

The Internal System of Quality Assurance

1. Policy and Procedures of Quality Assurance

LCC International University has an institutional culture where the importance of quality assurance is recognized. The University has developed and implemented a continuous quality improvement strategy and a unique internal quality management system which is based on high academic standards and principles of integrity and transparency.

The University's culture of quality assurance is based on the institutional mission and values in coherence with Lithuanian and North American requirements, and the *Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area*.

The institutional strategy, policy, and procedures provide the framework for quality of programs, assessment, teaching and research, student support, and institutional research. All the policies are available for the constituencies on the LCC website www.lcc.lt or on internal network drives.

Guiding Principles of Quality Assurance

- Quality assurance is guided by developing and applying internal institutional policies and procedures in accordance with national and international standards.
- Quality assurance is a continuous process.
- The responsibility for the quality assurance and improvement process involves the Board of Directors, administration, faculty, students, alumni and external stakeholders.
- The alignment of external and internal quality assurance is pursued.
- The procedures of quality assurance are transparent and ethical.

Management of Quality Assurance

The Board of Directors approves institutional identity, mission and vision, and the strategic plan, thereby providing the framework within which quality assurance is managed.

President's Cabinet is responsible for the management of quality assurance. This oversight responsibility covers all areas of the institution, including curricular and co-curricular programs, preparation of students, human resource management, marketing and admissions, and financial/learning resource management. The decisions are data-driven and reflect the institutional key performance indicators. The measures for improvement are chosen on the basis of relevance and compliance with institutional mission, market needs and sustainability.

2. Program Review and Monitoring

All study programs are accredited and meet the professional standards set by the Ministry of Education of Lithuania.

- Monitoring of academic quality involves students, administrators, faculty and social partners.
- The decision-making process for program development and review is described in the table below.
- The cyclical approach to program review and monitoring is based on the frequency needed.

Academic Decision-Making Guidelines

DECISION-MAKERS	Program Development / Review	Module Development / Review	Course Development / Review	Syllabus Development / Review	Academic Policy Development / Review	Budget Allocation
Individual Instructor	x	x	Can initiate	Can initiate, or may be asked to initiate	x	x
Department	x	Design module as a team	Provide feedback and consent	Provide feedback	May propose new/ revised policy	May propose recommendations
Department Chair	x	Leads module design process with department	Must approve and send to Acad. Division	Final approval	May propose new/ revised policy to Acad. Division	Participates in budget allocation through Acad. Div. Leadership
Academic Division Leadership Team	May recommend new program	Recommends to Acad. Council	Must approve and send to AVP	x	Provides cross-departmental feedback + wording, and send to Acad. Council	Recommends budget allocation to Academic VP

Academic Council	Must approve and send to AVP	Must approve and send to AVP	x	x	Final approval	Participates in approval through Chair's role on Pres. Cabinet and Board
Academic Vice President	Takes program to President's Cabinet for information	Final approval	Final approval	x	Takes approved policy to President's Cabinet for information	Recommends budget allocation to Pres. Cabinet
President's Cabinet	Must send to Board of Directors for approval	x	x	x	Receives policy as information Final approval of policy that affects multiple divisions	Recommends annual budget allocation driven by strategic plan
Board of Directors	Final approval of new programs	x	x	x	Sets mission and vision, and hiring expectations	Final approval of overall budget

3. Assessment of Students

LCC International University believes strongly in reliable and transparent assessment measures. These measures indicate students' movement toward the established learning outcomes of each course and each program, and ensure successful completion of the requirements for graduation.

LCC believes strongly in the value of multiple assessments as a means of measuring academic progress as well as successful course completion.

LCC uses a variety of assessment methods. No single grade within a course should be worth more than 30% (out of 100%) of the final course grade.

<u>Diagnostic Assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TOEFL (as part of the Admissions process) • Placement test within the Intensive English Program • Placement test for Lithuanian language abilities 	<u>Summative Course Assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final exams in every class • Portfolios in practicum courses
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placement test for computer proficiency 	
<u>Formative Assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In-class oral presentations • Response papers • Article summaries • Annotated bibliographies • Regular tests and quizzes throughout the course • Research papers • Group projects 	<u>Summative Program Assessment</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thesis • Business Plan <p>The summative program assessments are conducted by multiple examiners.</p>

Students are informed about the assessment procedures through the course syllabi, and through the institutional grading system which is easily accessible virtually or/and by hardcopies

(http://www.lcc.lt/uploads/academics/LCC_Catalog_15-16_BA.pdf;

http://www.lcc.lt/uploads/academics/LCC_Catalog_15-16_MA.pdf

<http://www.lcc.lt/uploads/studentlife/student-handbook-15-16.pdf>

e-learning portal Moodle, Student Handbook, Faculty Handbook, etc.)

Additional policies related to student assessment can be found in the LCC Catalog:

- Incomplete grades
- Grade point average (GPA) calculation
- Mid-semester grade report
- Grading rubric
- Academic good standing
- Final course examinations
- Grade appeal process

Academic Integrity Standards - LCC strongly supports academic integrity throughout the entire learning process. The standards can be found in the Student Handbook

(<http://www.lcc.lt/student-handbook>), the LCC Catalog

(http://www.lcc.lt/uploads/academics/LCC_Catalog_15-16_BA.pdf), and the Faculty Handbook

(available on internal drives).

Committee on Academic Standing (CAS): CAS brings Academic and Student Life discipline and student support procedures together. This committee is comprised of the Vice Presidents for Academics and Student Life, an Associate Dean, the Director of Community Life, Faculty Representative and Student Council Representative. This committee functions as an information sharing, policy development and decision-making body.

Students unable to honour the community expectations and regulations may be subject to Academic or Student Life action. CAS takes action on issues involving academic good standing as well as community expectations. These CAS decisions can result in probation, suspension, or dismissal.

4. Quality Assurance of Teaching Staff

Hiring – LCC teaching staff is hired according to the requirements of accreditation, and in keeping with the mission and vision of LCC.

- All vacant positions are posted on the LCC website (<http://www.lcc.lt/faculty-staff-opportunities>), and are advertised through various appropriate publications.
- Degree requirements and preferred experience are indicated in each vacancy.
- The hiring process is led by the Human Resources Division, in coordination with the appropriate Vice President, and with final approval of all new employment by the President.

Expectations – Expectations for teaching staff are outlined clearly in the Faculty Handbook, and are reviewed with each new employee upon arrival.

Professional Development – Funding priorities for professional development are determined at the department level. The overall strategy for professional development is overseen by the Office of the Associate Dean for Faculty Development. Policies (such as the sabbatical policy) are developed with the approval of the Academic Council.

Performance Review – Evaluation of the LCC teaching staff is coordinated through the Offices of the Human Resources Vice President and the Academic Vice President. Evaluation includes semester course evaluations by students, annual peer review and department chair review.

The procedures for employment, evaluation, and termination are described in the Faculty Handbook, and the Department Chair's Handbook.

5. Learning Resources / Student Support

To assure academic quality the University has a commitment to provide appropriate resources for studies. The academic space is equipped with new technology including classrooms, library, faculty offices, residential facilities and open spaces for learning. All the resources are designed upon the needs of users and easily accessible (e.g. wireless campus, e-learning platform, etc.). More details are available in <http://www.lcc.lt/campus-facilities>.

The University provides support service for students. An academic advising system is established for all students for the purpose of developing their study plan and helping shape their future career options. Faculty load includes regular office hours to work with students individually. Students have opportunities to apply for financial aid or other financial support if the tuition is an obstacle. In addition, counseling services for students is provided if they have special concerns. When the concerns are of a severe nature, the counselor connects with the appropriate professionals.

These support services for students are described in more detail in <http://www.lcc.lt/bachelors-financing-planning>; <http://www.lcc.lt/student-life-services>.

6. Information Systems

The University, through the Office of Institutional Research, engages in ongoing institutional research which is based on feedback/surveys from all constituencies and analysis of performance. There are certain KPI definitions upon which the University evaluates its programs and goals, and upon which data-driven decisions are made.

SURVEY	REGULAR SCHEDULE
Freshman Survey	Each year – in August
Enrolled Student Survey	Every other year
Senior Survey	Each year – the day before graduation
Alumni Survey	Every other year – new format under development
Annual Alumni Survey	Every year – 7 months after graduation
Prospective Student Survey	Every other year – in summer
Staff Survey	To be determined
Course Evaluations	Each course – each semester
Stakeholders' Survey	Available on our website

Key Performance Indicators – LCC produces an annual dashboard of KPIs for the Board of Directors. These KPIs are driven by the goals of the strategic plan, and are monitored as part of the self-evaluation process. The 2012-2017 strategic plan goals fall into these categories:

- Quality assurance
- Degree programs
- Non-degree programs
- Personnel
- Financial sustainability
- Stakeholder relations

An abbreviated analysis of KPIs is available in the Annual Report, and is used by the Board of Directors and President's Cabinet to inform ongoing decision-making.

7. Public Information

LCC International University is committed to transparent information for the public, and takes responsibility for the accuracy of all published data and information.

LCC sends information about all programs and qualifications to the Lithuanian Ministry of Education website (<http://www.aikos.smm.lt/aikos/index.htm>).

The LCC website (www.lcc.lt) includes the following:

- LCC Registrar's office information <http://www.lcc.lt/registrar>

- Academic calendar <http://www.lcc.lt/academic-calendar>
- Academic catalogs by academic year:
 - BA http://www.lcc.lt/uploads/academics/LCC_Catalog_15-16_BA.pdf
 - MA http://www.lcc.lt/uploads/academics/LCC_Catalog_15-16_MA.pdf
- Description of Study programs <http://www.lcc.lt/programs-of-study>
- Course Schedule <http://www.lcc.lt/registrar-course-schedule>
- Annual alumni employment trends are accessible on the website (<http://www.lcc.lt/alumni-statistics>).

LCC maintains internal working documents on the shared drives, accessible for all campus community. This allows for convenience as well as accuracy of documentation.

SUMMARY OF QUALITY ASSURANCE DOCUMENTATION – This table provides a quick reference to the various institutional documents that contribute to the quality assurance of the university programs and structures.

DOCUMENT	QUALITY ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES	AVAILABILITY/OWNER	UPDATES
Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Admissions • Tuition/Financial Aid • Program/Course Descriptions • Academic Policies • Assessment • Attendance • Academic Integrity • Graduation requirements 	LCC website: http://www.lcc.lt/registrar Owner: Registrar's Office	By September 1 each year
Faculty Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faculty Governance • Org Chart • Workload • Evaluation • Professional expectations • Syllabus template 	Hardcopy provided to each new faculty member LCC Network Drive: Official/Dept. Academics/Faculty Handbook Owner: Academic Vice President's Office	By August 15 each year
Student Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic calendar • Org chart of institution • Campus guide • Behavioral policies • Academic policies 	Hardcopy available each year for a small fee (free to first year students) LCC website: http://www.lcc.lt/student-handbook	By August 1 each year

		Owner: Student Life Vice President's Office	
Academic Council Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and approval of academic programs, modules, and courses Quality assessment of current programs Assessment 	LCC Network Drive: Faculty/Academic Council/ Minutes Owner: Academic Council	As needed
Personnel Policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employment Termination Benefits Performance review 	LCC Network Drive: Official/Dept. HR/Policies and Procedures Owner: HR Vice President's Office	As needed
Department Chair Handbook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsibilities Budget oversight Academic Procedures Graduation involvement Study Abroad Professional Development allocation 	Hardcopy and email to each Department Chair Owner: Academic Vice President's Office	By August 15 each year
Institutional Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surveys KPIs 	LCC Network Drive: Official/Key Performance Indicators Owner: President's Cabinet	By September 15 annually
Academic Division Minutes	Review and assessment of current academic issues	LCC Network Drive: Official/Dept. Academic/Academic Division Meeting Minutes Owner: Academic Vice President's Office	Biweekly
Institutional Review Board	To ensure the integrity and accurate procedures of all research involving human subjects	LCC Network Drive: Official/IRB Owner: Academic Vice President's Office	As needed
President's Cabinet Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of everyday management Annual budget development Strategic Planning implementation 	LCC Network Drive: Official/President's Cabinet/Minutes Owner: President's Office	Weekly

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy approval and regular review 		
CAS (committee for academic standing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of academic good standing procedures 	Confidential: located on hard drives of individual committee members	As needed

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