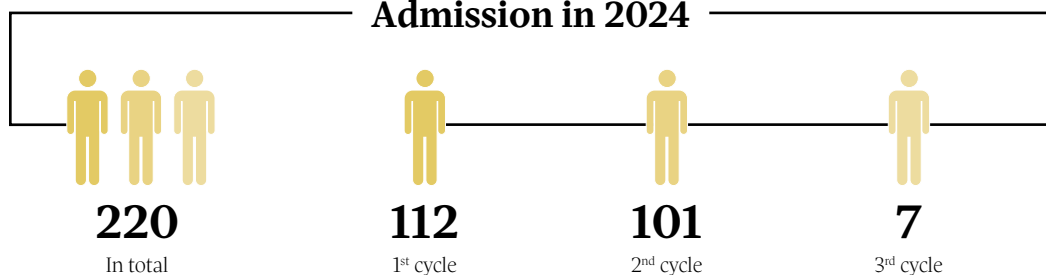
Faculty of Humanities



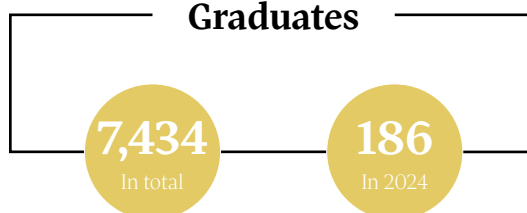
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	59
Academic staff with PhD (%)	84
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	85
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	27
Number of projects	26
Visiting teachers	31

Study programmes

First cycle

English Philology
History: Philosophy and History of Ideas
History: History Studies
Lithuanian Philology and Publishing
Regional Studies: Cultures and Languages of East Asian Countries
Regional studies: Cultures and Languages of Scandinavian Countries
Foreign Languages and Cultures: Francophone Studies
Foreign Languages and Cultures: Italian Studies and Romance Languages
Foreign Languages and Cultures: German Language and Communication

Second cycle

Literature Creation, Criticism and Communication
Comparative Cultural Studies (online)
Modern Linguistics (online)
Practical Philosophy (blended online)
Sociolinguistics and Multilingualism (joint study programme)
Applied English Linguistics
East-Central European and Lithuanian Historical Studies

Fields of third cycle studies

Ethnology
Philology
Philosophy
History and Archaeology



Dean Assoc. Prof. Rūta Eidukevičienė

Address V. Putvinskio g. 23, 44243 Kaunas

Key events of 2024

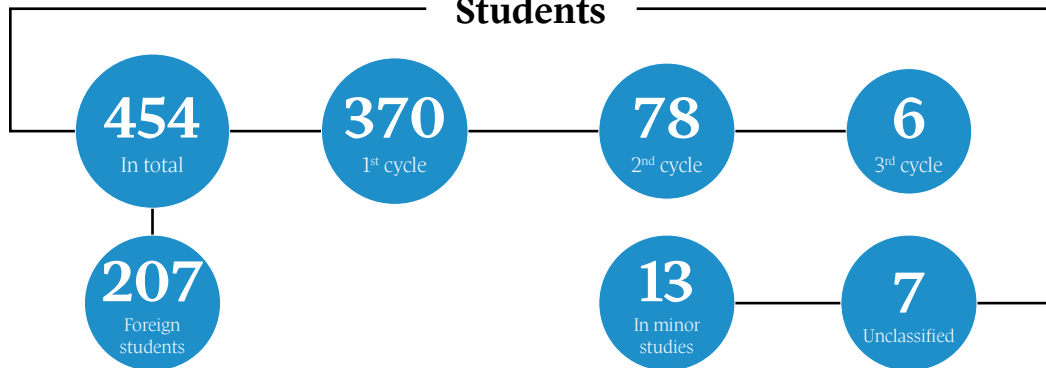
- In an external evaluation of the study fields, international experts evaluated VMU first cycle and second cycle study programmes in the field of History with high points and accredited them for the maximum period of time.
- Teachers of the Faculty of Humanities received the following significant awards for their research and other educational activities: Assoc. Prof. Liudas Glemža was awarded Kaunas City Scientist Prize, Prof. Rimantas Miknys received Stasys Šalkauskis Prize, Assoc. Prof. Gitana Vanagaitė was awarded Juozas Tumas-Vaižgantas Prize, Dr. Ramūnas Čičelis received the Lithuanian Writers' Union Prize, and Assoc. Prof. Žydrone Kolevinskienė received the Lithuanian Riflemen's Union Award and the Certificate of Appreciation.
- Agnė Gintalaitė, a second-year student of the second cycle study programme "Comparative Cultural Studies", was awarded Prof. Kazimieras Pakštas Prize and VMU Honorary Scholarship. Kotryna Sarapinaitė, a second-year student of the second cycle study programme "East-Central European and Lithuanian Historical Studies", received Saliamonas Banaitis, the Signatory of the Act of Independence of Lithuania, Nominal Scholarship. Augustas Pinkevičius, a first-year doctoral student in the study field of Philosophy, won first place in the competition "Best Master's Theses on EU Policy Development and Implementation", organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania and the Lithuanian Society of Young Researchers. Akvilė Kašubaitė, a first-year doctoral student in the study field of History and Archaeology, was awarded the Prize of the Department of National Minorities under the Government of the Republic of Lithuania for the best Master's thesis on national minorities and received the Lithuanian Foundation Scholarship.
- At total of nine doctoral dissertations were defended in four fields of science: in the field of Ethnology, the dissertation "Communities of Cultural Workers and Their Traditions in Mid-20th–Early 21st century" by Akvilė Stankutė (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Laimutė Anglickienė); in the field of Philology, the dissertation "The Experience of the Alien in 19th–20th Century Travel Literature of the Curonian Spit" by Ilona Filipenkovaite (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Mykolaitytė), the dissertation "Linguistic Interaction in Lithuanian and German Business Negotiations" by Gintarė Gelūnaitė-Malinauskienė (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Rūta Eidukevičienė), the dissertation "Forms of Writing in the Field of Turning-Point Literature: Texts by Iščokas Meras, Vytautas Martinkus, Ramūnas Klimas" by Kristina Tutlytė (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Indrė Žakevičienė), and the dissertation "Trauma Narratives in Contemporary Lithuanian and Spanish Dramaturgy" by Gerda Pilipaitytė (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Mykolaitytė); in the field of Philosophy, the dissertation "Philosophical Exegesis of the Liturgy of the Eastern Church in Greek Texts of the Second Through Eighth Centuries" by Gintaras Sungaila (Supervisor Prof. Tatjana Alekšienė) and the dissertation "The Problem of the Transcendental as a Qualificational Function: F. H. H. Bradley, Iain Hamilton Grant, and Ray Brassier" by Adas Diržys (Supervisor Prof. Gintautas Mažeikis); in the field of History and Archeology, the dissertation "The Nobility of Kaunas District in Political Life in 1588–1648" by Ričardas Jaramičius (Supervisor Prof. Vaida Kamuntavičienė) and the dissertation "The Expression of Piety in the Diary of Michal Kazimierz Radziwiłł Rybenko (1702–1762)" by Vika Veličkaitė (Supervisor Prof. Vaida Kamuntavičienė).
- Eight international and national research projects were successfully completed at the Faculty, while four research projects are ongoing, including the HERA project "Digital Islam Across Europe: Understanding Muslims' Participation in Online Islamic Environments" (Project Leader Prof. Egdūnas Račius). Additionally, six new research and study projects were launched, such as the project of the researcher groups of the Research Council of Lithuania "Features of Hate Speech and Criteria for Its Identification: A Linguistic and Legal Analysis" (Project Leader Prof. Jūratė Ruzaitė); the ESF-supported project "Lithuanian Language Courses for People who Have Fled Ukraine due to Russia's War of Aggression Against Ukraine" (Project Leader Assoc. Prof. Laura Kamandulytė-Merfeldienė), and others.
- The teachers and researchers of the Faculty organised several international scientific conferences, including "Monastic Life in Lithuania: History and Perspectives"; "Considering History, Understanding Memory"; "Nation Building and Cultural Diversity in East Asia: Challenges, Narratives, Perspectives"; "Perspectives on the Translation of Romance Language Texts"; and others.
- The following books were published by the teachers and researchers of the Faculty: the monograph "Hate Speech" by Prof. Jūratė Ruzaitė (Kaunas, 2024); the monograph "Own Voices: Women's Creativity in the Diaspora" by Assoc. Prof. Žydrone Kolevinskienė (Vilnius, 2023); the monograph "The Question of Being in Art: Painting, Photography, Sculpture, Collage" by Assoc. Prof. Tomas Kavaliauskas (Kaunas, 2024); the monograph "The Ruling Elite of Kaunas City in 1918–1940" by Prof. Aistė Lazauskienė (Kaunas, 2024); and the monograph "Minor Politics: the Philosophical Study of Social Movements" by Dr. Kaspars Pocius (Kaunas, 2024).
- Viktoras Bachmetjevas, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Humanities, completed a one-year fellowship at Yale University in the USA; doctoral student Karolė Miuller won a research visit funding competition organised by the Korea Foundation and undertook a long-term fellowship in South Korea; and doctoral student Martynas Butkus took part in a fellowship at the University of Illinois in Chicago, USA.
- Assoc. Prof. Malachi Black, a Fulbright Scholar, poet, and teacher of creative writing from the University of San Diego (USA), started teaching at the Department of Foreign Language, Literature and Translation Studies. Heqi Sun, a doctoral student from the University of Warsaw, completed an internship at the Asian Studies Centre. Additionally, Minji You from Yonsei University (South Korea) and Hyeonhee Kim from Sungshin Women's University (South Korea) undertook internships at King Sejong Institute.
- The Asian Studies Centre of the Faculty of Humanities actively participated in signing a cooperation agreement between VMU and National Chengchi University (NCCU) in Taiwan, where a Lithuanian Centre is being established. Additionally, a cooperation agreement was signed between UAB LITIT and VMU, committing to strengthen the partnership between higher education and business in the field of German language and communication studies offered by the Faculty of Humanities.
- A wide range of cultural events organised by the Faculty teachers and students were offered to the academic community and the general public: International Writers and Books Festival "Kaunas Literature Week 2024", Francophone Month, VMU Asia Week, Japan Days in Kaunas WA, Scandinavian Days, International Mother Language Day at VMU, German Language Days "Ö kaip vokiškai" (How do You Say It in German?), "October—Lithuanian Diaspora Month", "Baltic Literature Week 2024". The Faculty also organised an educational and creative workshop "Lithuanian Culture: A Harmony of Traditions and the Present" for students from foreign Baltic Studies centers, as well as the exhibitions of photographs of the Faculty teachers and the screening of the documentary "A Sense of the Future" about Prof. Marija Gimbutienė.



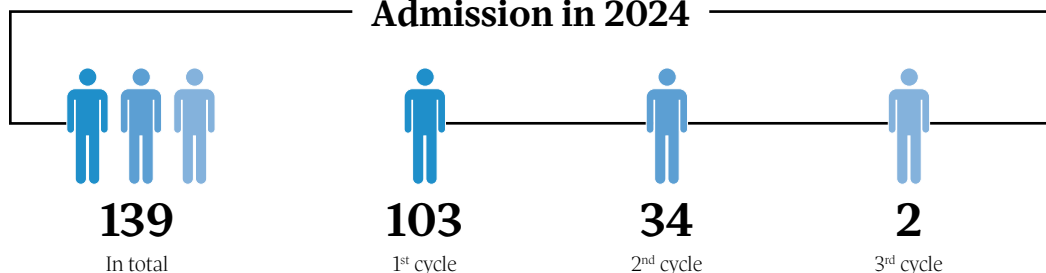
Faculty of Informatics



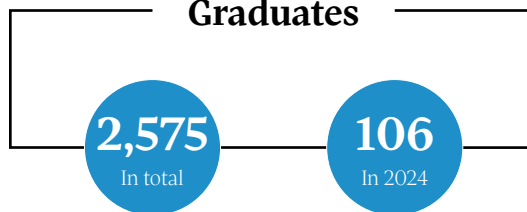
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	32
Academic staff with PhD (%)	72
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	8
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	71
Number of projects	18
Visiting teachers	70

Study programmes

First cycle

Informatics Systems
Mathematics and Its Application
Multimedia and Internet Technologies

Second cycle

Applied Informatics
Applied Mathematics

Fields of third cycle studies

Informatics

Dean Prof. Tomas Krilavičius

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



Key events of 2024

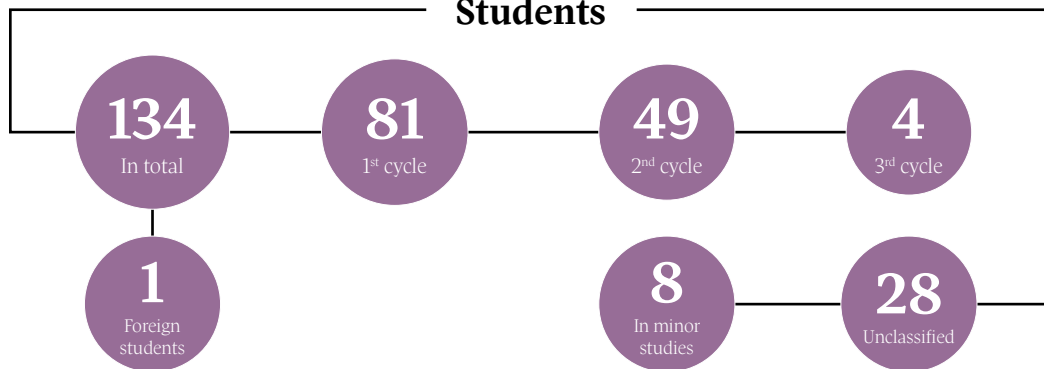
- The first and second cycle study programmes in the field of Informatics received the highest SKVC accreditation for 7 years.
- The Faculty of Informatics contributed to the largest European artificial intelligence conference, ECML PKDD 2024, held on September 9–13, which brought together over 900 researchers and professionals from more than 40 countries. The organisers were awarded the Lithuanian Artificial Intelligence Association Prize for the best AI event of the year.
- The Faculty successfully continues FOREST 4.0, one of the largest research projects at the University. Its aim is to establish and operate a Forest 4.0 Centre of Excellence for the development of a sustainable forest bioeconomy, ensuring that the Centre has the necessary physical and human resource base, financial sustainability, and capacity to carry out cutting-edge research and to increase the level of internationalisation of science.
- Since 2023, the SustAlnLivWork project has been carried out with the aim of creating a joint “Centre of Excellence of Artificial Intelligence for Sustainable Living and Working” (SusAlnLivWork) in Lithuania, which will play a significant role in the development and application of AI-based R&D solutions in the manufacturing, energy, health, and transport sectors.
- The project “Automatic Adaptation of Administrative Texts in Lithuanian to the Needs of Non-Specialists” was successfully completed. A methodology was developed for the automatic simplification of Lithuanian administrative style texts to a Plain Language level.
- On 27 January 2024, the 18th informatics and mathematics quiz “IFtorina-24” was organised by VMU Faculty of Informatics for school students in grades 11–12 and gymnasium grades 3–4. A total of 52 school students (11 teams) and 18 teachers from various schools in Lithuania participated in the event.
- EdTech IT Teacher Qualification and IT Master's Degree studies for teachers as part of the Education Development Programme of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania, under the Progress Measure No. 12-003-03-01-02 “Implementing EdTech Digital Transformation of Education” were successfully completed. During this programme, a total of 146 unclassified students of the module and 15 master's students successfully completed their studies.
- The Mathematics module studies, offered by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, were completed by 21 teachers, while 23 teachers from all over Lithuania started studying the Informatics module.
- A total of 92 teachers began their studies in the qualification improvement programme “Development of Mathematical Thinking: Theoretical Insights and Their Practical Implementation in Schools” as part of the project “Strengthening Teachers’ Competencies in National Qualification Development Programmes and Master's Studies”, led by the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and the National Agency for Education.
- A new interdisciplinary double degree programme “Digital Transformation Technologies and Management” was launched in collaboration with the University of Saarland in Germany.
- The Alumni Club of VMU Faculty of Informatics awarded one-time scholarships of EUR 300 to Karina Preidyte (Informatics Systems), Iveta Intaitė (Multimedia and Internet Technologies), and Evelina Duraitė (Multimedia and Internet Technologies).
- The following postdoctoral fellowship projects were launched: “Explainable Machine Learning for Medical Image Analysis: Precision Diagnosis Algorithms”; “Research on Combining Large Language Models and Knowledge Graphs to Extract Narratives from News Texts”; and “AI-Based System for Optimised Glycemic Control and Hypoglycemia Risk Prediction in Intensive Care Patients”.
- The project “SAFE4SOC—Standard Alert Format Exchange for SOC’s” was launched to simplify the interoperability of detection tools and cybersecurity management solutions, thereby enhancing the speed and accuracy of threat response across the cybersecurity ecosystem.
- The project “5G, Artificial Intelligence and Optimisation Techniques for Next Generation Logistics Solutions”, aimed at improving the efficiency of transport services through the use of AI, was launched.
- The projects “Corpora of Summaries for Artificial Intelligence” and “Creation of Anonymisation Corpus” were started to be implemented. The aim of these projects is to develop and validate mixed corpora of summaries of Lithuanian language texts and anonymisation that could be used to train systems based on deep learning models for automatic generation.



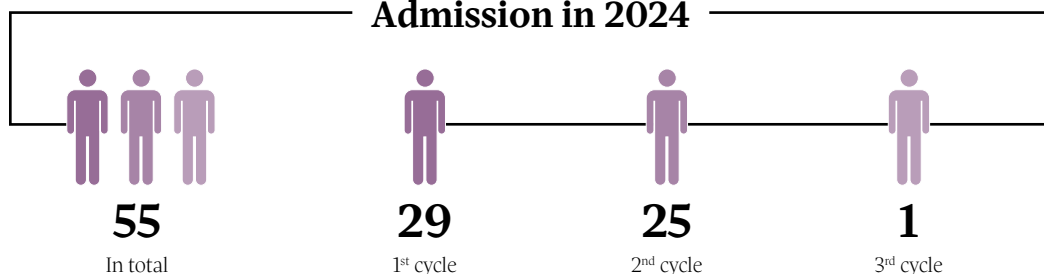
Faculty of Catholic Theology



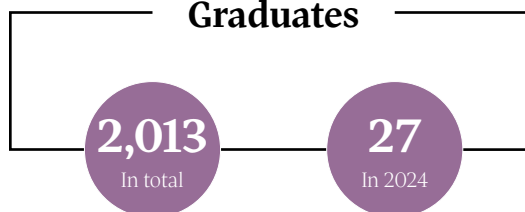
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	13
Academic staff with PhD (%)	93
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	7
Number of projects	4

Study programmes

First cycle

Catholic Theology
Pedagogy of Religion

Second cycle

Pastoral Theology
Religious Education
Family Research

Fields of third cycle studies

Theology

Dean Assoc. Prof. Benas Ulevičius

Address Gimnazijos g. 7, 44260 Kaunas



Key events of 2024

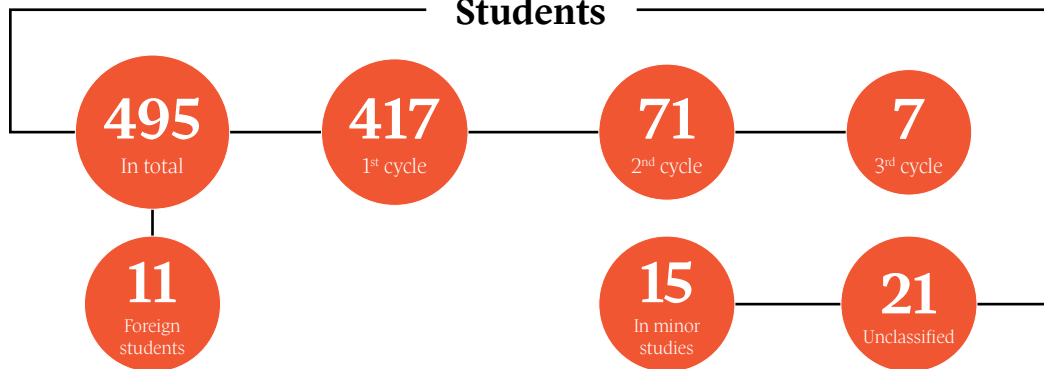
- The Faculty developed relations with foreign universities and partners. The Faculty teachers and students went to teach, study, and do internships at various universities and organisations in Europe and around the world. The collaboration with the Faculties of Catholic Theology of the Catholic University of Portugal and the University of Silesia in Katowice was further developed in the context of the Transform4Europe alliance. Particularly close cooperation took place with the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (Poland), the Pontifical John Paul II University in Krakow (Poland), the University of Malta (Malta), Riga Higher Institute of Religious Sciences affiliated to the Pontifical Lateran University (Latvia), and the Dicastery for Culture and Education of the Holy See (Vatican). The Faculty received a visit from representatives of the European Commission. Stronger ties were established with the pastoral care of the Lithuanian diaspora.
- The Faculty of Catholic Theology continued to strengthen its relations with social partners and society. The Faculty organised non-formal education programmes, lectures, and seminars for the public and for employees of Catholic organisations. A four-meeting seminar “What Do Theologians Do?” was organised. During the seminar, the Faculty alumni shared their success stories and presented to the public various career opportunities provided by Catholic Studies. The teachers of the Faculty gave lectures, hosted radio programmes and seminars, consulted Catholic organisations, carried out pastoral and educational activities in parishes, communities, hospitals, and elsewhere. Students-volunteers of the Faculty form an important part of the volunteers in various Catholic organisations. The Faculty maintains a particularly close contact with the Catholic centres and social institutions of Kaunas Archdiocese. The relations of the Faculty of Catholic Theology with the social partners are very strong, as many of the leaders and staff of Catholic organisations are alumni of the Faculty.
- The Faculty of Catholic Theology strengthened its cooperation with schools. The teachers went to schools, gave lectures to schoolteachers and students; groups of students visited the Faculty. Close collaboration with VMU “Rasa” Gymnasium and Catholic schools throughout Lithuania should also be mentioned. In 2024, the Faculty continued the tradition of the Republican competition of senior school students’ works on religion and science. The winners of the main prize were awarded an educational trip to the University of Cambridge.
- The Faculty of Catholic Theology continued to strengthen the interdisciplinarity of studies and research. The Faculty organised scientific and practical conferences and seminars with the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences, Kaunas University of Technology, the Lithuanian Psychological Association, and Lithuanian and foreign researchers in various areas of science.
- The active participation of the Faculty students is worth mentioning. The students organised two talent shows and discussions at the Faculty, and meetings of the most active students were also held.
- Prel. Prof. Habil. Dr. Vytautas S. Vaičiūnas from the Catholic Theology Faculty was awarded VMU Honorary Professor regalia for his significant contribution to the establishment of VMU Faculty of Catholic Theology and the development of its activities.
- In 2024, a Scientific-Practical Conference “Value-Based Education in the 21st Century: New Directions, Perspectives, and Changes” was organised.



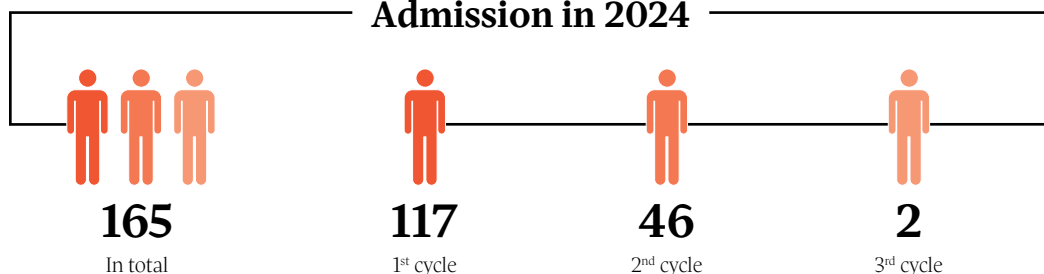
Faculty of Arts



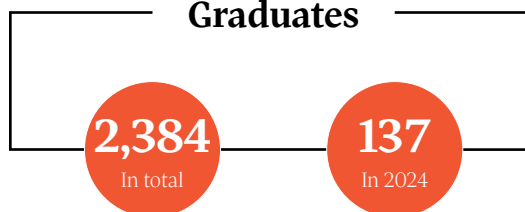
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	25
Academic staff with PhD (%)	78
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	25
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	14
Works of art	93
Number of projects	3
Visiting teachers	6

Study programmes

First cycle

Art History, Criticism and Media
New Media Art
Creative Industries
Music Production (EN)

Second cycle

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 2024

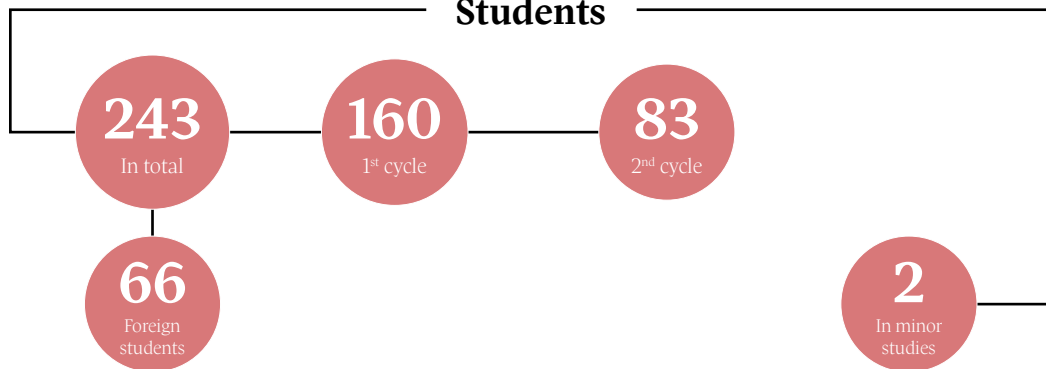
- Prof. Jurgita Staniškytė, Dean of the Faculty of Arts, became a member of the HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area Network) Board and the COST Expert Review Panel.
- The second cycle study programmes in the field of Arts Studies—“Arts Curatorship” and “Theatre Studies and Stage Art Management”—were ranked first in the 2024 Comparative Ranking of University Study Fields published by the magazine “Reitingai”.
- A new second cycle study programme in the field of Media Art—“Intermedia Art”—was accredited by the Centre for Quality Assessment in Higher Education (SKVC).
- In the SKVC study field evaluation, the study programmes Creative Industries in the study field of Communication received the highest points in Lithuania and were accredited for the maximum term.
- The National Cultural Forum “Cultural Entrepreneurship”, organised by the National Association of Creative and Cultural Industries (NKIKIA), was held at VMU.
- The traditional public art and culture festival “VMU Culture Days” was organised, featuring open lectures, discussions, art events, student projects and the traditional “Open Day for School Students”.
- In collaboration with the international performing arts festival “Contempo”, the Young Critics Workshop was organised (curated by Deimantė Dementavičiūtė-Stankuvienė).
- Jūratė Tutlytė was appointed as the Commissioner of the Lithuanian Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale.
- Deimantė Dementavičiūtė-Stankuvienė was appointed as the Chair of the Jury of the Lithuanian Professional Performing Arts Awards “Golden Cross of the Stage”.
- Daiva Price was appointed to the Expert Group of the Action Plan for the Promotion of Museum Activities under the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.
- Miglė Munderzbakaitė was appointed as the Chair of the Jury of Kaunas Performing Arts Awards “Fortuna”.
- Jurgita Staniškytė and Edgaras Klivis were members of the International Jury of the Latvian National Theatre Awards “Spēlmaņu nakts”.
- Raimonda Simanaitienė was recognised by the Faculty students as the best teacher of the 2023–2024 academic year.
- On the occasion of VMU Quality Day, the Faculty of Arts received the Award for Leadership in Social Partners’ Inclusion. Additionally, incentive prizes were given to Jūratė Tutlytė for her active teaching methods, and to Titas Petrikis for his collaboration and co-creation.
- Research output: monographs “Lithuanian Interwar Interiors 1918–1940: Workshop of European Style” and “The Architecture and Interior of Chaimas Frenkelis Villa” by Lina Preišegalavičienė; monograph “War and Culture: Lithuanian Theatre During the Nazi Occupation” by Ina Pukelytė; Linara Dovydaitytė (with her team) published policy recommendations on the heritage of the nuclear industry, “Nuclear Spaces: Communities, Materialities and Locations of Nuclear Cultural Heritage. Concluding Report” and organised the international scientific event “The Legacy of the Nuclear Industry as Cultural Heritage”; Rūta Mažeikienė served as the Chair of the Scientific Committee of VMU Student Conference “Freedom to Create 2024”.
- Rasutė Žukienė curated the following exhibitions: “Am I Who I Am?” by Almyra Weigel in the Picture Gallery of the National M. K. Čiurlionis Museum of Art; “Nostalgia: A Glass Art Exhibition by Sigita Grabliauskaitė” and “Textiles and Photography. Almyra and Thomas Weigel” by Beatričė Kleizaitė-Vasaris in the Art Gallery in Marijampolė; a sculpture exhibition by Gediminas Endriekus; the exhibition “Dedication: Remembering Lithuania and Lea Goldberg” by Aleksandras Ganelinas and Ilona Junevičienė; and the exhibition “Rhythmic Variations” by Kazys Varnelis from the collections of the Lithuanian National Museum.
- Romualdas Požerskis organised nine solo exhibitions in Lithuania (“Faces of January 13”, “Crazy Sculptures in the Nevada Desert”, “Noises and Garbage”, “The City Gone but Still Here”, “Mysterious Bangladesh”, “Pilgrimages”, “Lithuania in 1988–1993”, “Water and Dust”, “The Baltic Way”) and one solo exhibition abroad (“Way to Freedom”, held at the Consulate of the Republic of Lithuania in Valencia, Spain). He participated in five group exhibitions in Lithuania (“Lozoraitis Lithuania: When Personal Becomes Political”, “A Passenger on the Move. In Memory of Justinas Mikutis”, “The Lozoraitis—Diplomacy of Hope: A Century for the Sake of the State”, in Kaunas Photography Gallery exposition, in the international art fair “Art Vilnius”, “Fairy Tale. Childhood in Lithuania in the Late Soviet Era”) and seven group exhibitions abroad (“700 Years of Vilnius”, held at Palau de Cervelló in Valencia, Spain; “Baltic Humanist Photo Exhibition”, held at Spiral Garden Gallery in Tokyo, Japan; “Baltic Way”, held in Tallinn, Estonia; at the photography festival “Photomaunales Diaphane”, held at the Opale-Sud Museum in Berck-sur-Mer, France; at the international photography fair “Paris Photo”, held at the Grand Palais in Paris, France; “Human Lithuania”, held at the 24g Gallery in Paris, France; “Year 1989: Points of View”, held at the Quintanar Palace in Segovia, Spain).
- Titas Petrikis composed soundtracks for the films “Gardutė” (Tasty) (Director Eglė Vertelytė) and “Draugu lažybos” (Friends’ Bet) (Director Justinas Krisiūnas), as well as for the theatre play “Vėjo kotletukas” (Wind Cutlet) (Director Albertas Vidžiūnas).
- Lukas Tarvainis held a solo electronic music concert at the festival “Ženkilai” (Signs); he created and presented an artistic installation (together with visual artist Arina Chigareva) “(Dis)course. The Multi-Sensory Journey ‘KLAIPĖDA: 4 Perspectives’” and released the music album “Identities: The Sound of the Curonian Spit”.



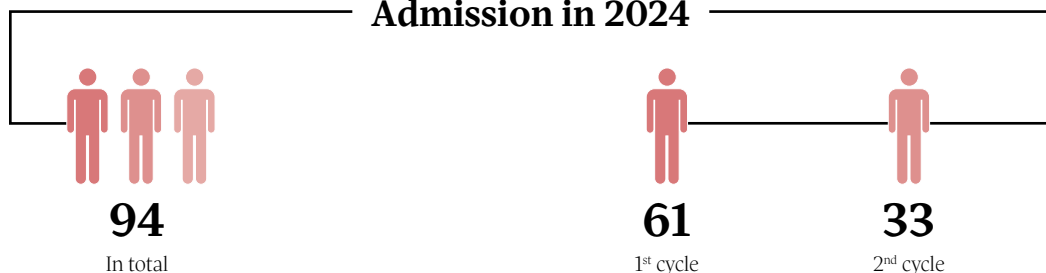
Music Academy



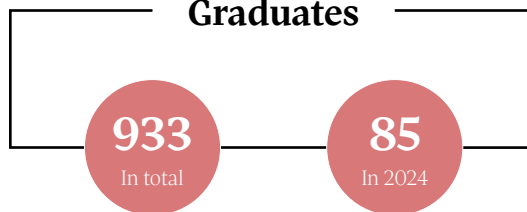
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	55
Academic staff with PhD (%)	64
Number of concerts	622
Works of music	632
Visiting teachers	51
Visiting teachers	1

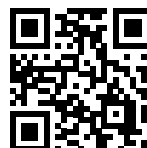
Study programmes

First cycle

Performing Arts

Second cycle

Performing Arts



Key events of 2024

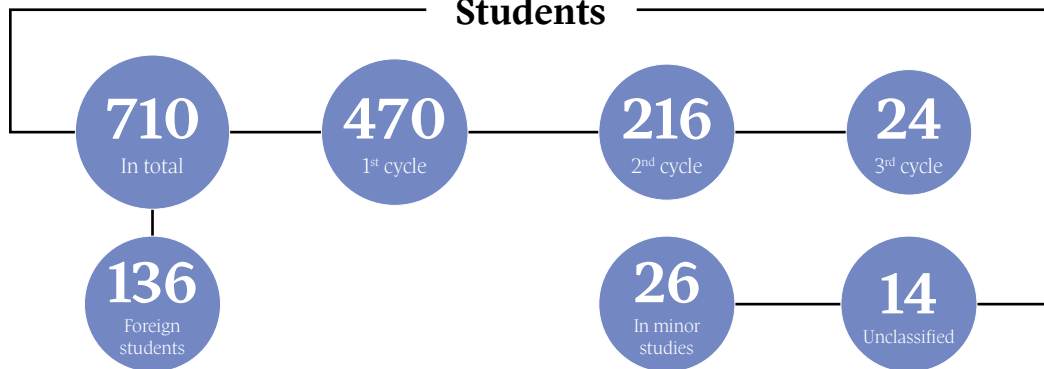
- Lecturer Kostas Smoriginas was named the Artist of the Year by the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre, and the Hope of the Year Award was granted to Lecturer Gabrielė Bukinė.
- On 13–20 April 2024, the 12th International Balys Dvarionas Competition for Young Pianists and Violinists took place. A total of 72 contestants participated in the event.
- The Magnus Piano Festival (on 28 March 2024) was organised by the teachers of the Department of Piano. The event featured performances by students from various art schools. A total of 26 pianists participated in the marathon.
- On April 6, the first international Ona Zabielaitytė-Karvelienė's Competition of Young Vocalists was organised at the Music Academy.
- On April 4–6, the 5th National Accordionist Competition was organised by Assoc. Prof. Povilas Velikis and Assoc. Prof. Gintaras Mameniškis (Lithuanian National Accordion Association).
- Student Ieva Glinkšė (Assoc. Prof. Rita Novikaitė's class) performed the role of the Maid in R. Strauss's opera "Elektra" at Luisenkirche Gemeindehaus Grosser Saal Gierkepl in Berlin.
- Recordings by Assoc. Prof. Rita Novikaitė from the album "Nel Contrasto" were broadcast on the radio programme "Jazz and Classic" in Chuncheon, South Korea. The broadcast featured G. F. Handel's "Rinaldo: Cara, sposa".
- On 23 November 2024, the Academy teachers Gabrielė Bukinė, Raminta Vaitiekaitė, Egidijus Bavikinas, Giedrius Prunskus, Tomas Ladiga, and student Joris Rubinovas participated in the premiere of G. Puccini's opera "La Bohème" at Kaunas State Musical Theatre.
- Lecturer Gabrielė Bukinė performed the role of Sister Angelica in G. Puccini's opera triptych "Il Tabarro. Suor Angelica. Gianni Schicchi" at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre (premiere on 24 November 2024).
- On October 26, teacher Paulius Kaminskas and student Dominykas Šimonis gave a concert at the American Lithuanian Club in Florida.
- Thirteen students of the Music Academy won prizes in various music competitions.
- Prof. Robertas Bliškevičius, together with the Cordos Quartet, released a music album "Clocks of the Past: Music for String Quartet" featuring the works of composer Bronius Kutavičius.
- Student Dominykas Šimonis participated as a member of the SKVC expert panel in the evaluation of the first cycle study programme in the field of Theatre Studies offered by the Lithuanian Academy of Music and Theatre.
- The State Choir "Vilnius", conducted by Prof. Artūras Dambrauskas, performed a concert programme at the Tramsschapp Cultural Centre to commemorate the 20th anniversary of Lithuania's EU membership.
- Lect. Enrikas Slavinskis composed the music for the film "Paslaptis (The Secret)", directed by K. Drazdauskas, which was presented at the Scanorama European Film Festival.
- VMU Music Academy became a member of the Association of Nordic Music Academies (ANMA) and the Nordclassic Classical Music Network, which connects higher music education institutions from Northern Europe and the Baltic States.



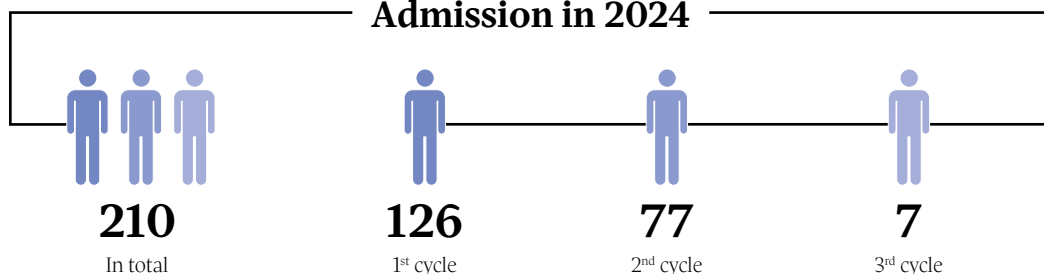
Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy



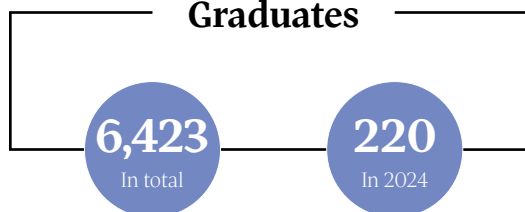
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	30
Academic staff with PhD (%)	86
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	96
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	21
Number of projects	11
Visiting teachers	8

Study programmes

First cycle

Political Studies: Political Science and Leadership (LT)
 Political Studies: International Politics and Development Studies (EN)
 Political Studies: World Politics and Economics (EN)
 Public Administration (LT)
 Public communication (LT)

Second cycle

Contemporary European Politics
 State Institutions Administration
 Integrated Communication
 Diplomacy and International Relations (EN)
 Future Media and Journalism (EN)
 East European Research and Studies (MIREES) (EN)

Fields of third cycle studies

Political Science
 Communication and Information Sciences

Dean Prof. Šarūnas Liekis

Address V. Putvinskio g. 23, 44243 Kaunas



Key events of 2024

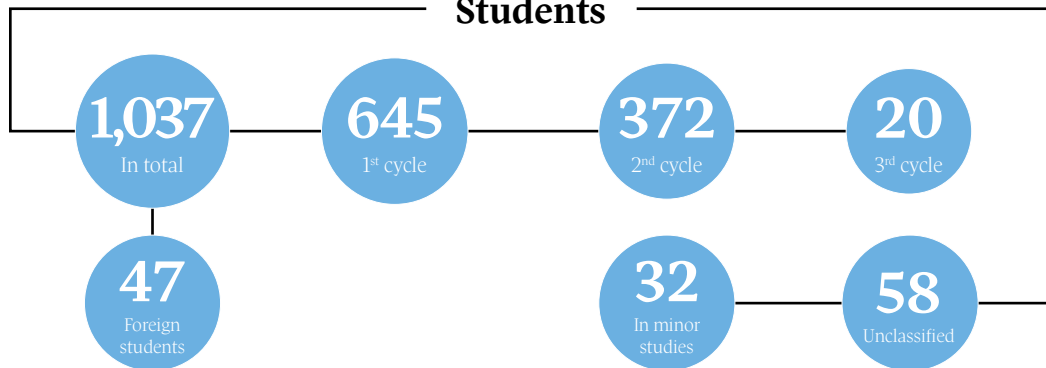
- The study programmes Public Communication and Integrated Communication received the highest SKVC accreditation for 7 years.
- The following three monographs were prepared: “The Question of Being in Art: Painting, Photography, Sculpture, Collage” by Tomas Kavaliauskas; “Lithuania in Swedish Baltic Policy in 1917–1991: From Recognition to Its Renewal” by Saulius Pivoras; and “The Ruling Elite of Kaunas City in 1918–1940” by Aistė Lazauskienė.
- Ilona Tamutienė was awarded the ISAJE (International Society of Addiction Journal Editors) prize to participate in the international event, the ISAJE Annual Meeting 2024. This award is supported by a grant from the US National Institute on Drug Abuse (1R13DA061574-01; PI: Dr. Emily C. Williams, University of Washington).
- Mindaugas Norkevičius was awarded Lithuania's Teacher of the Year Award by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania.
- On 3–7 June, The Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy, together with its T4E Alliance partner—the University of Silesia in Katowice—organised a Summer School “Diplomatic Protocol and Etiquette” as part of the joint second cycle study programme Diplomacy and International Relations. During the Summer School, students from the Polish University participated in practical workshops and lectures at VMU, delivered by Šarūnas Liekis and Aistė Žemaitytė. Meetings were also held at the President's Office of the Republic of Lithuania, the Embassy of Poland in Vilnius, and the Central Electoral Commission (CEC).
- Podcasts with Ukrainian alumni on the challenges of diplomacy in wartime were organised.
- Public lectures and seminars were held, with Faculty alumni invited as guest speakers. In 2024, lectures were given to students by Daina Naujokaitė (European Commission), Vytautė Merkytė (Delfi), Agnė Breikštienė (CEO of “Adres”), Jaunius Špakauskas (Communications Director at UAB “Bitė Lietuva”), and others.
- Lecturer Austėja Pečiurienė won the University award for innovative teaching methods.
- The EU COST project “COST Action: CA22121, Rising Nationalisms, Shifting Geopolitics, and the Future of European Higher Education/Research Openness (OPEN)” is in progress. The main national representative and member of the management committee is Sima Rakutienė; the deputy representative is Ingrida Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė.
- The EU COST project “ACTION CA 22165 Redressing Radical Polarisation: Strengthening European Civil Spheres Facing Illiberal Digital Media (DepolarisingEU)” is being implemented. The main representative is Tomas Kavaliauskas, and the deputy representative is Gintautas Mažeikis.
- Ingrida Unikaitė-Jakuntavičienė and Mindaugas Jurkynas published a research study “Political Parties in Lithuania: Elections, Leaders, and Funding”.
- The Faculty was nominated the “Leader in Internationalisation” at the event “Quality 360°”.
- Visits and lectures were organised with international experts, such as Israel, Italy, and the Czech Republic ambassadors, scholars from Egypt, teachers from the University of Warsaw, and others.
- The American magazine “Foreign Affairs”, specialising in international relations and U. S. foreign policy, published a list of the best books of 2024, which includes the monograph “The Russian Way of Deterrence: Strategic Culture, Coercion, and War” by Dr. Dmitrijus (Dima) Adamsky, a researcher at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy.



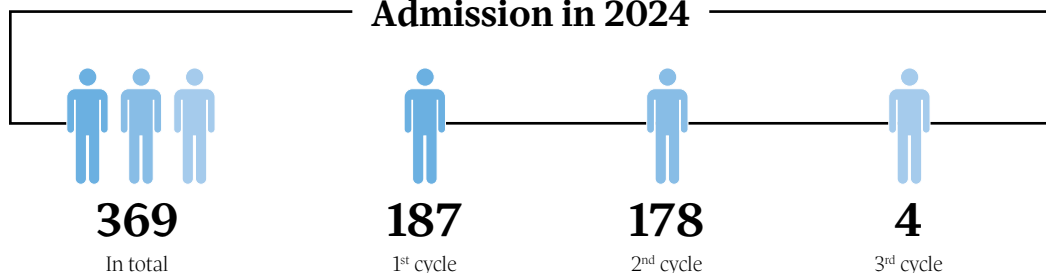
Faculty of Social Sciences



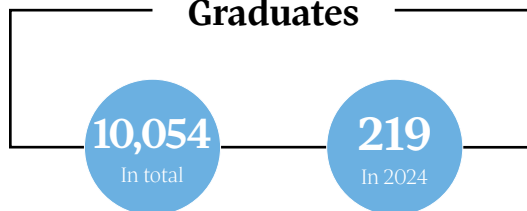
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	44
Academic staff with PhD (%)	91
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	9
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	38
Number of projects	19
Visiting teachers	14

Study programmes

First cycle

Psychology
 Social Work and Psychosocial Counselling
 Sociology and Anthropology: Sociological and Anthropological Studies
 Sociology and Anthropology: Society, Culture and Communication (EN)

Second cycle

School Psychology
 Organisational Psychology
 Social Anthropology
 Social Work: Social Work in the Context of Global Crises (EN)
 Social Work: Transformative Social Work
 Health Psychology
 Applied Sociology (blended online)

Fields of third cycle studies

Sociology
 Psychology



Dean Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Stelmokienė

Address Jonavos g. 66, 44191 Kaunas

Key events of 2024

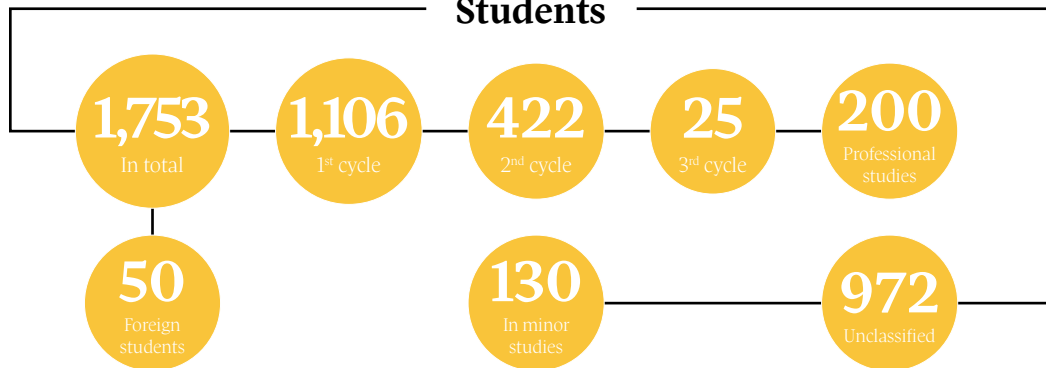
- Members of the community of the Faculty of Social Sciences were honoured with special awards: Prof. J. Ruškus received the Badge of Honour from the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of the Republic of Lithuania and an award from the Ministry of Justice, which was also given to Prof. M. Ališauskienė; Assist. Prof. G. Malinauskas was awarded the Medal of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas; Dr. M. Morkevičiūtė received the Young Scientist Scholarship and the Prize in the Competition of Research Works of Young Researchers and Doctoral Students awarded by the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences; the student of the second cycle study programme “Social Work” T. Gasparavičius received The Best Bachelor’s Thesis Award from the Ministry of Social Security and Labour of the Republic of Lithuania; and the student of the second cycle study programme “Social Anthropology” K. Lungytė received The Best Master’s Thesis Award from the Lithuanian Sociological Association.
- Researchers of the Faculty of Social Sciences launched five national and international projects: “Development and Effectiveness Evaluation of an Online Self-Help Programme for Positive Body Image for Women in the Postpartum Period” (Project Manager G. Jarašiūnaitė-Fedosejeva); “I will Drive Like They Do: The Role of Adolescents’ Perceived Social Norms and Their Changes in Predicting Their Future Risky Driving Behaviour” (A. Endriulaitienė); “Discursive Practices of Politicisation of Religion and Religionisation of Politics in Contemporary Lithuania” (M. Ališauskienė); “Development of Gender Equality and Equal Opportunity Measures at Vytautas Magnus University” (Laura Lapinskė); and “Open(ing) Research in Central Asia: Consolidating a Culture of Research Ethics, Data Management, and Open Science in Eurasia and Beyond” (National Team Leader Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė).
- Two semester-long student research projects funded by the Research Council of Lithuania were won and started—the research project by L. Zarevičiūtė (Supervisor G. Jarašiūnaitė-Fedosejeva) and the research project by I. Muraškaitė (Supervisor K. Žardeckaitė-Matulaitienė)—as well as one postdoctoral fellowship by M. Markuckas (Supervisor J. Ruškus).
- Researchers of the Faculty of Social Sciences are involved in the following four Social Science Data Infrastructures as the main coordinators or institutional partners: Fertility and Family Survey Research Infrastructure (GGP LT), Lithuanian Longitudinal Social Survey Research Infrastructure (LIST), Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe Research Infrastructure (SHARE Lithuania), and the European Social Survey Research Infrastructure (ESS LT).
- The Department of Social Work organised the International Conference “Well-Being of the Child and Family. What Can Social Work Offer in a Context of Dynamic Change?” The staff of the Department of Psychology developed a programme for the International Transform4Europe Summer School “(Co)Happiness Laboratory”. An innovative activity for collaboration with social partners was proposed at the Faculty, and the first social sector hackathon—SMFHACK’24—focused on the topic “Addictions in the Life of a Young Person” took place.
- Among all first cycle study programmes in Psychology in the country, the study programme “Psychology” offered by VMU Department of Psychology attracted the largest number of first-year students, as did the second cycle study programme “Health Psychology”. The admission to the newly launched second cycle study programme “Social Work in the Context of Social Crises”, offered in English, was successful. The second cycle study programme “Social Anthropology” celebrated its 20th anniversary. At VMU event “Quality 360°”, the Faculty was recognised as a leader in ensuring academic integrity.
- The following monographs were prepared: “Analysis of the Feasibility of Self-Completion in the Implementation of Lithuanian Population Surveys: The Case of the European Social Survey” by A. Žilys and G. Jarašiūnaitė-Fedosejeva and “The Power of Teachers: Thrive, Not Just Survive” by L. Bukšnytė-Marmienė et. al. Additionally, one research study “Drivers’ Attitudes Towards Penalties: Justice, Effectiveness, Purpose, and Their Psychological Antecedents” by R. Markšaitytė, L. Šeibokaitė, and A. Endriulaitienė, and one methodological tool “The Process of Assessing the Need for Social Services: A Methodological Tool for Social Workers” by D. Zovė and R. Motiečienė were published.
- The Lithuanian Psychological Students’ Association (LiPSA) organised the 3rd Neuropsychology Conference “Neurofiesta: From Research to Everyday Life” and celebrated its 20th anniversary. The Social Work Student Club “Vesta” organised the event “Solutions Festival: A Social Work Methods Fair”, as part of the successful competitive project. VMU Sociologists’ Club contributed to organising the 10th Anniversary National Conference of Young Sociologists and Anthropologists and won competitive funding for the project “SOckava’2024”.
- By organising conferences, symposia, trainings, seminars, discussions, and other activities (more than 80 different forms of activities were implemented), members of the Faculty of Social Sciences community actively shared their experience with various target groups: students, teachers, parents, the professional community, VMU community, alumni, and the general public. Cooperation agreements were initiated and signed with five organisations. Two programmes were offered on the platform “Kursuok”: “Conflict Mediation” and “Psychological Capital: The Path to Success and Personal Well-Being”.
- More than 30 foreign teachers, researchers, and practitioners (e.g., transgender rights advocate, educator, and activist Jessica Lynn) visited the Faculty under various funding programmes.



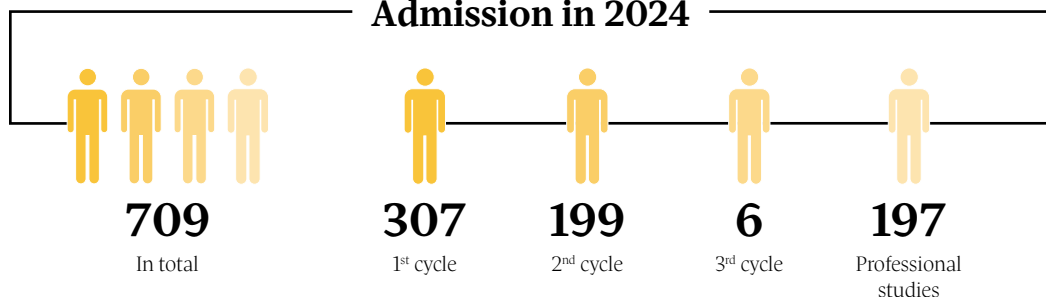
Education Academy



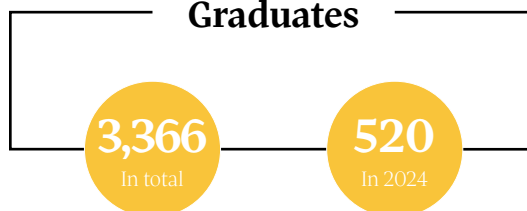
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	96
Academic staff with PhD (%)	86
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	10
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	55
Patents registered in Lithuania	3
Number of projects	21
Visiting teachers	82

Study programmes

First cycle

Pre-school and Pre-primary School Pedagogy
Subject Pedagogy
Pedagogy of Primary Education and Early Foreign Language Teaching
Special Educational Support
Sports Studies

Second cycle

Physical Education and Sports (in Vilnius)
Inclusive Education: Socio-Educational Industries (in Vilnius)
Language and Speech Therapy (joint study programme) (in Kaunas)
Subject Education (in Kaunas)
Music Education (in Vilnius)
Educational Management (EN/LT) (in Kaunas and Vilnius)

Professional studies

Pedagogy

Fields of third cycle studies

Education Sciences

Chancellor Prof. Lina Kaminskiene

Address T. Ševčenkos g. 31, 03111 Vilnius | K. Donelaičio g. 52, 44244 Kaunas



Key events of 2024

- VMU Education Academy in Kaunas hosted seminars “Towards Flexible Mathematics: Knowledge and Skills” for mathematics teachers, led by Harvard University Professor Jon Star and Professor Erno Lehtinen from the University of Turku and Vytautas Magnus University.
- Edita Naidaitė, an economics and entrepreneurship teacher at Kaunas Maironis University Gymnasium, a member of “Lietuvos Junior Achievement” teachers’ network, a graduate of VMU Education Academy and a Master’s student in the study programme “Educational Management” at VMU Education Academy, was honoured with the prestigious first-place award at the Best Entrepreneurship Teacher in Europe competition in Brussels.
- VMU Education Academy in Kaunas and Vilnius hosted the International Scientific Conference “Teachers as Heroes: What Helps Educators Grow?” for pre-school and primary teachers, which was attended by Jan Peeters, founder of the Centre for Innovation in the Early Years at the University of Belgium, an expert in educational policy research and support, alongside researchers from the Education Academy and teachers from Lithuania.
- The 7th International Lithuania Congress took place at the University of Wrocław, bringing together over 60 scholars, researchers, and education experts from Lithuania, Poland, and European Baltic Studies centres. One of the organisers of the Congress was VMU Education Academy.
- The Young Teacher Club was opened in Alytus city municipality, offering 9–12 grade school students the opportunity to participate in activities both in their city and at VMU. Currently, VMU Education Academy is actively collaborating with the Young Teacher Clubs in Kaunas, Panevėžys, Utena, and Klaipėda districts.
- In collaboration with VMU Education Academy, a specialised education-focused class was launched at Rokiškis Romuva Gymnasium. A specialised education-focused class also operates at Kaunas Maironis University Gymnasium.
- Students of the second cycle study programme Educational Management (studies funded within the framework of the project “Strengthening Teachers’ Competencies in National Qualification Development Programmes and Master’s Studies”) visited educational institutions in the Netherlands and Germany.
- The Forum “A Vision for Systematic Cultural Education in Lithuania” was held at VMU in Kaunas, where the UNESCO Framework for Culture and Arts Education, developed over two years by global and regional experts and adopted this year, was presented. The Forum discussed the concept and value of cultural literacy in today’s society, explored directions for future development, and offered specific proposals for systematic cultural education for the new programme of the Government of Lithuania.
- A discussion “Psychoactive Substance Use Among Young People: Challenges and Possible Solutions” took place at VMU in Vilnius. Experts discussed the use of psychoactive substances, cases of poisoning related to them, and the ongoing prevention efforts aimed at reducing psychoactive substance use among young people.
- To mark the World Teachers’ Day, the Visitor Centre of the Seimas hosted an event “Building the Future: a Sense of Community among Future and Young Teachers”. The event was attended by teachers, as well as school students from the Young Teacher Clubs of Alytus and Kaunas district municipalities.
- The State Child Rights Protection and Adoption Service, together with Dr. Ingrida Mereckaitė-Kušleikė, a teacher at VMU Education Academy, developed and presented methodological guidelines on children’s rights for teachers.
- Nine projects prepared by the researchers of VMU Education Academy were successful in the programme Breakthrough in Educational Research launched by the Research Council of Lithuania.
- The students and teachers of the first cycle study programme “Special Educational Support” organised the event “Autism Awareness Month: Listening to Different Voices”.
- The representatives of the first cycle study programme “Subject Pedagogy: Dance and Theatre Pedagogy” implemented by VMU Education Academy organised “Theatre and Movement Workshops” for grade 10–12 school students.
- VMU Education Academy in Kaunas and Vilnius hosted the conference for school students “Revolution in Backpacks: A New Generation’s Perspective”, bringing together 500 grade 7–12 students.
- VMU Education Academy in Vilnius organised a meeting for the international Erasmus+ DISCO+ project. This event brought together representatives from universities in France, Italy, Spain, Romania, the Netherlands, and Lithuania.
- At VMU in Vilnius, the “Citizenship Club” hosted discussions with defence expert Darius Antanaitis and European Parliament members Liudas Mažylis and Rasa Juknevičienė.
- At the National Museum in the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, the Forum “The School of the Future for Every Child” was held.
- The Song and Dance Ensemble of VMU Education Academy “Šviesa” celebrated its 70th anniversary. On this occasion, festive concerts were held at VMU in Kaunas and Vilnius.
- In collaboration with VMU Faculty of Humanities and the Baltic Summer University, VMU Education Academy organised Lithuanian language and culture summer and winter courses, along with the Lithuanian Studies. The courses, offered both online and face-to-face, took place at VMU Education Academy in Vilnius. The courses were attended by over 140 participants from 40 countries, as well as 10 teachers from Lithuanian language schools abroad and teachers from Baltic Studies centres.
- VMU Education Academy was responsible for organising the discussion “Lithuanians Around the World: Lithuanian Schools and Diaspora Lives” at the Seimas of Lithuania.
- The Education Academy also organised a seminar “Communication in a Bodily-Tactile Modality: How to See Voices We Cannot Hear”.

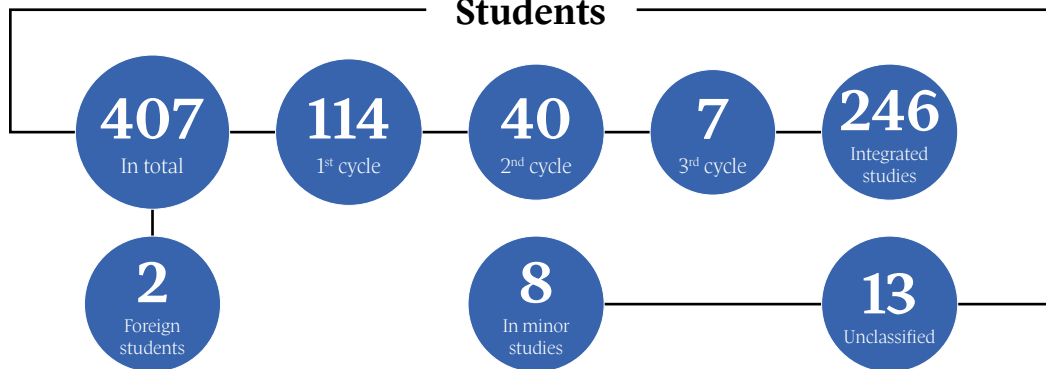
ŠVIETIMO KODAS



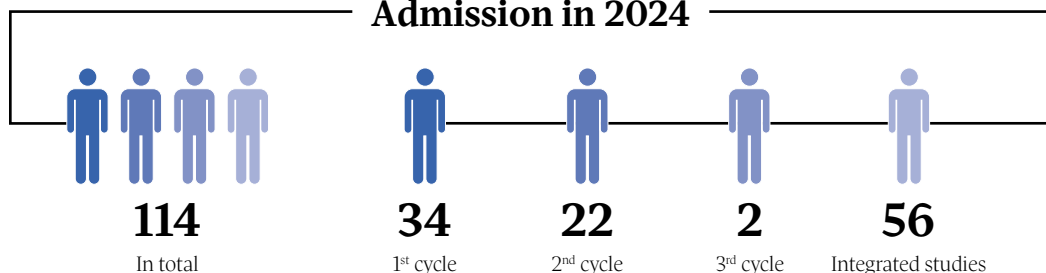
Faculty of Law



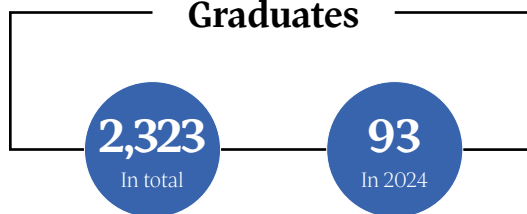
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



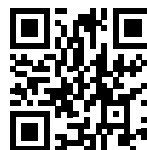
Academic staff (positions)	16
Academic staff with PhD (%)	82
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	68
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	7
Number of projects	6
Visiting teachers	10

Study programmes

First cycle	Second cycle	Integrated studies	Fields of third cycle studies
Law and Finances	Criminal and Business Law Financial Law	Law	Law

Dean Dr. Neringa Palionienė

Address Jonavos g. 66, 44191 Kaunas



Key events of 2024

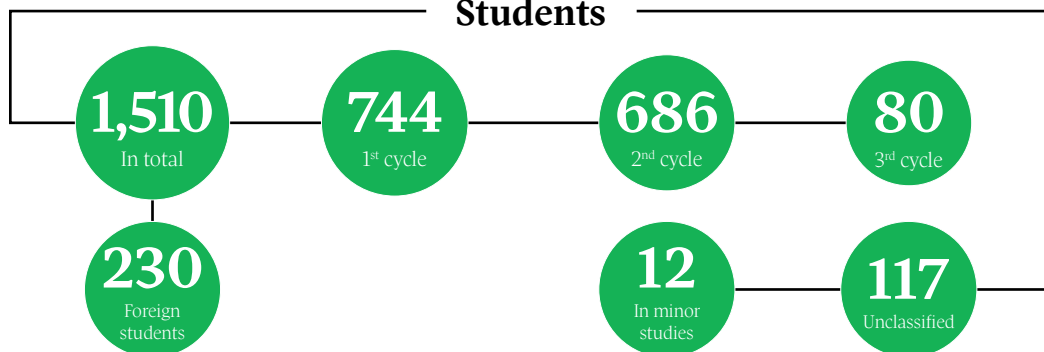
- In 2024, the Faculty took significant steps to enhance student engagement. On April 26, the Faculty of Law, in cooperation with the Legal Clinic and ELSA Kaunas, hosted the International Scientific-Practical Student Conference “Modern Legal Trends and Perspectives”, featuring presentations by students from Lithuania, Poland, Hungary, and India. On 4 September, two students of the Faculty of Law were awarded three top prizes in the competition for the best Master’s theses of 2024 at the Supreme Court of Lithuania. Furthermore, the Faculty successfully organised and implemented its first-ever Blended Intensive Programme (BIP) in partnership with Nicolaus Copernicus University, Carlos III University of Madrid, and the University of Rijeka.
- A group of researchers from the Faculty of Law (Prof. E. Gruodytė, Prof. J. Kiršienė, Assoc. Prof. T. Berkmanas, Assoc. Prof. A. A. Pasvenskienė and J. Kalpokienė) were invited to hold a special session on “Ethical Considerations of Using AI Tools in Legal Profession” at the International Legal Ethics Conference, one of the most renowned and prestigious conferences on legal ethics, which took place in Amsterdam in July 2024. The Conference provided the researchers with an opportunity to present their research findings to an international audience. For the fourth year in a row, the Faculty of Law together with the Law School of Mykolas Romeris University and the Law Institute of the Lithuanian Centre for Social Sciences organised the International Scientific-Practical Conference “Trends and Challenges in European and National Criminal Justice Policies”.
- The researchers of VMU Faculty of Law organise, lead, and participate in various national and international projects. It is worth mentioning the Erasmus+ project “Modernization of Legal Education for the Support of European and Euro-Atlantic Integration of Ukraine” (EU4UA), running from November 2023 to November 2026, under the Erasmus+ programme “Capacity Building in the Field of Higher Education”, in which the Faculty of Law participates as a partner.
- On 23–27 September, 24 researchers from the following five Ukrainian universities visited VMU Faculty of Law: Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Zaporizhzhia National University, Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University in Kharkiv, and Chernivtsi National University named after Yury Fedkovych. During the visit, an International Conference “Legal and Scientific (R)evolution: The Role of European Integration” was organised, where researchers from VMU Faculty of Law and Ukrainian universities presented their papers.
- On April 26, by the decision of the Academic Council of Yaroslav Mudryi National Law University in Kharkiv, the Dean of the Faculty of Law Prof. D. Žalimas was awarded the honorary title of Doctor Honoris Causa for his outstanding academic activities and achievements in the field of Law. On 2 September, Professor of the Faculty of Law J. Kiršienė was honoured with the Gold Medal of the Lithuanian Energy Institute (LEI) during an employee assembly in recognition of her significant contributions to the achievements of the Institute. On 9 December, M. Šimonis, the Partnership Associate Professor of the Faculty of Law, was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Minister of Justice of the Republic of Lithuania “For Merits in the Field of Human Rights in 2024”.
- In 2024, doctoral student J. Kalpokienė continued her work as a member of the Council of Europe Consultancy Services in the Framework of Activities of the Education Department—Artificial Intelligence and Education (AIED) Expert Group. In 2024, the researchers of the Faculty of Law actively participated in science popularisation and public consultation activities. They prepared 7 expert opinions for institutions in both Lithuania and abroad. It is worth mentioning that Prof. D. Žalimas provided an expert opinion to the Constitutional Court of the Republic of China (Taiwan) regarding the constitutionality of the death penalty. In addition, more than 20 public lectures, training sessions, and seminars on various legal topics were delivered to different target groups. Teachers and researchers of VMU Faculty of Law participated in radio and television programmes, prepared and published science popularisation articles on socially relevant issues on online portals. To strengthen the relations between the students and alumni of the Faculty of Law, five public lectures were organised in 2024, which were led by the Faculty alumni on topics related to their current professional activities.



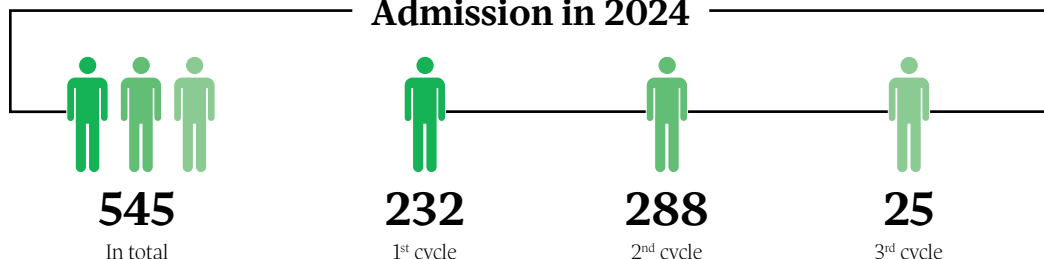
Agriculture Academy



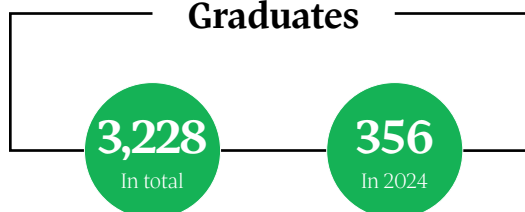
Students



Admission in 2024



Graduates



Academic staff (positions)	128
Academic staff with PhD (%)	89
Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	1,5
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	243
Patents registered in Lithuania	2
Number of projects	101
Visiting teachers	41

Study programmes

First cycle

Agronomy
 Food Quality and Safety
 Landscape Design
 Accounting and Finance
 Sustainable Biobusiness Management
 Logistics and Commerce
 Sustainable Engineering
 Land Use Planning and Real Estate Valuation
 Agricultural Mechanical Engineering
 Forestry
 Applied Ecology

Second cycle

Agronomy (Crop Production, Plant Protection and Nutrition, Horticulture and Gardening)
 Agroecosystems
 Quality and Safety of Plant Food Raw Materials
 Accounting and Finance
 Rural Development Administration
 MBA Customs Process Management
 Business Logistics
 Agricultural Economics
 Agricultural Business Management
 Hydraulic Engineering
 Land Management
 Transport Machinery Engineering
 Sustainable Energy
 Agricultural Engineering and Management
 Mechanical Engineering (Specialisations: Mechanical Reliability Engineering, Transport Engineering, Agricultural Engineering)
 Ecology and Climate Change
 Wildlife Resources and Management
 Forestry

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 2024

- A cooperation agreement was signed with UAB "Agrochema".
- A total of 33 Faculty students received scholarships awarded by social partners (67,370.00 EUR).
- The students of the Faculty received financial support from UAB "Scandagra" (EUR 15,750), Ieva and Arnas Radzevičiai (EUR 5,000), and UAB "Nando" (EUR 1,000).
- On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of VMU Agriculture Academy, Prof. Zita Kiaučioniene, Prof. Aušra Blinstrubienė, Prof. Kęstučius Romaneckis, Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Paulauskienė were awarded Certificates of Appreciation by the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania.
- Jūratė Aleivikoviienė, Professor at the Department of Agroecosystems and Soil Science, was awarded a Certificate of Appreciation by the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania Kęstutis Navickas "for a significant contribution to promoting the dissemination of scientific insights and knowledge on soil vitality aspects and the impact of sustainable farming solutions on soil".
- On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of VMU Agriculture Academy, commemorative badges were awarded to 22 members of the community of the Faculty of Agronomy. The members of the Faculty community Arvydas Bočys and student Emilija Sviderskytė received Certificates of Appreciation from the University Rector. The Chancellor's Certificates of Appreciation were awarded to Assoc. Prof. Jūratė Aleinikovienė, doctoral student Justina Deveikytė, Lect. Aurelija Lozuraitienė, Assoc. Prof. Povilas Mulerčikas, Lect. Aurelija Šaluchaitė, and student Arnas Šadbaras.
- During the Alumni Day, the mission of carrying VMU flag was entrusted to Jonas Pačėsa, a student of the second cycle study programme "Quality and Safety of Food Plant Raw Materials" at VMU Faculty of Agronomy.
- On the occasion of VMU Quality Day, the Faculty of Agronomy received the Award for Leadership in Study Quality Culture.
- On 16–18 October, an International Scientific Conference "Agroecosystem Sustainability: Links between Carbon Sequestration in Soils, Food Security and Climate Change" (AgroEco 2024) was organised.
- On 21 March, the Annual Scientific-Practical Conference "Herbology 2024: Weed Ecology and Control" was held.
- On October 21–25, Erasmus Blended Intensive Programme and BOVA courses "Sustainable Use of Natural Resources: 2024 Autumn Course" were organised at the Faculty in collaboration with Latvia University of Life Sciences and Technologies, the Estonian University of Life Sciences, and the University of Life Sciences in Lublin (Poland).
- A total of 28 researchers from 14 countries took part in the traineeships at the Faculty of Agronomy.
- The teachers of the Faculty of Agronomy participated in nine Erasmus+ teaching visits and thirteen Erasmus+ trainings visits.
- Twelve students from the Faculty of Agronomy studied in Italy, Poland, Estonia, and Latvia under the Erasmus+ programme, and one student had the opportunity to do practice in Costa Rica.
- Twenty students from Latvia, Poland, and Estonia visited the Faculty under the Erasmus+ programme, and one student from Turkey had practice at the Faculty.
- On 12 December, Jūratė Straveckienė defended her doctoral dissertation "The Effect of Ripening Stage and Genotype on the Phytochemical Composition of the Solanum Sp. Fruits" (Supervisor Assoc. Prof. Jurgita Kulaitienė).
- Seven doctoral students were admitted to the doctoral studies in the field of Agronomy in the area of Agricultural Sciences (two places are funded by the State, and five places are funded by the Research Council of Lithuania).
- Dr. Audronė Ispyrion was accepted as a postdoctoral fellow for the period from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2026 (the research topic "Increasing the Value of Berry Pomace: Effects of Fermentation on By-Product Characteristics and Applications"; Supervisor Prof. E. Jarienė).
- The Faculty of Agronomy purchased equipment for EUR 28,470.
- Seven researchers of the Faculty served on the editorial boards of 14 scientific journals, either published internationally or in collaboration with foreign research and academic institutions, as members, editors, guest editors, or advisory board members.
- More than 20 teachers and researchers of are actively involved in international organisations.
- The researchers of the Faculty published 31 research articles in journals indexed in the CA WoS database (Q1–Q4), 26 of which were in the first quartile (Q1). Ten articles were published in collaboration with co-authors from foreign institutions.
- Two patents were registered in collaboration with researchers from the Faculty of Engineering of VMU AA.
- In 2024, the researchers carried out 25 project activities, including two "Horizon" projects and 1 COST Action.
- Two new study programmes were developed in the field of Agronomy: a short-cycle study programme "Crop Production Technologist" and a professional Bachelor's degree programme "Agrotechnologies".

Dean Assoc. Prof. Aida Adamavičienė

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



Faculty of Bioeconomy Development

Key events of 2024

- The most significant international science projects carried out in 2024 were the “Horizon Europe” project “Accelerating the integration of circular bio-solutions into rural areas of Europe” (BioRural), 2022–2025, with VMU activity coordinated by Prof. V. Vitunskienė; the “Horizon Europe” project “Strengthening knowledge and innovation systems in farm health and safety” (Safehabitus), 2023–2026, with VMU activity coordinated by Assoc. Prof. L. Girdžiūtė; the Horizon Europe project “Enhancing bioeconomy transformation in the BIOEAST region”, 2024–2026, with VMU activity coordinated by Assoc. Prof. R. Pakeltienė; the European Commission project “Support for Common Agricultural Policy implementation networking. Part 2—Support for innovation and knowledge exchange—EIP-AGRI”, 2021–2029, with leadership by Assoc. Prof. R. Pakeltienė; the INTERREG project “Building resilient rural communities in the Baltic Sea region by harnessing digital bio-business opportunities”, 2023–2026, with VMU activity coordinated by Assoc. Prof. J. Greblkaitė; and the SI Baltic Sea Neighbourhood Programme project “Sustainability and safety of the Baltic food chain”, 2023–2024, with VMU activity coordinated by V. Kargytė.
- Three Erasmus+ study projects were implemented, with VMU activities coordinated by Prof. V. Aleknevičienė, Prof. V. Atkočiūnienė, and Assoc. Prof. R. Pranskūnienė.
- The most important international scientific events organised were the 4th International Scientific Conference “Sustainable Bioeconomy Development 2024: Theory and Practice”, the 14th International Scientific Conference “Accounting and Finance for Business 2024: Towards Sustainability”, and the international scientific-practical conference “Problems of Professional Logistics Personnel Training in the Context of Global Competitive Environment” in collaboration with the Logistics Department of the National Aviation University (Ukraine).
- The Faculty researchers published 50 scientific articles in journals indexed in the Clarivate Analytics Web of Science / Scopus databases (including 10 in the first quartile and 15 in the second quartile), as well as 5 articles in individual publications by international publishers.
- Five presentations were delivered at the plenary sessions of international conferences (Prof. A. Miceikienė, Prof. V. Atkočiūnienė, Part-time Assoc. Prof. M. Švažas, Assoc. Prof. M. Vienažindienė, Assoc. Prof. D. Perkumienė).
- For their scientific achievements, faculty researchers were awarded honorary certificates by the Speaker of the Seimas, Viktorija Čmilytė-Nielsen (Prof. A. Miceikienė), and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania (Prof. V. Vitunskienė, Prof. V. Atkočiūnienė, Assoc. Prof. R. Pakeltienė). Additionally, 20 faculty members were awarded commemorative pins for the 100th anniversary of the Lithuanian University of Agriculture.
- Students conducted 3 research projects under the Research Council of Lithuania-funded activity “Student Research During the Summer” (Supervisors Prof. V. Vitunskienė, Prof. V. Aleknevičienė, Assoc. Prof. M. Vienažindienė).
- Assoc. Prof. R. Pakeltienė is the Chair of the European Committee of the European Life Sciences Universities Association (ICA) and a member of the Bioeconomy and Biodiversity and Climate Groups of the European Economic and Social Committee of the European Commission. Prof. A. Miceikienė is the representative of Lithuanian research institutions in the EU Common Agricultural Policy Network. Assoc. Prof. A. Novikova is the national representative in the European Circular Bioeconomy Network.
- Two Erasmus+ BIP courses were held: “Accounting and Finance: Towards Sustainability” (with 16 students from foreign universities; led by Assoc. Prof. D. Juočiūnienė) and “Management for Business Startups” (with 21 students from foreign universities; led by Prof. J. Žukovskis).
- A total of 27 visiting faculty members from foreign universities arrived at the Faculty of Bioeconomy Development, including 25 faculty members who came under the Erasmus+ exchange programme. Under the Erasmus+ exchange programme, faculty members of the department went abroad to teach 21 times and to study 22 times.
- Under the Erasmus+ exchange programme, 39 students from foreign universities came to study at the Faculty of Bioeconomics Development, and 4 students participated in internships. Additionally, 11 BPF students went abroad for studies, 29 participated in intensive Erasmus+ BIP courses, and 1 completed an Erasmus internship.
- Qualification improvement training was conducted for 1,335 farmers under 3 training programmes.
- A total of 1,722 school students were trained in the Entrepreneurship class of the “Smart Student Academy” at the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences.
- The second cycle programme in Customs Process Management received an EU recognition certificate.
- A double degree agreement was signed with the State University of Economics and Technology in Kryvyi Rih (Ukraine) for the implementation of the first cycle programme in Logistics and Trade.
- According to the double degree agreement with the Tashkent State Agrarian University of Uzbekistan, the first 4 students of the study programme “Logistics and Commerce” arrived for studies.
- Five Accounting and Finance programme students were awarded one-time scholarships established by UAB “Nordzucker Business Services”, and one student received a scholarship from Kaunas Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Crafts.
- A state-funded doctoral position was won in the competition of the Research Council of Lithuania.
- An academic partnership agreement was signed with UAB “Rivilė” and UAB “Stekas”.

Dean Prof. Bernardas Vazonis

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



Faculty of Engineering

Key events of 2024

- On the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences, a Land Management and Hydrotechnics museum exhibition was set up and opened.
- A new double degree (with Silesian University) second cycle programme in English, Aquamatics, and a new first cycle programme in Water Engineering was created. The “Erasmus Mundus Design Measures” project was won and started, with the goal of creating a joint second cycle programme in Bioenergy Engineering.
- The Smart Student Academy at VMU Agriculture Academy has established experimental engineering classes in Telšiai, Šilalė, Alytus city and district, and Kazlų Rūda. The programme continues the activities of the engineering experimental classes that were initiated in 2021 in Rokiškis, in 2022 in Pasvalys, Joniškis, Biržai, Plungė, and in 2023 in Naujoji Akmenė, Mažeikiai, Zarasai, and Šakiai districts. A STEAM engineering class was established, and its activities will be carried out either in high schools or at the faculty. Two large-scale events for students were organised to celebrate World Earth Day, “Earth Day”, and International GIS Day, “GIS Day”.
- The ŽŪA Science and Innovation Fund allocated EUR 10,000 for purchasing laboratory equipment for the newly established STEAM Engineering class and EUR 65,000 to strengthen the scientific activities of the Mechanical Engineering field.
- Prof. Eglė Jotautienė was awarded the academic title of professor (Mechanical Engineering T009). Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis, prof. Algirdas Jasinskas, and prof. Dainius Steponavičius each won one LMT competitive doctoral position at The Research Council of Lithuania (Environmental Engineering T004).
- Six doctoral dissertations were defended: Tomas Ūsas (advisor: Prof. Rolandas Bleizgys), Svajūnas Plungė (scientific advisor: Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis), Linas Jurevičius (scientific advisor: Prof. Petras Punys), Indrė Bručienė (scientific advisor: Prof. Egidijus Šarauskis), Marius Kazlauskas (scientific advisor: Prof. Egidijus Šarauskis), Andrius Grigas (scientific advisor: Prof. Dainius Steponavičius). Eleven doctoral students were admitted to doctoral studies (three of them were admitted to the positions won in a competitive contest of the Research Council of Lithuania).
- Prof. Arvydas Povilaitis was awarded the Research Council of Lithuania medal and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania's appreciation. Assoc. Prof. Jolanta Valčiukienė was honoured with an appreciation from a member of the Lithuanian Parliament, while Prof. Rolandas Bleizgys, Assoc. Prof. Gražina Žibienė, and Prof. Egidijus Šarauskis were recognised with appreciation awards from the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Lithuania.
- An international Scientific Practical Conference, “Human and Nature Safety 2024”, was organised, and participation took place in organising Erasmus BIP and BOVA courses such as “Application of Modern Technologies in Reconstruction of Geodetic Networks” and Erasmus BIP courses on “Contemporary Challenges in Land Management and Geodesy in the Baltic Countries”.
- A “Horizon” international project was won and initiated, and participation is ongoing in more than 10 international scientific projects, with VMU project leaders and participants from the faculty, along with involvement in over 20 various national research projects and the submission of over 10 research project proposals. Two patents were registered at the State Patent Bureau of the Republic of Lithuania.
- Faculty members and researchers participated as experts in more than 10 various evaluation committees, more than 10 international associations, and more than 20 editorial boards and scientific committees of academic journals. More than 30 seminars and other training sessions were organised and conducted, more than 10 visits of foreign scientists were initiated, and participation took place in 17 Erasmus+ teaching and 23 Erasmus+ learning visits.

Dean Assoc. Prof. Rolandas Domeika

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



Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology

Key events of 2024

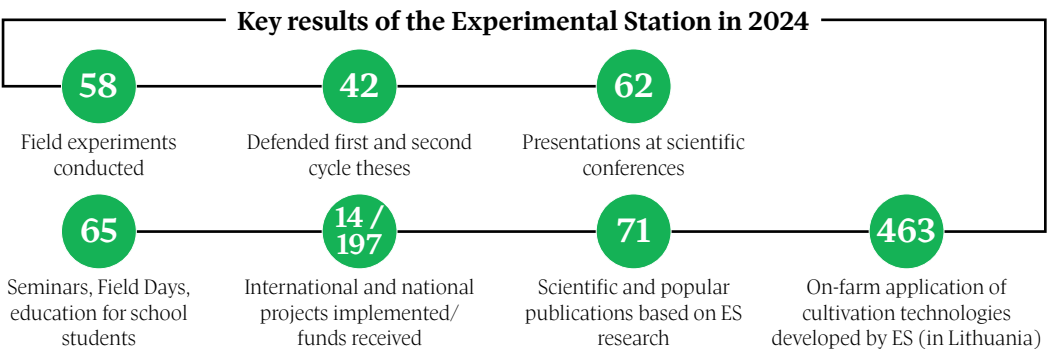
- Prof. Algirdas Augustaitis was awarded the IUFRO World Congress Host Award for his significant contribution to forestry science as a researcher from the Baltic countries.
- A study titled “Great Forests of Lithuania” by A. Brukas and G. Mozgeris was published in 2024 by the publisher D. Šeronas, with a total of 448 pages.
- On 24 October, a cooperation agreement was signed between Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy and the public institution “Sustainable Forests” (VšĮ “Darnūs miškai”).
- The public institution “Ekoagros” awarded a scholarship for the best Applied Ecology first cycle thesis to M. Jankauskaitė. Mocevičius’ company “Ginalas” awarded scholarships for the best first and second cycle theses in the Forestry programme to first cycle student R. Rutkauskas and second cycle student P. Stonkus. The Lithuanian Hunters and Fishers Association awarded a scholarship for the best second cycle thesis in the study programme “Wildlife Resources and Management” to G. Kurpeikis.
- The winner of the “Best Second Cycle Thesis 2024” competition in the field of Agricultural Sciences became P. Stonkus, a second cycle student from the Faculty of Forestry and Ecology at VMU AA. Scientific advisor Dr. D. Kavaliauskas.
- Prof. G. Brazaitis and Prof. L. Česonienė were awarded a Certificate of Appreciation from the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. Prof. G. Mozgeris received Certificates of Appreciation from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania, the Alytus City Municipality, and the Society of Lithuanian Foresters.
- The best teacher of the 2023–2024 academic year at VMU Agriculture Academy Faculty of Forest Sciences and Ecology was elected Assoc. Prof. A. Gavenauskas. Teachers T. Vaidelys, D. Šileikienė, and V. Paulauskas were awarded VMU 35th Anniversary Badge of Honor for excellent student evaluations.
- A national student competition titled “My World—For a Sustainable Lithuania” was organised. In 2024, 40 teams from 38 educational institutions participated in the competition. The final of the competition took place on 20 March at Raudondvaris Manor.
- On 5 June, a quiz for students titled “Let’s Grow a Forest—We Will Grow Too” took place at VMU Agriculture Academy. The event was held to celebrate International Forest Day. The quiz was organised in collaboration with VMU Faculty of Forestry and Ecology and the State Forest Enterprise, with the partner being Kaunas Educational Innovation Centre.
- On 16–18 April, the annual SILVA network conference “Changing Expectations of Society and Policy for Higher Forestry Education” was organised in Akademija, Kaunas District. Silva network, ICA, Vytautas Magnus University.
- On 23 April, an international seminar titled “Environmental Protection and Sustainable Resource Management” was organised in Akademija, Kaunas District.
- On 23–29 June 2024, the Faculty of Forestry and Ecology at Vytautas Magnus University (VMU) was a partner in organising the 26th World Congress of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO) in Stockholm. The main organiser of the event was the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences.
- On 18–22 November, the Erasmus BIP courses on “Wildlife Protection and Management in Human-Altered Ecosystems” were organised. Five foreign partners, 31 students, and 6 foreign teachers participated.
- In 2024, 3 “Horizon”, 2 LIFE, 2 COST activities, and 3 Erasmus+ projects were carried out.
- The INTERREG Baltic Sea Region programme project *Diverse_Gene_Watch*, titled “Early Forecasting and Monitoring System for Genetic Biodiversity Loss in Keystone Forest Tree Species”, was won. The main coordinator is VMU (Vytautas Magnus University).
- The Erasmus+ project “Bumblebees—for Natural Pollination” (BUMBLE-NAP) (No. 2024-1-TR01-KA220-VET-000254015) was awarded. VMU coordinator: Assoc. Prof. Anželika Dautartė.
- VMU AA Faculty of Forestry and Ecology is a member of the International Union of Forest Research Organisations (IUFRO), the International Long-Term Ecological Research (ILTER) Network, and the European Forest Institute (EFI).

Dean Prof. Vitas Marozas

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

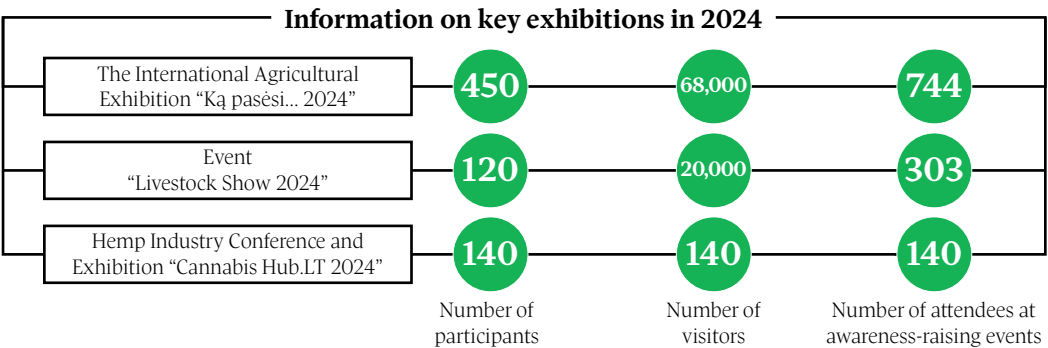


VMU AA Experimental Station



Director Prof. Habil. Rimantas Velička | **Address** Rapsų g. 7, Noreikiškės, 53365 Kauno r.

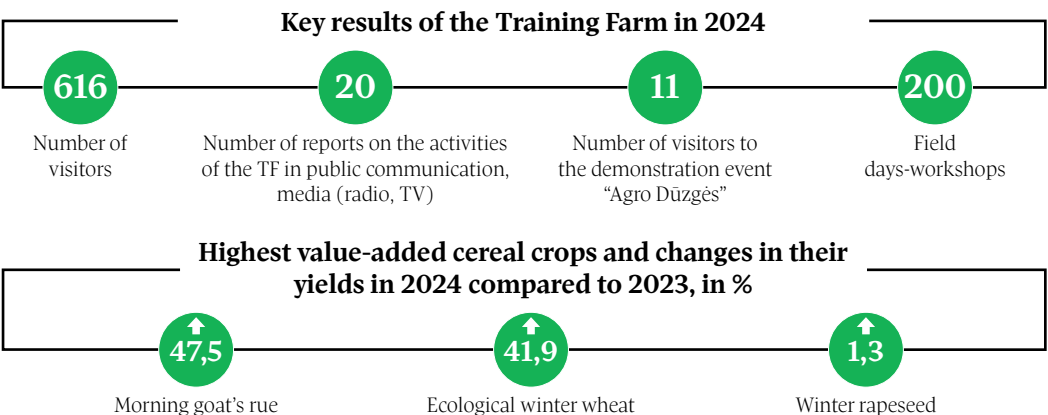
VMU AA Business and Social Partnership Centre



Information on ongoing projects			
Ongoing projects		Training within the projects	
PCs.	Total value in EUR	No of organised trainings	Trained persons
13	372,600	208	3,210

Director Rita Petlickaitė | **Address** Universiteto 8A, Akademija, 53361 Kauno r.

VMU AA Training Farm



Director Vilius Venskutonis | **Address** Rapsų g. 1, Noreikiškės, 53365 Kauno r.

Key events of 2024

VMU Agriculture Academy Experimental Station

- The interdisciplinary research team of scientists BS conducted 58 field experiments, covering approximately 2,950 plots, which totalled 58.94 ha, a 24.5% larger area compared to 2023. As every year, stationary crop rotation, energy plant, agronomy—meadow farming, and plant gene pool collections were established and updated.
- During the reporting period, the Experimental Station carried out 12 national, commissioned by economic entities, and international projects, with a total estimated value of EUR 760,689. In 2024, the value of scientific experimental services provided under these projects amounted to EUR 197,262.
- Two international projects were won based on the station's experimental base: "Holistic Agroecological Measures Evaluation" and "Smart Climate-Friendly Research: New Knowledge and Innovations for Climate-Smart Farming—Connecting Research Stations".
- Based on the research conducted at the ES base, publications were released and presentations were made at conferences and seminars: 11 publications in CA Web of Science DB indexed journals with impact factor (IF) (9 in Q1, 1 in Q2, 1 in Q3); 25 publications in other peer-reviewed scientific journals; 35 science popularisation articles; 62 presentations at scientific conferences both abroad and in Lithuania; 56 seminars and field days.
- At the station, 12 doctoral researchers conducted scientific research; 20 first cycle theses and 22 second cycle theses were prepared and defended; students completed 18 types of educational practices totalling 512 hours; 9 educational events for schoolchildren were held; 8 various trainings and field days took place; international collaboration with researchers from foreign institutions continued.
- On 5 Jun, the 25th anniversary scientific-practical conference "Farmer's Summer 2024: Latest Scientific Research for a Green and Sustainable Future of Lithuania" was organised.
- For its long-term scientific research and knowledge-sharing, the Research Station received special recognition—the "Farm of the Year 2024" nomination and a Certificate of Appreciation from the Mayor of Kaunas District.

VMU Agriculture Academy Business and Social Partnership Centre

- Three major exhibitions were organised: the International Agricultural Exhibition "Ką pasėsi... 2024" (21–23 March), the "Livestock Show 2024" exhibition (26–28 September), and the International Hemp Business Conference-Exhibition "Cannabis Hub.LT 2024" (8–9 November, held in collaboration with the Hemp Growers, Processors, and Business Innovators Association).
- On 25 April, the event "Regional Future Forum 2024" was organised for farmers, local action group and other NGO members, researchers, business representatives, and other interested parties. The event was attended by 114 individuals.
- On 16 May, together with VMU Agriculture Academy's educational farm, an open farm event "Agro dūzgės 2024" was held, focusing on grass forage production technologies. During the practical session, visitors were introduced to a model grassland set up at the Educational Farm, and UAB "Žemtiekimas" demonstrated innovative fodder preparation equipment. The event was attended by 120 target visitors.
- On 18 May, Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy organised a 100th-anniversary celebration event, the "100th Anniversary May Fest". The event was attended by approximately 2,000 people.
- On 28 November, the 11th Scientific-Practical Conference "Strengthening the Competitiveness of Rural Areas in Lithuania: Diversity, Resilience, and Welfare" was organised. The event was attended by 120 target visitors.
- In different regions of Lithuania, 208 continuing education courses were organised, and 3,210 individuals were trained.
- A total of 8 national and 5 international projects were carried out, with a combined value of EUR 372,599.

VMU Agriculture Academy Training Farm

- In 2024, 616 visitors visited Vytautas Magnus University Agriculture Academy teaching farm, including several foreign delegations from Moldova, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan.
- The production areas increased by 173 hectares, which is 27% of the total farm territory. The construction of a barn was planned, and preparatory work was being carried out.
- Together with VMU AA, the Agroecology Centre of the Department of Environmental and Ecological Sciences at VMU AA Faculty of Forestry and Ecology, a field day titled "Ecological Production at VMU Teaching Farm" was organised.
- Support was received for a project carried out in collaboration with the cluster "Green Intelligence". In 2024, a cycle of 5 seminars and discussion sessions on ecological farming topics was organised.
- A second prestigious grassland area was established based on the recommendations of VMU AA AF Assoc. Prof. Evaldas Klimas.
- Video reports about the Training Farm were shown on TV channels: Delfi TV in the programme "Ar galiu užėti" and LRT in the programme "Kaimo akademija". Articles about the Educational Farm were published on the portals ukininkopatarejas.lt and manoukis.lt.
- The collaboration with major agribusiness companies continues. Together with partners, ongoing trials are being conducted on soil cultivation, monitoring different varieties of rapeseed and corn, and testing crop quality.

Botanical Garden



Largest collections (number of collectible issues)

2,338

Roses

885

Peonies

839

Dahlias

684

Daylilies

494

Tulips

284

Rhododendron

294

Astilbes

317

Plantain lilies

353

Lingonberries, rosehips
and cranberries

420

Iris

Collectible numbers (in total) **19,246**

Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications **8**

Rare plant species **103**

Plant collection numbers assigned to ANGI **305**

Bred and registered varieties **2**

Number of projects **3**

Volunteers **89**

Lankytojai



114,856

Visitors per year



397

Excursion groups



3,664

Participants in
educational activities

Activity

Public events

The fascination of Plants Day

Weeks of flowering of plants

Night of Scents

The presentation of the President Valdas Adamkus Prize

Photo exhibition "Development of VMU Botanical
Garden's Medicinal Plant Section: Science, Studies, and
Practical Activities (1924–2024)"

European Heritage Days 2024 "From Herbal Medicine
Tradition to the Council of Europe Cultural Route"

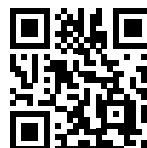
International Dahlia Exhibition

Botanical Nights Art and Music Festival, "House No. 5"
Theatre Festival

Conferences and seminars

International Scientific-Practical Conference
"Human and Natural Safety 2024"

Scientific-Practical Seminar "Medicinal and
Aromatic (Spice) Plants: Current Trends
and Prospects" dedicated to the 100th
anniversary of VMU Botanical Garden
(1924–2024)



Director Dr. Nerijus Jurkonis

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

Key events of 2024

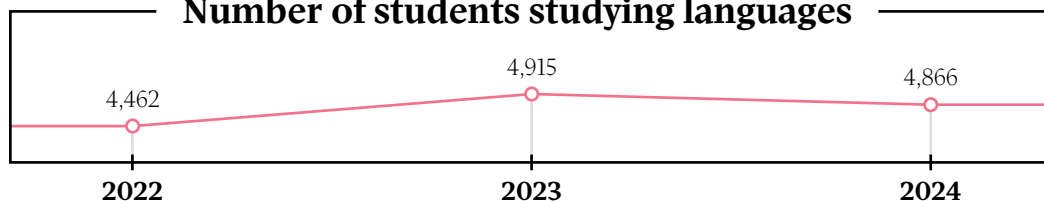
- In 2024, VMU Botanic Garden celebrated the 100th anniversary of the Medicinal Plant Section. Various events were organised: a scientific conference, seminars, open-door days, a photo and document exhibition, and an off-site meeting of the National Health Council (NHC).
- In 2024, VMU Botanical Garden became a full member of the Council of Europe's cultural route, the European Historic Pharmacies and Medicinal Plant Gardens Aroma Itinerarium Salutis (AIS).
- VMU Botanical Garden became a member of the "Green Intelligence" cluster.
- In 2024, two projects were carried out: "Development of an Innovative Oral Gel from Natural Plant-Based Extracts for Reducing Xerostomia Symptoms" (Project Leader Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė) and the environmental education project "See, Plant, and Taste", implemented in Lithuania by the Nordic Council of Ministers' Office, in collaboration with the Nordic Gene Bank "NordGen" and the Association of Botanical Gardens of Lithuanian Universities (VMU BG Department Leader Kristina Mulevičienė).
- In 2024, three varieties of snapdragons ("Traupis", "Black Crown", and "Istrica") developed by chief gardener Indrė Lukšytė were included in the list of National Plant Genetic Resources of Lithuania (ANGI).
- The American Peony Society registered a new peony variety "Latvian Rain" (author Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius) and included it in the International Peony Registry. The American Rose Society registered a new rose variety, "Ugnis" (author Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius), and included it in the International Rose Registry.
- At Paris International Dahlia Competition (Concours International du Dahlia, Ville de Paris), the main Public Prize was awarded to the dahlia variety Étoile du Jardin, created by Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius.
- At the International Dahlia Exhibition-Competition held at Vytautas Magnus University, the second place was awarded to the seedling "Fire and Ice OP 1" (Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius). The third place was awarded to the seedling "Sable d'Or OP 3" (Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius). The public prize was awarded to the variety "Orija", developed by Dr. A. Balsevičius.
- Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė was awarded the 30th Anniversary Badge of the Latvian Pharmaceutical Society and the Kauno kolegija Medal.
- The employees of the Botanical Garden published 9 scientific publications in Lithuanian and international scientific journals.
- Dr. Paulina Martusevičė was elected a member of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences Young Academy (Agricultural and Forestry Sciences Section).
- Doctoral student Viktorija Januškevičė defended her doctoral dissertation titled "Modelling and Optimisation of the Fermentation Process of Plant-Derived Raw Materials".
- In 2024, 18 employees of the Botanic Garden participated in Erasmus+ teaching and learning visits to various botanic gardens, arboreta, and other research institutions in different countries.
- Prof. Remigijus Daubaras participated in the 11th International Kiwi Fruit Symposium in New Zealand, the 13th International Vaccinium Symposium in Halifax (Canada), and with Dr. Laima Česonienė at the 5th European Horticultural Congress in Bucharest (Romania). Dr. Paulina Martusevičė attended the "BrewExpo America 2024" Conference in Las Vegas (USA) and the "Vermont Lab Week" Conference in Santa Fe (Argentina). Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė participated in the 24th International "BaltPharm Forum 2024" Conference in Pärnu (Estonia) and in the AIS General Assembly in Rijeka (Croatia). Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius attended the international Dahlia competition in the "Parc de Floral" garden in Paris (France), while Dr. Arūnas Balsevičius and Ričardas Narijauskas participated in the international rose competition in Warsaw (Poland). Dr. Nerijus Jurkonis took part in the 8th World Botanic Gardens Congress in Singapore, and Kristina Mulevičienė attended a meeting organised by Chamber UK and the Lithuanian Chamber of Commerce in the UK in London.
- In 2024, VMU Botanical Garden participated in seed exchanges with 319 botanical gardens, arboreta, and other scientific institutions from around the world.
- VMU BS provides a base for various study programme students' internships. In 2024, 1,239 students completed their internships at the Botanical Garden, including 438 university students and 801 students from colleges and vocational education centres.
- In total, in 2024, 239 educational activities were held at VMU Botanical Garden, with 3,664 children participating. During the summer holidays, 2 summer camps were organised, with 46 students participating.
- In 2024, 14 educational programmes were conducted as part of the Cultural Passport's cultural education system. In these educational programmes, 239 children participated in 2024. Four new educational programmes were accredited in 2024: "History Lesson Botanically: Plant Symbols in Heraldry", "World Festivals and Plants: Interesting Symbols and Their Meanings", "Plants in Literature: Readings and Bookmark Making", and "Botanical Garden Plants in Lithuanian Folk Traditions".
- In 2024, 8 educational seminars were organised for adults on topics related to dendrology, floriculture, medicinal plant cultivation, and plant protection. The total number of participants was 137 listeners.
- In 2024, there were 89 volunteer activities based on agreements, 72 students (574 hours) participated in social and civic activities, and 53 employees from other organisations participated in group volunteer activities. A total of 214 people volunteered.
- In 2024, 5 new plant exhibitions were set up, and 8 exhibitions were reconstructed and updated. The Baltic Garden was completed and officially opened. The rose collection was expanded, with 6 new separate rose exhibitions set up, and a new greenhouse for the subtropical rose collection was constructed. Preparatory works for the relocation of the willow field collection of National Plant Genetic Resources to VMU Botanic Garden were completed.
- The High Freda Manor buildings were renovated, and facade restoration works of the warehouse-workshop were completed.



Institute of Foreign Languages



Number of students studying languages



A total number of university students, school students, etc. **5,046**

A number of unclassified students

Unclassified students from the public learned in language groups with students **66**

School students studied languages through non-formal education **88**

VMU staff learned in language groups with students **26**

VMU staff attended English language courses for staff **211**

Pages translated **720**

Hours of interpreting **123**

Pages edited **100**

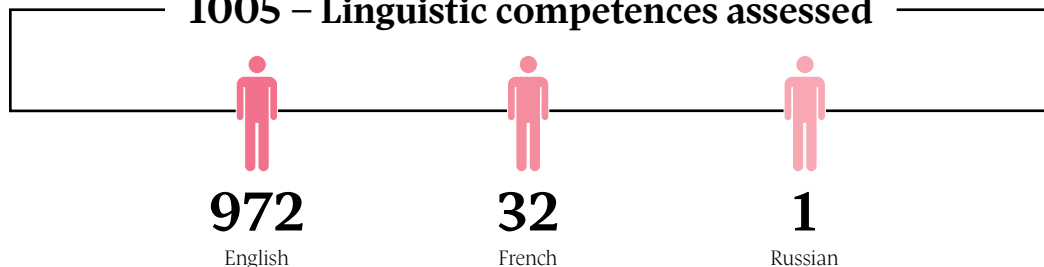
The number of authorial pages of studies or monographs. **18**

Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications **4**

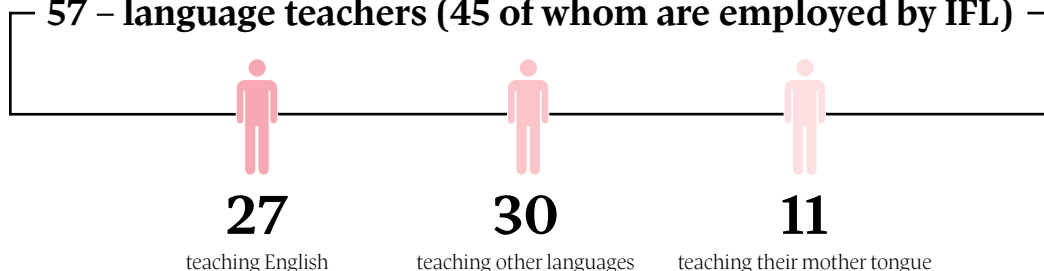
Number of projects **1**

Visiting teachers **12**

1005 – Linguistic competences assessed



57 – language teachers (45 of whom are employed by IFL)



33 languages are offered

Ancient Hebrew

Arabic

Cantonese

Chinese

Croatian

Danish

English

Esperanto

Estonian

Finnish

French

Georgian

German

Italian

Japanese

Kyrgyz

Latvian

Lithuanian Sign

Language

Latin

New Testament Greek

Norwegian

Polish

Portuguese

Romanian

Russian

Serbian

Spanish

Swedish

Turkish

Ukrainian

Director Dr. Teresė Ringailienė

Address K. Donelaičio g. 52, 44244 Kaunas



Key events of 2024

- The 24th and 25th issues of the scientific journal “Sustainable Multilingualism” were published. The journal’s aim is to promote sustainable multilingualism and multiculturalism.
- On 21 February, the Institute of Foreign Languages invited everyone to celebrate Mother Language Day, where international students presented their native languages, and they had the opportunity to learn some Lithuanian words.
- On 8–12 April, a hybrid intensive Erasmus programme (BIP) took place for students, organised by the European Universities Alliance Transform4Europe and VMU Institute of Foreign Languages. The programme involved 30 first cycle students from Bulgaria, Spain, Lithuania, and Slovenia. They got acquainted with different cultures, gained intercultural communication skills, practical research experience, and learned to better understand language usage and cultural norms.
- On 3–7 June, a hybrid intensive programme for teachers, titled “SALT: Strategies advancing language teaching”, took place, with 16 language instructors from Poland, Germany, Ireland, Ukraine, and Lithuania participating. The programme was organised by the European Universities Alliance Transform4Europe and VMU Institute of Foreign Languages. During the event, the teachers of VMU Institute of Foreign Languages shared their experiences in language teaching and innovative teaching methods.
- On April 12, the 3rd Student Language Conference, “Let’s Improve Together: Creating the University of the New Century”, took place. At the same time, it was the first international conference, as students from Bulgaria, Spain, Ukraine, and Belarus participated. The goal of the Conference was to improve language skills, share professional knowledge, and promote multilingualism and multiculturalism.
- In April, the competition for the Prof. Birutė Ciplijauskaitė’s named scholarship was announced. This scholarship is awarded annually to one VMU student who is successfully studying Spanish at VMU. This year, the scholarship was awarded to Paulina Bračkutė, a first-year student of the first cycle programme in International Politics and Development Studies at the Faculty of Political Science and Diplomacy at VMU.
- In 2024, the Institute of Foreign Languages continued the remote series “Language Tasting” meetings, aimed at promoting less common languages. In April, Hindi, Cantonese, Icelandic, and Yoruba were introduced, and in November, Chinese and Taiwanese, Ukish (Ukrainian-Canadian dialect), Cornish, and Uzbek languages were presented.
- On 26 September, the European Day of Languages was traditionally celebrated. Students and high school students attended a lecture by the IFL teacher V. Misevičiūtė titled “From ABC to AI: Improving Languages with Technology”. In the second part of the event, VMU students participated in “Language Exchanges”, while high school students from various schools joined the activity “Multilingual and Multicultural Encounters”.
- On 21 September, the IFL team and international VMU students participated in the “Cultural Garden” festival organised by the Centre for Cultures of Different Nations, which took place for the seventh time in the Presidential Palace garden.
- In the spring semester, a DELF exam session took place, testing 33 candidates. The Institute of Foreign Languages is one of the few centres in Lithuania authorised to conduct this French language exam.
- On September 10th, for the second time, the Dr. V. and S. Čepukėnai honorary scholarship was awarded for promoting and spreading the French language and culture. This year, the scholarship was awarded to Elija Sigita Masalskaitė OSB, a recent graduate of the Faculty of Catholic Theology and a moral education teacher at Zapyškis Secondary School.
- The Camões Portuguese Language Centre and the Institute of Foreign Languages organised an event on November 21, 2024, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Carnation Revolution in Portugal. Journalist Paulo Pena gave a lecture titled “Freedom is Fragile”, and an exhibition of photographs by Portuguese artist Jorge da Silva Horta was opened, featuring authentic shots taken on the day of the Carnation Revolution.
- In October, events titled “Ö kaip vokiškai” were held. VMU students and students from Lithuanian schools participated in the competition “My German Phrase”. German breakfast was organised for A1 and A2 level German language students, and A2 level students attended a lecture by DAAD teachers titled “Deutsch in Deutschland und Österreich”.
- In the autumn semester, an English-Spanish language tandem was held with students from the Don Bosco University of El Salvador.
- The IFL teachers actively communicated and collaborated with various schools and gymnasiums (e.g., S. Darius and S. Girėnas Gymnasium, Ariogala Gymnasium, Ugnė Karvelis Gymnasium, “Rasa” Gymnasium, KTU Vaižgantas Progymnasium, and others): they gave lectures, conducted language awareness events, and organised language games.

Bioeconomy Research Institute

Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	76
Number of ongoing scientific projects	31
Number of new project proposals prepared	59
R&D contracts with businesses and public authorities	14
Research staff (FTE on 31 December)	65

Key events of 2024

- On 1 January 2024, the international “Horizon Europe” project “Promoting Bioeconomy Transformation in the BioEast Region (BOOST4BIOEAST)” was launched. The project implementation period is from 2024 to 2026. The project coordinator is Dr. Rasa Pakeltienė.
- On 20–22 February 2024, junior researcher Dr. Muhammad Ayaz delivered an invited presentation titled “Analysis of Biochar in the Nemoral Climatic Zone: Applications of Mineral Nitrogen Fertilizers for Improving Soil Sustainability and Crop Production” at the International Soil Science Society Conference.
- On 20 June 2024, for significant scientific research on climate change and water ecosystems, as well as active expert involvement, senior researcher Dr. Arvydas Povilaitis was awarded the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences Commemorative Medal.
- On 1 September 2024, the Institute’s academic staff was joined by new researchers. A total of 149 researchers work at the Institute in seven thematic groups and the Bioeconomics Research Excellence Centre.
- A “Horizon Europe” international project “Safe Wheat Cultivation for Sustainable Health: Innovative Sensors and Holistic Spectroscopy for Improving Soil and Plant Health and Wheat Grain Safety (WHEATWATCHER)” was won and started on 1 October 2024. The project’s implementation period is from 2024 to 2028. The project coordinator is Dr. Egidijus Šarauskis.
- Together with VMU Faculty of Law, a “Horizon Europe” project titled “Geothermal Energy Extraction and Application for Industrial Heat Production (GEOfLEXHEAT)” was won and started on 1 October 2024. The project duration is from 2024 to 2027. The project coordinator is Dr. Jurgita Malinauskaitė.
- Together with VMU Faculty of Law, a successful international “Horizon Europe” project titled “Process Innovations in the Minerals Industry, Focusing on Roasting and Calcination Furnace Technologies, Based on New Pre- and Post-Processing Methods (PRIM-ROCK)” was launched on 1 October 2024. The project’s implementation period is from 2024 to 2028. The project coordinator is Dr. Rytis Skominas.
- On 17 October 2024, a Scientific-Practical Conference “Agricultural Sciences for Business: 100 Years of Progress” was organised.



Research Institute of Natural and Technological Sciences

Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	24
Patent registered in Lithuania	1
Number of ongoing scientific projects	21
Number of new project proposals prepared	15
Research staff (FTE on 31 December)	30

Key events of 2024

- The 17th International Scientific Conference “The Vital Nature Sign 2024 (VNS 2024)” was organised on 16–17 May. The chairman of the Conference organising committee is Prof. Audrius Sigitas Maruška, the head of the Instrumental Analysis Open Access Centre.
- On 11–24 June, the 3rd International Doctoral School took place as part of the event for the COST Action CA19110—Plasma Applications for Smart and Sustainable Agriculture (PIAgri). The event was organised as a face-to-face gathering on 11–14 June 2024, at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas, Lithuania. The organiser was Prof. Vida Mildažienė.
- The senior researcher of the Cellular Stress Response Research Group, Dr. Rasa Žukienė, was elected as a member of the Federation of European Biochemical Societies (FEBS) WGI working group.
- The Leader of the Molecular Ecology and Genomics Group, Prof. Algimantas Paulauskas, was elected as a board member of the European Bison Friends Society.
- On 10 April, a patent LT 7061—High-Power Piezoelectric Motor with Control System was registered at the Lithuanian Patent Office. The authors of the patent were the researchers of the Functional Materials Research Group: Piotr Vasiljev, Dalius Mažeika, Andrius Čeponis, Sergejus Borodinas, Regimantas Bareikis, and Arūnas Struckas.

Key projects:

- 2024–2027. No. S-ERA4Health-24-1. “School Community-Level Intervention Programme to Increase the Impact of Physical Activity on Children’s and Adolescents’ Health Equity (CONNECTION)”. Project Manager Dr. Sandra Andrušaitė.
- 2024–2026. EU investments. No. 02-020-K-0027. “Development of a High-Efficiency Odour and Heavy Metal Pollution Neutralizer, Operating Using Catalytic, Adsorption, Chemical Oxidation, and Low-Temperature Plasma Discharge Processes”. Project Manager Prof. Algimantas Paulauskas.
- 2024–2026. No. 02-019-K-0136. “Research and Development of Innovative Label Creation”. Project Manager Prof. Algimantas Paulauskas.
- 2024. No. VDU-S-675. “Research on Vector-Borne Diseases Detection in Moose Calf Groups”. Project Manager Dr. Irma Ražanskė.
- 2024–2026. Innovation Agency. No. 02-019-K-0092. “Development of an Innovative Oral Gel Made from Natural Plant-Based Preparations for Reducing Symptoms of Xerostomia”. Project Manager Prof. Ona Ragažinskienė.
- 2024–2027. RCL researchers’ group project “Enhancing Tumor Radiosensitivity and Immune Response Using Multimodal Treatment Strategies”. Contract No. MIP-129/24. Implementers LUHS and VMU. VMU Leader Dr. P. Ruzgys.
- 2024–2026. LMT Lithuania-Japan Cooperation Programme project S-LJB-24-1 “Molecular Mechanisms Determining the Effects of Seed Treatment with Cold Plasma and Plasma-Activated Water”. Project Manager R. Žukienė.
- 2024–2025. No. S-LU-24-2. Lithuania–Ukraine Programme project “Genetic Control of Pentose Sugars Transmembrane Transport and Metabolism in Ogataea Polymorpha Yeast During Alcoholic Fermentation”. The Leader of the Lithuanian group is R. Daugelavičius.

Director of the Institute Prof. Algimantas Paulauskas

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



Educational Research Institute

Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	2
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	29
Number of ongoing scientific projects	9
Number of new project proposals prepared	11
R&D contracts with businesses and public authorities	1
Research staff (FTE on 31 December)	17

Key events of 2024

- In the Educational Research Institute (ERI), six research groups work on scientific topics, where scientists from foreign countries (the United Kingdom, Germany, Italy, Finland) collaborate with Lithuanian researchers: I. Neuroscience-based learning and health education. The head of the research group is Assoc. Prof. Agnė Brandišauskienė. II. Educational support, inclusion, and well-being. The head of the research group is Prof. Stefanija Ališauskienė. III. Education systems, management, and policy. The head of the research group is Prof. Vidmantas Tūtlys. IV. Modern methodologies of education research and practice. The heads of the research group are Prof. Rūtenis Paulauskas and Prof. Habil. Vilma Žydžiūnaitė. V. Research evidence-based education and higher education research. The heads of the research group are Assoc. Prof. Vaida Jurgilė and Prof. Habil. Vilma Žydžiūnaitė. VI. Educational innovations and change. The head of the research group is Assoc. Prof. Judita Kasperiušienė.
- On 26–28 June, the eighth international summer school was held at VMU, with international participants – doctoral students and researchers—from Australia, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, the United States, Germany, Italy, Poland, Austria, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. This year's international summer school was dedicated to foundational theory (Prof. Antony Bryant, Leeds Beckett University, UK), ethnographic research (Dr. Laura Purdy, Edge Hill University, UK), phenomenography (Dr. Sanela Lazarevski, Leeds Beckett University, UK), integrated phenomenology, and publications based on qualitative research (Prof. Habil. Vilma Žydžiūnaitė). The summer school has already become a scientific tradition, and ETI is recognised as an international centre of expertise in qualitative research methodologies.
- Since 2021, ETI has been a member of the international network Summer School for Doctoral Students, along with other network members: Latvia (Liepaja Academy of Riga Technical University, Ventspils University, Turība University), Lithuania (Vytautas Magnus University, Klaipėda University), Serbia (University of Novi Sad), Czech Republic (Hradec Kralove University), Finland (University of Eastern Finland), Poland (Warsaw University of Life Sciences). On August 21–23, VMU, EA, ETI team, Project Leader Prof. Rūtenis Paulauskas, Prof. Habil. Vilma Žydžiūnaitė, and Lina Šedbarė, took on the leadership responsibility for organising the summer school.
- On 27 March, the event “Dialogue Laboratory 2024” took place. “Teacher’s Profession Prestige 2025: Are We Getting Closer or Further Away?” was organised by VMU, EA, and ERI. The Dialogue Laboratory is an opportunity for practitioners, policymakers, and researchers to come together and share their opinions and experiences through dialogue.
- Since 2023, the ERI began a new scientific methodology competency development activity and continued it in 2024, aiming to contribute to the quality of ongoing research—the cycle of scientific methodology seminars “Methodological Tangles”. Researchers (second cycle students, graduates), doctoral students, scientists, and practitioners were invited to participate in the seminars. Four methodological seminars were conducted.

Director of the Institute prof. Vilma Žydžiūnaitė

Address K. Donelaičio g. 52, 44244 Kaunas



Lithuanian Emigration Institute

Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	33,3
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	3
Number of ongoing scientific projects	2
Number of new project proposals prepared	2
R&D contracts with businesses and public authorities	1
Research staff (FTE on 31 December)	7

Key events of 2024

- Monographs and article collections were published: Asta Petraitytė-Briedienė "Loving Lithuania from Afar". The Consuls General of Lithuania in Chicago, Juzefa and Petras Povilas Daužvardžiai. Monograph. Kaunas: VMU publishing house, 2024. Egidijus Aleksandravičius. "Žaidimas su degtukais". History journalism and social criticism. Vilnius: Tyto alba, 2024.
- An exhibition titled "Lithuanians on the French Riviera: Diplomat Antanas Liutkus' Photographs from 1941–1953" was held at the La Citadelle Museum in Villefranche-sur-Mer, France. This exhibition is part of the Lithuanian Culture Season in France.
- The Lithuanian Emigration Institute became a separate university institute. The LEI council was elected, with Prof. Juozas Skirius becoming the chairman, and new LEI regulations were approved.
- Tomasz Blaszcak won the Lanckoronski family scholarship from Bzezio for an internship in London in 2025.
- International scientific conferences: "Exiled Lives of Stutthof Prisoners" (20 November 2024); international interdisciplinary symposium "Strengthening Intercultural Connections: Assistance and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Lithuania" (28 November 2024). Two international seminars, "Honorary Consuls in the Corners of the Lithuanian World", were also held, dedicated to the memory of Lithuania's honorary consul in Australia, Dr. Algis Kabaila, and Lithuania's honorary consul in Argentina, Algimantas Rastauskas.
- Exhibition catalogues were prepared: "The Lozoraitis—Diplomacy of Hope: A Century for the Sake of the State" (Kaunas, M. K. Čiurlionis National Museum, 2024), catalogue prepared by and texts authored by Dr. Asta Petraitytė-Briedienė; "Equation with Unknowns. Lithuanian Artists in Germany from 1945 to Present", catalogue compiled by and texts authored by Dalia Kuizinienė and Rasa Žukienė (Lithuanian National Art Museum, 2023 [delayed]).
- Two projects of the Research Council of Lithuania were successfully completed: the publication of the scientific journal "OIKOS: Lithuanian Migration and Diaspora Studies", Project No. S-LIP-22-48 (Project Leader Dalia Kuizinienė), and the project "Monograph 'Lithuanian Diplomacy Insights. Consuls Dr. P. P. and J. Daužvardžiai'", Project No. S-LIP-24-30 (Project Leader Asta Petraitytė-Briedienė).
- Several interdisciplinary scientific conferences were held: the Conference "Rebels in the Rebel's Ship", dedicated to the émigré journalist and public figure Liūtas Mockūnas (27 September 2024); the Interdisciplinary Scientific Conference "Lithuanian Diaspora Studies: Expanding Horizons and Future Challenges" (8 November 2024); the Conference "Algirdas Landsbergis: A Journey Between Two Worlds", celebrating the 100th anniversary of writer and journalist Algirdas Landsbergis (29 November 2024); and Vytautas Kavolis workshops (10 December 2024). Scientific seminars were held in memory of writer Liūnė Sutema and artist Vytautas Ignas; in celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Lithuanian Community in the USA, the exhibition "We Build the Lithuanian State Together" was opened; exhibitions such as Laima Vincė's painting exhibition, the Lithuanian Emigration Institute's anniversary exhibition, and others were held; several book presentations and meetings with representatives of the diaspora were also organised.
- A wide range of cultural events were offered to the academic community and the general public, organised and attended by the staff of the Lithuanian Emigration Institute. A large number of public events are organised in collaboration with the President Valdas Adamkus Library-Museum. The year 2024 is dedicated to the Lozoraitis family, and A. Petraitytė-Briedienė participated in various LRT and radio shows, delivering guest lectures at events dedicated to the Lozoraitis anniversary in museums and libraries in Trakai, Vilnius, Kaunas, Marijampolė, Lentvaris, and other cities. Egidijus Aleksandravičius and Dalia Kuizinienė participated in meetings with foreign communities and delivered guest lectures at academic and artistic institutions in Lithuania and abroad. Juozas Skirius, Dainius Genys, Dalia Kuizinienė, Daiva Dapkutė, and Daiva Kristina Kuzmickaitė participated in radio and television programmes and moderated academic and artistic events.



Director of the Institute Prof. Habil. Egidijus Aleksandravičius

Address S. Daukanto g. 25, 44249 Kaunas

Institute of Digital Resources and Interdisciplinary Research

Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	48
Articles in scientific journals indexed in the Scopus database	6
Number of ongoing scientific projects	7
Number of new project proposals prepared	3
R&D contracts with businesses and public authorities	1
Research staff (FTE on 31 December)	4

Key events of 2024

- In 2024, two new projects focused on language technologies were won and initiated, funded by the Economic Recovery and Resilience Plan "New Generation Lithuania" and the state budget of the Republic of Lithuania: "Models of morphologically and syntactically annotated corpora for training (gold standards)" and "Creation of the Great Lithuanian Language Corpus (LIEPA-3)". Together with partners, a public procurement contract was won with the State Digital Solutions Agency (VSSA) to create a Lithuanian language corpus and vectorised language models, and a R&D agreement was signed.
- A project funded by the Research Council of Lithuania in the Educational Research Breakthrough Programme was won, aimed at studying the Lithuanian language of immigrant students. Participation is planned in an international project funded by NordForsk, aimed at the linguistic integration of refugee children and their families.
- The following projects were continued: "Encouraging Citizen Engagement in Vytautas Magnus University Research Campaigns by Creating a Supportive Ecosystem for Using Citizen-Collected Data in Scientific Research (VisDuumUo)" and "Digitalisation, Automation, and Optimisation of Information Delivery Processes and Services to Citizens in the Police Force, Using Artificial Intelligence Technologies (DI.POLIS)".
- The "Horizon 2020" programme project "Transform 4 European Research and Innovation" (T4ERI) and the project funded by the State Commission of the Lithuanian Language (VLKK) titled "Acquisition of Narrative Structures and Grammar" were completed.
- The Research Council of Lithuania has prepared the Lithuanian Research Infrastructure Roadmap, which, along with other initiatives, presents CLARIN-LT—the Consortium of Common Language Resources and Technologies Infrastructure.
- The annual meeting of the national CLARIN-LT consortium members and the CLARIN-LT 10th-anniversary seminar were held.
- The Lithuanian delegation participated and presented papers at the annual CLARIN conference.
- The members of the CLARIN-LT consortium, VMU (coordinator), VU, and MRU, started implementing the LMT-funded project "Plan for Membership in the International Research Infrastructure CLARIN ERIC".
- In August, CLARIN-LT signed a commitment agreement with the international research infrastructure CLARIN ERIC.
- Joint practical seminars by LITAKA and CLARIN-LT were held on the Python programming language and the Lithuanian language automatic morphological analysis and synthesis programme "Morfuoklis". CLARIN was presented to the first cycle students of Mykolas Romeris University.
- The director of the institute participated in the LMT expert group that prepared a legal act supplementing the Science and Studies Law—the Description of the Open Access to Research Results.
- The CLARIN-LT consortium and other SITTI units have moved into new premises at S. Daukanto g. 27.



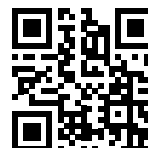
Director of the Institute Prof. Habil. Rūta Petrauskaitė
Address V. Putvinskio g. 23, 44243 Kaunas

Vytautas Kavolis Transdisciplinary Research Institute

Number of author's sheets of monographs or studies	67
Number of research articles in CA WoS and/or Scopus referenced publications	23
Number of ongoing scientific projects	15
Number of new project proposals prepared	60
R&D contracts with businesses and public authorities	13
Research staff (FTE on 31 December)	34

Key events of 2024

- The Lithuanian Research Infrastructure Roadmap includes four Social Science Data Infrastructures (MTI), with the main coordinator or partner rights held by: the Fertility and Family Study MTI (GGP LT) (Prof. Aušra Maslauskaitė), the Lithuanian Longitudinal Social Study MTI (LIST), the European Health, Ageing, and Retirement Study MTI (SHARE Lithuania) (Dr. Inga Gaižauskaitė), and the European Social Survey MTI (EST LT) (Assoc. Prof. Aurelija Stelmokienė).
- A European Horizon acceleration project titled "Development of V. Kavolis Transdisciplinary Research Institute Networking Roadmap for Strengthening Research Directions and Accelerating Participation in European Horizon Programme Calls" was won and is being implemented. The project is funded by the European Union—NextGenerationEU, contract No. 10-038-T-0145 (Project Manager Prof. Renata Legenzova).
- Together with the consortium of Lithuanian universities, the SHARE ERIC aging research infrastructure project was initiated (Project Manager Dr. Inga Gaižauskaitė), with Vilnius University as the leading partner, and Vytautas Magnus University (VMU), Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), and the Lithuanian Social Research Center (LSTC) participating. Researcher Dr. M. Morkevičiūtė was awarded the LMA Young Researchers' Scholarship and the LMA Young Researchers and Doctoral Students' Research Competition Prize.
- Historian Dr. Liudas Glemža was awarded Kaunas Science Prize for his long-term research.
- Prof. Anna Sylwia Czyż was awarded the bronze medal "Gloria Artis" by the Polish Ministry of Culture.
- Institute's researchers, Prof. Renata Legenzova and Assoc. Prof. Asta Gaigalienė, were appointed as associate members of the 2024–2028 Public Financial Education Action Plan Coordination and Monitoring Council, where they will contribute to shaping and implementing the key financial education goals of Lithuania.
- Three research group projects funded by the Research Council of Lithuania (LMT) were launched, led by scientists from V. Kavolis Institute: "Evaluation of the Impact of Socialisation on the Financial Resilience of Young Small Businesses" (Project Leader Prof. Renata Legenzova) (EUR 199,990.21), "Discursive Practices of Religion Politicisation and Politics Religiosity in Contemporary Lithuania" (Project Leader Prof. Milda Ališauskienė) (EUR 198,965.08), and "Kaunas St. Cross Church: a Mission, Parish, Barefoot Carmelites. Heritage and Historical Research" (Project Leader Dr. Aušra Vasiliauskienė) (EUR 177,916.43).
- The H2020 Marie Curie Staff Exchange programme project No. ORCA-101182752-GAP-101182752 "Open(ing) Research in Central Asia: Consolidating a Culture of Research Ethics, Data Management, and Open Science in Eurasia and beyond" was won, with a total budget of EUR 1.6 million. VMU part is led by Dr. Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė.
- The project "Baltic Harmony: Building a Gendered Violence-Free Educational Environment" (BalHar) (CERV-2024-DAPHNE) funded by the European Commission Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers was won, with a total budget of EUR 1,885,219.3. The project is led by VMU, with Prof. Milda Ališauskienė as the Project Leader.
- The "Horizon2020" RIA programme project "WHAT-IF: Advanced Simulations for Testing the Effect of the Information Environment on the Functioning of Democracy" was won, with a total budget of 3.2 million EUR. VMU part of the project is led by Prof. Aukšė Balčytienė.
- Three postdoctoral fellowships were awarded under the LMT competitive programme: Dr. D. Stumbrienė (supervised by Prof. D. Jasilionis), Dr. Aistė Bimbirytė (supervised by Assoc. Prof. A. Vasiliauskienė), and Dr. Deimantė Krisiukėnienė (supervised by Assoc. Prof. A. Gaigalienė).
- Four international scientific events took place: "Monastic Life in Lithuania: History and Perspectives", "Considering History, Understanding Memory", the Baltic Demographers Conference "Population Studies and Data in the Three Baltic Countries: Current Situation, Challenges, and Prospects", and the international seminar "Disciplines and Their Boundaries" in collaboration with researchers from the University of Helsinki's Institute of Social and Human Sciences.
- An exhibition titled "Pacai. Lilies in the Garden of History" was opened at the Royal Palace in Vilnius on October 29, 2024, and will run until January 26, 2025. The main curator is Prof. Anna Sylwia Czyż.
- Vytautas Kavolis Institute for Transdisciplinary Studies invited members of the public and the academic community to a public lecture and meeting with Kaunas city historian Dr. Remigijus Civinskas titled "In the 19th Century Kaunas Historian's Research Workshop: Kaunas Citizens of Adam Mickiewicz's Time. About Kaunas History Over Coffee".



Director of the Institute Assoc. Prof. Jurga Bučaitė-Vilkė

Address Jonavos g. 66, 44191, Kaunas



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