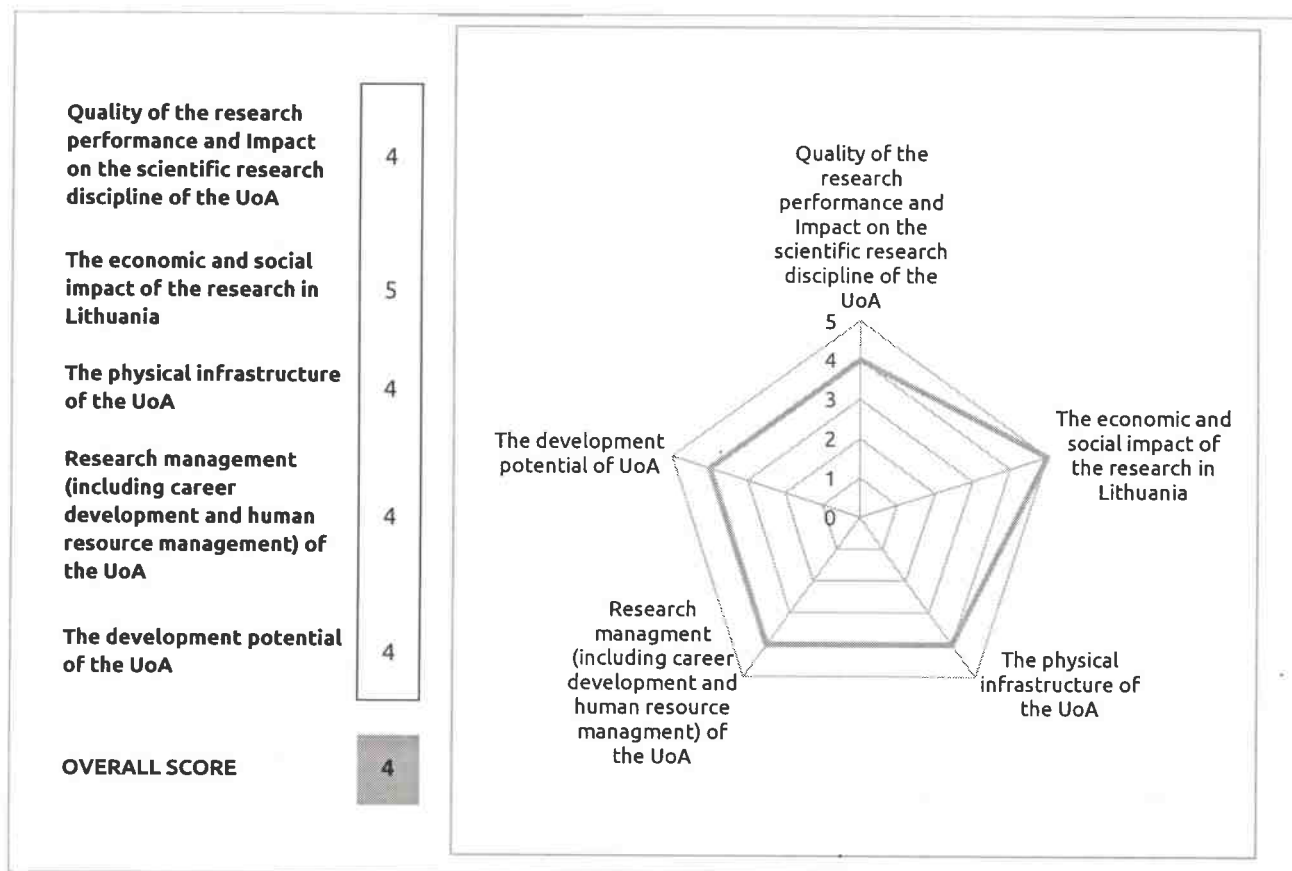


Lithuanian Culture Research Institute

Name of the UoA	Lithuanian Culture Research Institute
Name of institution being assessed	Lithuanian Culture Research Institute
Total no. FTE researchers	42
Composition of the Unit of Assessment (UoA)	1. Division of the history of Balts and Lithuanian Culture; 2. Division of the History of Art and Visual Culture; 3. Division of the Heritage of Sacral Art; 4. Division of the History of Music and Theatre; 5. Division of Contemporary Lithuanian Culture; 6. Division of the History of Lithuanian Philosophy; 7. Division of the Comparative Studies of Culture; 8. Division of Contemporary Philosophy



Overall Score

The UoA ranks **first in Lithuania** as far as the present assessment is concerned. However, reviewers encourage this UoA to consider that the assessment was conceived as an international one, meant to provide indications on how Lithuanian humanities research institutions compare with similar centres and institutions in the world. For this reason, however excellent LKTI's work objectively is, this UoA is given a score of 4, and not 5, since its assessment shows that there is still room for improvement before reaching full international standards (score "5" would imply, for instance, proven capacity of attracting foreign scholars on a regular basis). In particular, management of transition between older and younger generations of scholars appears to be an issue at LKTI, and should be addressed through more energetic participation in European research funding schemes. The "4" should be therefore considered as an encouragement to maintain the research leadership in Lithuania, and attain leadership also at the regional, European, and international level.

Quality of the research performance and Impact on the scientific research discipline of the UoA

The UoA carries on research that meets the highest national standards of quality and significance and provides a strong reference for the international panorama. Among the several Departments that compose the UoA, some in particular qualify as “pockets of excellence”: Fine Art History, Sacral Art Heritage, Music and Theatre History, Comparative Culture Studies, and Contemporary Philosophy. Submitted publications are overall excellent in terms of selection of topics, knowledge of the state of the art, originality of approach and methodology, consistency in both argumentation and style, clarity of exposition, choice of dissemination forum, and scientific and cultural impact. At least nineteen members of the UoA are active at the international level. The UoA can boast numerous publications in SCOPUS journals (23 in 2013, although many by the same researcher) and several extremely original doctoral and post-doctoral dissertations, for instance Renata Šukaitytė’s post-doctoral research on “Minor Cinema in the Global Context”, Milda Žvirblytė’s post-doctoral research on “The Distinctive Features of Lithuanian Modernism in the Context of Central European Art”, which both adopt the praiseworthy perspective of studying local topics in international contexts. Successful participation in the COST program provides further evidence of integration in international networks of research, which is usually a consequence of academic excellence. Reviewers have appreciated, moreover, the elegant firmness by which the self-assessment report defends the specificity of the UoA in relation to applied research institutes, as well as its attitude toward potential national “competitors”, which are rather seen as potential partners. The UoA should persist in its efforts of internationalization and high-quality research, by concentrating resources in the most productive domains and niches of research. Also, while encouraging scientific excellence and outstanding individual productivity, the UoA should make sure that its entire research staff is equally committed to the UoA goals, securing an efficacious relay between established and early-career researchers.

The economic and social impact of the research in Lithuania

The UoA occupies an extremely important role in the cultural panorama of Lithuania. It collaborates with important public organisations in Lithuania and other European countries. Several of its members are active as consultants outside of the academia (section 7.4 of the self-assessment lists 12 instances, from Aleksandra Aleksavičiūtė’s acting as Member of State Culture and Arts Awards Commission of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania to Giedrė Jankevičiūtė being member of the State Commission on Cultural Heritage). A comparatively new research institution in the international panorama, the UoA is a recognized major research centre on Lithuanian culture, whose high quality output has political and social importance. Staff members are active in committees and advisory boards of governmental bodies. They also engage in frequent significant visits abroad. Research outreach and public dissemination inside the country are active and diverse (committee of science and studies, councils of culture and arts, committees of professional competition and awards). Collaboration with schools and museums in popularization of Lithuanian culture, participation in expert commissions etc. is outstanding (for instance, contribution to shaping the permanent exhibition of the National Art Gallery of Lithuania in 2009 or the project on the virtual history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania).

The physical infrastructure of the UoA

Judging from both the description of the physical infrastructure contained in the self-assessment report and experts’ visits, the UoA positively responds to international criteria and is potentially able to host both local and international researchers. Continuous efforts should be made to allocate physical research infrastructure and office space in relation to research productivity (more funding and research outputs ergo more space). Initiatives should be taken in order to create a work environment able to attract international scholars, for instance by creating positions of junior research leadership to be filled by foreign scholars (German example).

Research management (including career development and human resource management) of the UoA

Research management appears as adequate for an institution that is of primary importance in the intellectual panorama of Lithuania and aims at intensifying its activity internationally. The UoA has a robust system of research management with permanent structures such as Research Council, Supervisory Council, the Assessment Commission, the Research Works Assessment Commission, and the Departments. Overall, the quality of research output indicates that these structures and procedures are working quite well. However, the issue of improving the relay among generations of scholars should be critically faced, as well as the problem of finding more effective ways to finance the internationalization of research at the UoA. Greater efforts should be made in participating in large European research projects.

The development potential of UoA

The Institute has potential to compete at an international level, but there is room for improvement (especially when it comes to international research grants). It undoubtedly has the capability of maintaining a high level research environment, support all areas of research, achieve all research goals and objectives, and have an impact on the Lithuanian society and the international research community. Established research directions are clearly viable, but the major question is what the new directions will be, after all these multivolume megaprojects are complete. The UoA has a long-term strategic plan but the report gives only a very vague picture of future vision and plans. The major problem that awaits the UoA in the future is, in the words of the self-assessment report, “aging of personnel”. Progression of active research staff is difficult, because “the smooth succession of generations of scholars in the Institute is somewhat problematic and results in a rather slow personnel circulation.” The reason, according to the s-a. report, is “rather low basic financing of the Institute”, but certainly the Institute’s career management plays a role in the organisation of such transition, and should probably find alternative ways to improve it, for instance by encouraging unproductive researchers at the end of their career to retire. State funding needs to be there at this critical juncture but there is a potential for fundraising; the UoA needs to think creatively, and internationally, on how to change this financial situation. As a consequence, the Institute’s development potential deserves a 4, also by virtue of an excellent critical mass and strategy of determination of research niches, but should maintain and improve the actualization of this potential in order to even more proficiently compete at the international level.

Conclusions and recommendations

Given appropriate funding, the UoA could establish and develop its role as major international player for research and publication on Lithuanian and Baltic culture. The issue of accelerating the relay among generations of scholars should be seriously confronted in order to ensure that the current quality of research and publication is maintained and adapted to the future challenges of European and international investigation. The research niches of the UoA should be given priorities in future assets of funding and office space distribution, as well as in attracting foreign researchers. Outstanding established scholars should be encouraged to co-publish with early career researchers.