



ERASMUS+ project of Capacity Building in Higher Education
Internal quality assurance system for agriculture and
biosystem engineering related HEI of Algeria

QUALS

Partnership and mobility

Raimundas Rukuiža,
VMU-AA ERASMUS coordinator
QUALS coordinator
International Cooperation Department
Vytautas Magnus University



Online Training (2nd session)
Implementation of Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)
2021.04.01

QUALS – Partnership and mobility



- Basics and aims of ECTS
- Improvement of student mobility
- Preparation of student to be good candidate
- Mobility management: how to make the university attractive for international mobility (students, teachers, staff, etc.)



Basics and aims of ECTS

ECTS (**European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System**) was instituted in 1989, within the Erasmus programme, as a way of transferring credits that students earned during their studies abroad into credits that counted towards their degree, on their return to studying in their home institution.

The **Lisbon Recognition Convention**, signed on 11 April 1997, stipulated that degrees and periods of study must be recognised unless substantial differences can be proved by the institution that is charged with recognition. The **Bologna declaration**, signed by education ministers from 29 European countries in 1999 proposed a **European Higher Education Area** in which students and graduates could move freely between countries, using prior qualifications in one country as acceptable entry requirements for further study in another. That was the basics for implementation of ECTS in European countries.

ECTS helps in the design, description and delivery of programmes, makes it possible to **integrate different types of learning** in a lifelong learning perspective, and **facilitates the mobility of students** by easing the process of recognising qualifications and periods of study. ECTS can be applied to all programmes, whatever the mode of delivery (classroom-based, work-based, distance learning) or the status of students (full-time, part-time), and to all kinds of learning contexts (formal, non-formal and informal).



Basics and aims of ECTS

Implementation of ECTS is strongly related to the use of study credits for the evaluation of study volume.

- **Study programmes** are practical directions on studies in certain years and semesters, on development of yearly individual plans of studies, on formation of the chosen specialisation. The study programme indicate the sets of compulsory, alternative and elective courses (modules) every semester, their volumes and rules and recommendations on selection.
- **Courses** are independent subjects or its part, which is taught one semester. Studies of every course are completed by evaluation.
- **Credit** – a unit of the volume of the course. One credit is equal to 27 hours of student's learning work, i.e. working week of a student. Credit – time for lectures and independent work.
- **Volume of studies.** In the programs of studies academic year consist of two semesters. Duration of one semester examinations included - 20 weeks. This means that the volume of studies of one semester – 30 credits. Total volume of 4 years Bachelor studies – at least 240 credits, that of Master student – 120 credits.

The ECTS Users' Guide offers guidelines for ECTS implementing:

http://www.ehea.info/media.ehea.info/file/ECTS_Guide/00/0/ects-users-guide-2015_614000.pdf



Improvement of student mobility

Improvement of student mobility is based on ensuring of quality in mobility. There are several quality principles for mobility, which constitutes a tool for improvement of quality in learning mobility:

- The mobility project should have **clear learning objectives** and these are known to all actors including participants. These objectives (study, practical training, degree) are negotiated and developed together with participants and all other actors in the hosting and sending environments.
- The mobility project fits to the **needs of the organisations**. Different stakeholders of the university, including management and staff, should support the mobility project. It is an opportunity for professional and strategic development and provides added value.
- The **type of learning mobility is adapted** to the profile of the participants and the learning objectives. The mobility should pass the basis of available resources. The chosen type of learning mobility should help the participants to reach the learning objectives.
- The **indicators** (related to organisation, aims realisation, time frame etc.) should be formulated for assessing outcomes collaboratively with participants. Before the activity, the organisers and participants define and further monitor together how they will assess whether the project is successful.



Improvement of student mobility

- **Information about the project** and conditions for involvement are clear before participants decide to participate. The organisers inform candidates and participants well in advance about the project. Information is communicated through channels appropriate to the nature and needs of the specific target groups.
- If there is **selection**, the criteria and procedures are **transparent**. The selection procedures are adapted to the type of mobility. The selection criteria are precise and clear to all involved in the selection, including those applying. The criteria are used objectively to select the most suitable participants for the project. Unsuccessful applicants receive clear feedback on why they were not selected.
- **Collecting the needs** of participants to create an inclusive environment. The organisers take participants' needs into account to secure suitable conditions and appropriate environments for all participants.
- The **resources are adequate** to reach the objectives and cater for the needs of participants. There is a realistic match between the human, physical and financial resources, the time frame available, the activities, the needs of participants and the objectives.



Improvement of student mobility

- The **programme is prepared** well in advance together with all actors. It should fit the hosting environment can offer. All actors share expectations and agree well in advance how they will implement the project.
- Participants interact with the **diverse cultures** involved in the project, and in the hosting environments. The project should stimulate the intercultural learning process and allows participants to challenge stereotypes and prejudices. The duration and intensity of interaction is adapted to the target group.
- Actors in the project **co-operate in a positive partnership**. Both the sending and the hosting partners are committed to a collaborative approach to ensure participants' learning. They communicate transparently, share responsibilities, agree on a process on how to change things. They are willing to compromise in the interests of the participants.
- **Arrangement of practicalities** well in advance and inform participants about them in a timely manner. The organisers take care of practicalities, such as travel, accommodation, social security and insurance, migration and visa, costs of living, and inform participants well before departure.



Improvement of student mobility

- Participants receive **adequate preparation**. The staff involved in the project also go through a preparation process.
- The **learning environment, methodology and methods** used are appropriate for the participants to reach the learning objectives. The organisers review the learning environment, objectives and methods and adapt them to the changing needs of participants and to any changes in the circumstances.
- **Ensuring adequate support** during the project. The adequate guidance throughout the learning process and qualified support to defuse problems. Participants are aware of these available support structures and how to access them. The support participants receive enables them to learn from the difficult situations encountered.
- Space and support for structured **reflection on the experience**. This reflection takes place before, during and after the activity. Recognition tools and processes can be used to support the reflection.
- The **learning outcomes are evaluated** at project and individual level, and in a short-term and long-term perspective. Such evaluation compares the participant's starting point and the impact of the project on the individual.



Improvement of student mobility

- The evaluation also includes **non-intended outcomes**, covering both explicit objectives and other outcomes, positive or negative, that resulted from the project.
- Supporting the participants to **document their achievements** and help those to be recognised. Participants receive proof of participation. The organisers help participants to gain recognition of their achievements.
- **Guiding the participants at the using the outcomes** of the experience at various phases. In the preparation phase - managing participants' expectations towards the project. During the implementation phase, participants are stimulated to connect the experience to their own reality. After the activity, organisers support participants to transfer their learning to other contexts and exploit the outcomes in their personal and professional future development.
- **Capitalising on the outcomes** of the project to have a wider impact. It includes the planning ahead on optimising the impact of the project. During the implementation, are taken the measures to increase the visibility of the project, including the documenting and sharing of good practice. The organisers reflect on how the mobility project fits the wider strategic development of the university.



Preparation of student to be good candidate

To have good prepared candidates for mobility we have to answer the questions:

- ❖ Are participants fully aware of the objectives and methods of the mobility?
- ❖ Is practical information about the activity (programme, logistical details) communicated in due time to participants?
- ❖ Are participants aware of their responsibilities and obligations?
- ❖ Are the participants trained in problem-solving and conflict management?
- ❖ Are the expectations of the participants in alignment with the aims and means of the project as well as conditions in the hosting environment?
- ❖ Have participants been informed in due time about any preparatory work they need to do?
- ❖ Have participants received adequate linguistic and cultural preparation to facilitate their interaction with the hosting environment?
- ❖ Have participants been adequately prepared on how to deal with psychological issues such as homesickness?
- ❖ Are participants instructed on how to minimise the impact of the activity on the environment?



Mobility management

Creating the best conditions for incoming mobility implies preparatory activities to ensure optimal learning process and outcomes for incoming students. We should answer the question:

- Does Your university have the **proven capacity** to deal with all aspects of education exchanges?

Before you start the preparation, make a list of all the things that you have to do to make institution attractive and prepare for exchange mobility:

- You have to inspect Your facilities and check whether You live up to requirements for international study exchange - are you ready to prepare **information and documentation** that you can use the participants in the study mobility process?
- The **qualifications and experience** of local staff is essential – make sure that their competence profiles are suitable for acceptance the international students and guest teachers.
- Communication with **national agency** and Education Ministry to clear the financial possibilities and conditions to support the international study exchanges.
- Possession of **contacts** with reliable international partner universities for possible students and teachers exchange.



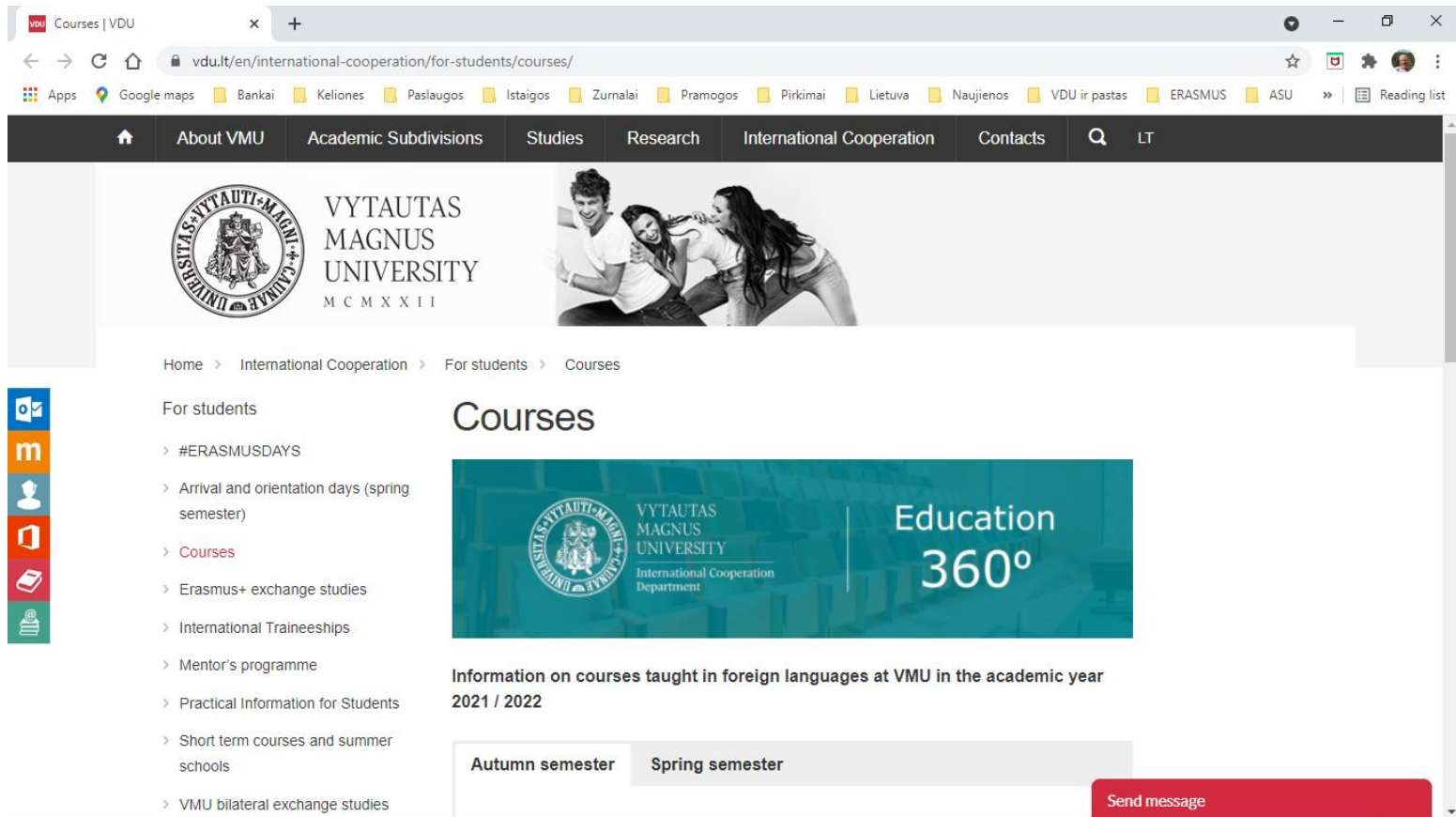
Mobility management

You have to prepare the documents and facilities according requirements for host institution:

- Preparation of clear and easily traceable information for exchange students and incoming teachers in the web-site of university;
- Preparation of ECTS information package in English (The use of French language in international exchange clearly limits the possibilities) which includes: information on the institution and its units, admission requirements, study procedure, programmes and courses, Language courses, internships, general and practical information for students (IT services, accommodation, costs of living, meals and cafeterias, medical facilities, insurance, migration and visa information, sports and leisure facilities, student associations etc.);
- Preparation of accommodation facilities for international students and teachers;
- Distribution of administrative staff roles in communication with exchange participants, preparation and confirmation of exchange documentation (Learning Agreements, Certificates, Transcripts of Records etc.).

Mobility management

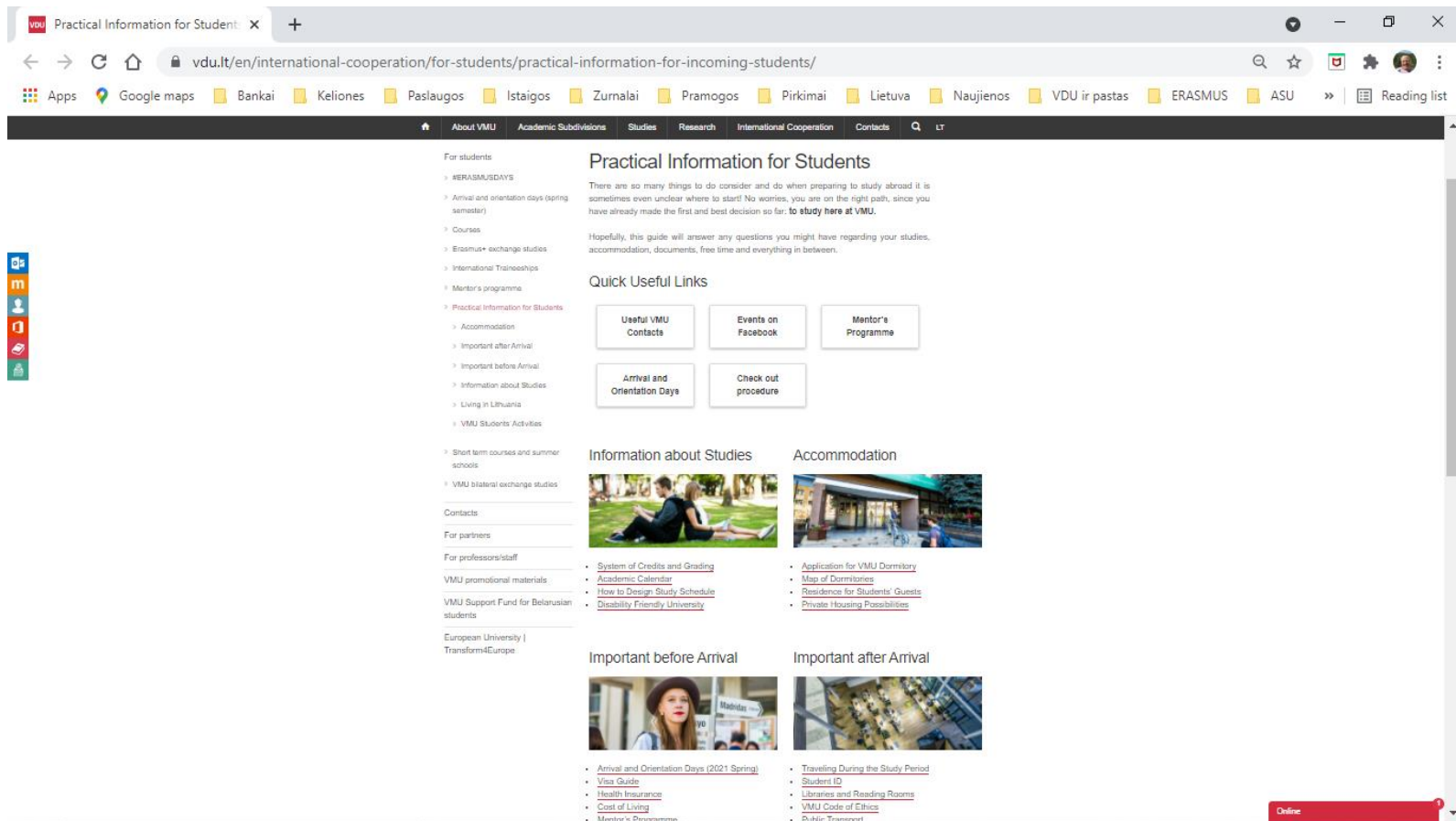
Course catalogue and other information for incoming students:



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the VMU website. The browser address bar shows the URL: vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/courses/. The website header includes navigation links: Home, About VMU, Academic Subdivisions, Studies, Research, International Cooperation, Contacts, and a search bar. The main content area features the VMU logo and a banner image of three students. Below the banner, a breadcrumb trail reads: Home > International Cooperation > For students > Courses. A sidebar on the left contains a list of links for incoming students, including #ERASMUSDAYS, Arrival and orientation days (spring semester), Courses (highlighted in red), Erasmus+ exchange studies, International Traineeships, Mentor's programme, Practical Information for Students, Short term courses and summer schools, and VMU bilateral exchange studies. The main content area is titled "Courses" and features a large teal banner with the VMU logo and the text "Education 360°". Below the banner, the text reads: "Information on courses taught in foreign languages at VMU in the academic year 2021 / 2022". At the bottom of the page, there are two tabs: "Autumn semester" and "Spring semester". A red "Send message" button is located in the bottom right corner.

Mobility management

Practical information (part of ECTS information package):

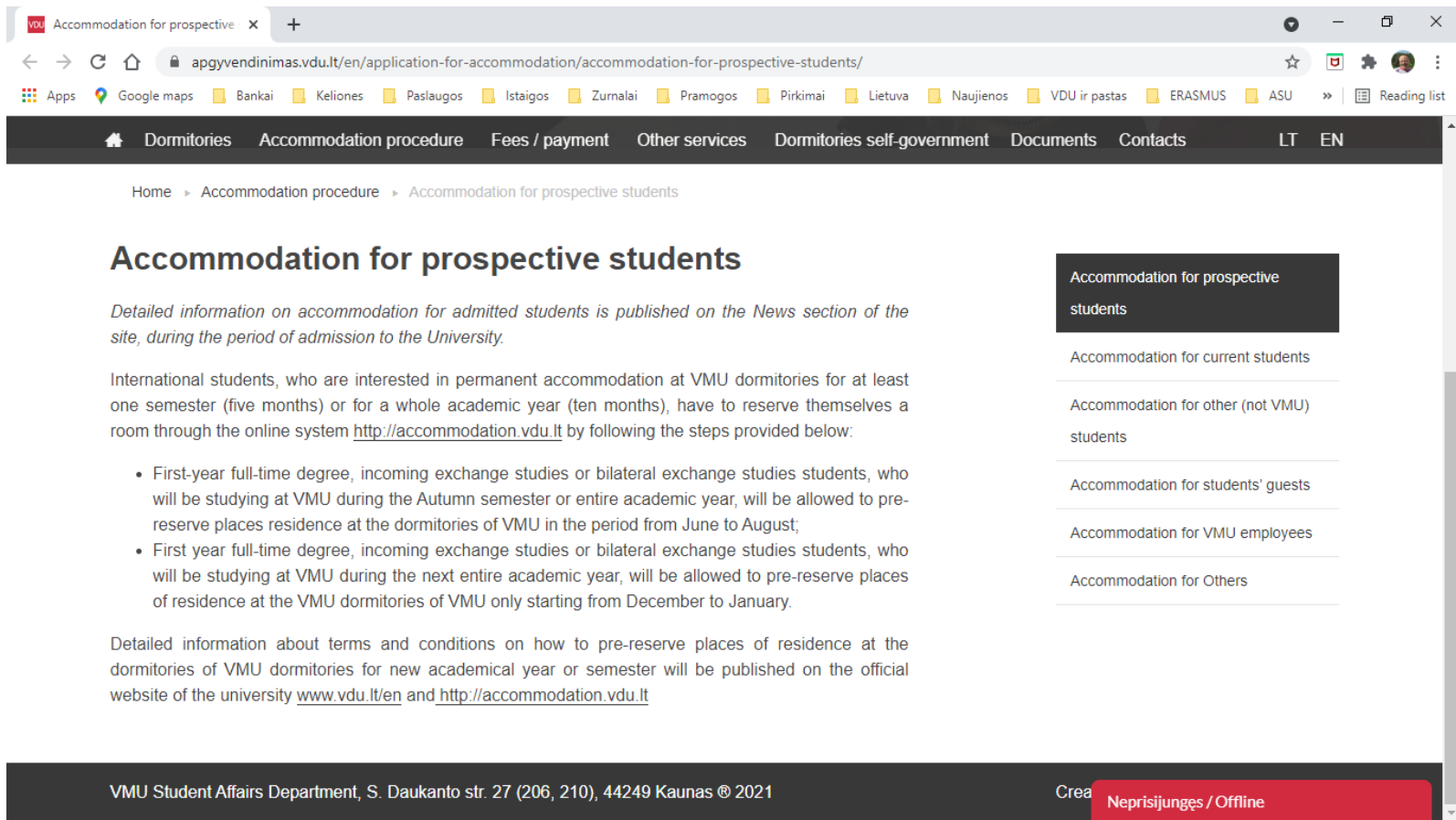


The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the 'Practical Information for Students' page on the VMU website. The browser's address bar shows the URL: vdu.lt/en/international-cooperation/for-students/practical-information-for-incoming-students/. The page content includes:

- For students** section with a list of links: ERASMUS/DAYS, Arrival and orientation days (spring semester), Courses, Erasmus+ exchange studies, International Traineeships, Mentor's programme, Practical Information for Students, Accommodation, Important after Arrival, Important before Arrival, Information about Studies, Living in Lithuania, VMU Students Activities, Short term courses and summer schools, VMU bilateral exchange studies.
- Contacts** section for partners and professors/staff.
- VMU promotional materials** and **VMU Support Fund for Belarusian students**.
- European University | Transform4Europe** logo.
- Practical Information for Students** main heading with an introductory paragraph: "There are so many things to do consider and do when preparing to study abroad it is sometimes even unclear where to start! No worries, you are on the right path, since you have already made the first and best decision so far: to study here at VMU. Hopefully, this guide will answer any questions you might have regarding your studies, accommodation, documents, free time and everything in between."
- Quick Useful Links** section with buttons for: Useful VMU Contacts, Events on Facebook, Mentor's Programme, Arrival and Orientation Days, Check out procedure.
- Information about Studies** section with links: System of Credits and Grading, Academic Calendar, How to Design Study Schedule, Disability Friendly University.
- Accommodation** section with links: Application for VMU Dormitory, Map of Dormitories, Residence for Students' Guests, Private Housing Possibilities.
- Important before Arrival** section with links: Arrival and Orientation Days (2021 Spring), Visa Guide, Health Insurance, Cost of Living, Mentor's Programme.
- Important after Arrival** section with links: Travelling During the Study Period, Student ID, Libraries and Reading Rooms, VMU Code of Ethics, Public Transport.

Mobility management

Accommodation web-site for prospective students:



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the VMU Accommodation for prospective students page. The browser address bar shows the URL: apgyvendinimas.vdu.lt/en/application-for-accommodation/accommodation-for-prospective-students/. The website has a dark navigation bar with the following menu items: Dormitories, Accommodation procedure, Fees / payment, Other services, Dormitories self-government, Documents, Contacts, LT, and EN. The breadcrumb trail is: Home > Accommodation procedure > Accommodation for prospective students. The main heading is "Accommodation for prospective students". Below the heading, there is a paragraph: "Detailed information on accommodation for admitted students is published on the News section of the site, during the period of admission to the University." This is followed by a paragraph: "International students, who are interested in permanent accommodation at VMU dormitories for at least one semester (five months) or for a whole academic year (ten months), have to reserve themselves a room through the online system <http://accommodation.vdu.lt> by following the steps provided below:" and a bulleted list of conditions for pre-reserving places. The list includes: "First-year full-time degree, incoming exchange studies or bilateral exchange studies students, who will be studying at VMU during the Autumn semester or entire academic year, will be allowed to pre-reserve places residence at the dormitories of VMU in the period from June to August;" and "First year full-time degree, incoming exchange studies or bilateral exchange studies students, who will be studying at VMU during the next entire academic year, will be allowed to pre-reserve places of residence at the VMU dormitories of VMU only starting from December to January." Below the list, there is another paragraph: "Detailed information about terms and conditions on how to pre-reserve places of residence at the dormitories of VMU dormitories for new academical year or semester will be published on the official website of the university www.vdu.lt/en and <http://accommodation.vdu.lt>". On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar with a list of links: "Accommodation for prospective students" (highlighted), "Accommodation for current students", "Accommodation for other (not VMU) students", "Accommodation for students' guests", "Accommodation for VMU employees", and "Accommodation for Others". At the bottom of the page, there is a footer with the text: "VMU Student Affairs Department, S. Daukanto str. 27 (206, 210), 44249 Kaunas © 2021" and a red button that says "Neprijungęs / Offline".

Thank You for Your Attention !

Contacts:

Assoc. prof. dr. Raimundas Rukuiza
International Cooperation Department
Vytautas Magnus University

Phone: +370 37 788149

E-mail: erasmus.zua@vdu.lt

Internet:

<https://zua.vdu.lt/en/project/quals/>



VYTAUTAS MAGNUS
UNIVERSITY
AGRICULTURE
ACADEMY

