

APPROVED

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the Lithuanian University of Health Sciences
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LITHUANIAN UNIVERSITY OF HEALTH SCIENCES DIDACTIC CONCEPT

INTRODUCTION

The Lithuanian University of Health Sciences (hereinafter referred to as the University), guided by its vision of being a leading European university of health sciences committed to the prosperity of society, its mission to educate and develop creative, ethical, proactive, educated, healthy and independent individuals, and its core values of respect for life, community, academic excellence, openness, professionalism and justice, hereby adopts this Didactic Concept. The purpose of this Concept is to establish the fundamental principles and methods underpinning the organisation and delivery of teaching and learning, the development of teaching staff competencies, and the respective roles of teaching staff and students in the study process. This Didactic Concept shall apply to all undergraduate and postgraduate study programmes offered by the University.

CHAPTER I

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR THE ORGANISATION AND DELIVERY OF STUDIES

In order to create favourable conditions for effective learning, promote the implementation of innovative teaching methods, contribute to the continuous enhancement of the quality of higher education, and support the personal and professional development of students and teaching staff, the following fundamental principles for the organisation and delivery of studies are established, having regard to the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, the Bologna Declaration The European Higher Education Area, the European Framework for the Digital Competence of Educators, and other relevant documents.

1. **Student-centred studies:** active student engagement in the teaching and learning process and the development of independent learning are encouraged. A variety of teaching and learning methods (e.g. simulations, problem-based learning, case analysis, discussions, small-group work) are used to promote active student participation and motivation and to develop critical thinking and practical skills. Study subject descriptions shall specify the methods used to ensure the student's active role in the study process.
2. **Unity of research, studies and practice:** the study process is based on the latest scientific advances and is inseparable from practical application. The integration of these three areas creates the conditions for preparing professionals who can think critically, solve problems and adapt to the constantly changing needs of the labour market and society. From the early stages of their studies, students are involved in research, scientific and applied activities, clinical and public health projects – thereby fostering the principles of a continuously learning health system at the University and its clinical bases.
3. **Patient safety is a priority of the study process.** It is ensured that all teaching and learning activities and practical activities are based on the highest standards of ethics and professional

- responsibility. Patient safety is ensured by clearly defining students' roles in clinical practice, levels of supervision and the use of simulation before undertaking practice in real-life settings.
4. **Studies based on progressive competency development:** studies are based on progressive competencies that the learner must acquire through sequential study throughout all years of the study programme and, upon completion of the studies, be fully prepared for independent professional practice corresponding to the professional qualification acquired/awarded.
 5. **Interdisciplinarity of studies:** study programmes are delivered by integrating knowledge, abilities and skills from different fields of science (e.g. interprofessional education). The disciplines offered (simulation and real-life practice subjects) provide opportunities for students from different programmes to learn together. The University provides students with the opportunity to study university-wide and inter-university elective subjects aimed at developing general competences and enabling students from different years and programmes to learn together.
 6. **Internationalisation of studies:** the University promotes international and intercultural cooperation by providing opportunities for staff and student mobility, learning in mixed groups and the exchange of good practice in university didactics, as well as joint and double-degree programmes with universities in other countries.
 7. **Individualisation of studies:** the individualisation of studies is based on the diversity of students and their needs, based on which individual study plans are developed where necessary. During their studies, students are provided with the opportunity to choose topics for assignments, coursework and final theses. Alternative assessment methods are applied, and competences acquired through non-formal learning, micro-credential programmes or self-directed learning are assessed and recognised.
 8. **Lifelong learning:** the University adopts a flexible and learner-centred approach that reflects national priorities and the priorities of the Bologna Declaration the European Higher Education Area. Lifelong learning is promoted at the University through postgraduate professional training, general competence development training, micro-credential programmes, and the recognition of competences acquired through non-formal learning and self-directed learning.

CHAPTER II

TEACHING AND LEARNING CONTENT AND ORGANISATION

9. **Evidence-based studies:** at the University, study content, teaching methods and assessment are based on scientific evidence and are regularly updated and reviewed considering scientific advances. The University uses active teaching and learning methods that promote critical, evidence-based thinking. From the first years of their studies, students are taught to apply research methods, formulate hypotheses, collect and analyse data, and interpret results, and are encouraged to participate in the activities of research groups and scientific events.
10. **Practice-based studies:** the University ensures the early integration of students into practical activities by introducing them to animal and human healthcare systems, technologies and clinical environments.
11. **Integrated teaching and learning content:** study content is developed by combining different topics into a coherent whole, thereby developing systematic and holistic thinking skills, providing a broader context and demonstrating interrelationships. Study programmes

are designed by planning learning outcomes both horizontally and vertically, ensuring coherence and continuity between the subjects taught.

12. **Integration of technology into studies:** the University uses digital tools, virtual learning environments and interactive platforms. The implementation of digital tools and methods in the study process is encouraged to modernise teaching and learning and enhance its accessibility and effectiveness. The University encourages the use of artificial intelligence in studies and in the study planning process, in compliance with the requirements of academic integrity, data protection and patient safety, and subject to regulation by relevant internal documents.
13. **Distance and face-to-face modes of study:** the specific nature of the University's study programmes means that, to ensure the quality of studies, studies are delivered through direct interaction between teaching staff and students in classrooms, laboratories and practical training settings. Distance learning is applied only where, and in those study programmes where, it enables students to achieve the intended learning outcomes, skills and competences.

CHAPTER III

ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT AND FEEDBACK

14. **Integration of formal and non-formal assessment:** the University uses both formal assessments, in which a student's achievement is awarded a grade, and non-formal assessment, during which the teaching staff member provides the student with feedback on the strengths and areas for improvement in their learning and/or practical activities.
15. **Purpose of achievement assessment and its alignment with teaching and learning content:** the assessment strategy for learning achievements is communicated to students in advance, described in the study subject (module) descriptions, and aligned with the aims, content and intended outcomes of teaching and learning, i.e. based on the principle: “I teach what I assess, and I assess what I teach”.
16. **Use of formative assessment:** considering the intended outcomes, the teaching staff member applies an appropriate type of assessment. A cumulative grading system (summative assessment) is used in many of the University's study programmes; however, formative assessment is also used to continuously monitor and critically evaluate learning and adjust the learning process, accordingly, thereby providing learners with a deeper understanding of their learning.
17. **360-degree assessment:** standardised assessment of achievements may be carried out by a teaching staff member, the student (self-assessment), or other members of the team (e.g. mentors, other healthcare professionals and administrators), thereby ensuring 360-degree assessment. Involving multiple assessors makes the assessment more comprehensive and reduces the impact of subjectivity.
18. **Variety of assessment methods:** considering the intended learning outcomes, the most appropriate method shall be selected to assess each learning outcome. The University uses a variety of assessment methods, e.g. tests, case analysis, objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), portfolio, projects, research reports, essays, simulation-based assessment, oral presentations, etc.
19. **Constructive feedback during learning and following achievement assessment:** feedback provided to students shall be clear and concise, and vague or general statements that are

difficult to interpret shall be avoided. Feedback shall identify the strengths and weaknesses of the student's work, thereby encouraging students to develop their ability to deepen their knowledge independently. Two-way communication is encouraged when providing feedback, allowing students to review the comments provided and their work. Teaching staff are trained in providing feedback (through didactic training) to ensure its quality and consistency across the University.

20. **Use of feedback to improve the quality of studies:** feedback from students, teaching staff and social partners (surveys, the Study Quality Thermometer, focus groups and the views of social partners) is systematically used at the University to improve the quality of studies, including through the enhancement of study subjects. Feedback is considered by study programme committees and study and research commissions, and an analysis of feedback and the changes implemented is conducted and published annually.
21. **Principles of assessment of learning outcomes:** the assessment of learning achievements shall be based on the principles of validity (assessment is linked to the intended learning outcomes of the study programme, study subject, module or cycle), reliability (the assessment information and results obtained shall be objective and independent of the assessor), clarity (the assessment system shall be informative and comprehensible to both assessors and those being assessed), usefulness (assessment shall support those being assessed in achieving the aims and intended learning outcomes of the study programme), impartiality (the assessment methods used shall be equally appropriate for all those being assessed), and transparency (assessment shall be based on publicly available criteria, and the results of individual assessments and explanations thereof shall be accessible to those being assessed).
22. **Use of open educational resources:** teaching staff and students are encouraged to use and create open educational resources in accordance with copyright and data protection requirements, thereby increasing the accessibility and innovativeness of teaching materials.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEACHING STAFF

23. **Teaching staff as mentors and guides:** in implementing the principle of student-centred studies, a teaching staff member acts as a facilitator of teaching and learning – a mentor, consultant and learning facilitator who responds flexibly to changing circumstances and applies a variety of teaching, learning and assessment methods according to the intended programme outcomes, students' needs, expectations and experience. Relationships between teaching staff and students shall be based on the principles of mutual integrity, trust, cooperation and respect for the individual.
24. **Teaching staff didactic activities:** the activities of teaching staff are not incidental but are planned and reflected upon throughout the teaching and learning process. The didactic activities of teaching staff ensure the successful delivery of studies. The didactic activities of teaching staff comprise several components:
 - 24.1. **teaching planning:** consideration is given to the aims of teaching; how the identified aims will be achieved; what materials will be used; what teaching and learning methods and forms of instruction will be employed; what tools will be developed; what tasks need to be prepared; how assessment will be conducted; what forms and methods of teaching will be used; how feedback will be provided following achievement assessment; how it will be

- determined whether the subject has been successfully delivered (student achievement assessment results, student feedback); efforts are made to ensure that the teaching and learning process promotes student independence while providing the necessary academic support;
- 24.2. implementation of teaching: the planned activities are carried out;
 - 24.3. self-assessment: consideration is given to whether everything was implemented as planned; what challenges arose; what was done well and what could be improved; what the student achievement results indicate; and what students' views of the subject are;
 - 24.4. improvement of teaching: changes are implemented in preparation for a new teaching and learning cycle, and consideration is given to whether the necessary adjustments can be made independently or whether assistance is required.
25. **Teaching staff didactic competences** comprise the knowledge, skills and abilities of teaching staff to plan, organise and deliver the teaching and learning and assessment processes, provide and receive feedback, and achieve the intended learning outcomes, taking into account the diversity and expectations of students, providing them with support and encouraging their engagement in the teaching and learning process.
26. **Development of teaching staff competences** – the University places continuous and ongoing emphasis on the development of teaching staff competences. Competence development is organised considering annual surveys of teaching staff, the needs of academic units, student feedback, the University's strategic priorities, as well as individual needs at the level of units delivering studies. The University offers new teaching staff a programme for the development of didactic competences for novice teaching staff and active mentoring, involving experienced University teaching staff and international experts.
27. **Support for teaching staff** – the University systematically provides teaching staff with methodological, technological and psychological support in planning, delivering and assessing the study process, promotes the sharing of good practice in clinical and practical activities between faculties and the provision of feedback.
28. **Assessment of teaching staff didactic competences** is necessary to support the successful professional development of teaching staff and improve the quality of studies. This assessment is carried out using different data sources, methods and scopes:
- 28.1. student feedback;
 - 28.2. peer assessment (e.g. through observation of a lecture or other form of teaching);
 - 28.3. teaching staff portfolio (self-reflection on teaching activities during annual appraisal meetings);
 - 28.4. monitoring of students' learning outcomes;
 - 28.5. development of didactic competences.

CHAPTER V

STUDENT WELL-BEING AND ROLE IN THE STUDY PROCESS

29. **Inclusive teaching and learning:** the University recognises, values and takes into account the needs of all students, regardless of their background, gender, age, health, religion, language, socio-economic status, disability or other characteristics, and ensures equal opportunities to participate in the study process by creating an engaging teaching and learning

- environment and providing opportunities for each student to achieve their learning objectives (e.g. extended examination time, adapted teaching materials, etc.).
30. **The student as an active participant in the study process:** the student assumes responsibility for their own learning and complies with the principles of academic integrity. The University encourages all students to participate in study quality evaluation processes and provide feedback. Students are involved in the improvement of study programmes through the Students' Representation and other organisations, as well as through participation in the activities of study programme committees, commissions, the Rectorate and the Senate.
 31. **Promoting active and honest learning:** the University promotes students' integrity, independence, responsibility, self-reflection and critical thinking, active participation in practical work and research activities, and initiative in matters concerning patient and public health, based on the principles of civic responsibility.
 32. **Non-formal competence development:** the University provides students with opportunities to develop additional competences and acquire knowledge according to their interests and needs by implementing student competence development initiatives and offering informational and training events in various formats and on a range of topics.

CHAPTER VI

FINAL PROVISIONS

33. All members of the University's academic community shall be responsible for the implementation of the Didactic Concept.
34. The University's Didactic Concept shall be reviewed at least once every 5 years and may be amended by resolution of the University Senate.