

JOINT REPORT BY THE EXPERTS ON THE INCLUSION OF A LICENSED STUDY  
PROGRAMME ON THE ACCREDITATION FORM

**Daugavpils University**

STUDY FIELD

**“Language and Culture Studies, Native Language Studies and Language Programmes”**

STUDY PROGRAMME

**joint doctoral study programme “Language and Literature Studies”**

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## **I. Summary of the Assessment**

### ***Summary:***

The joint doctoral study programme “Language and Literature Studies” (51226) (study programme) implemented by Daugavpils University (DU), Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (VeA) and Liepāja University (LiepU) corresponds to the field of study “Language and Culture Studies, Native Language Studies and Language Programmes” in terms of interdisciplinary thematic coverage of language and literature and is in accordance with the current legislation of the Republic of Latvia, taking into account the main trends. The indicators of the joint doctoral study programme correspond to the learning outcomes defined for the programme.

The content of the programme fits the requirements formulated for doctoral study programmes. The topicality of this joint study programme is firmly anchored in the research of modern topics in Linguistics and Literary studies at national and international level. The joint study programme is on a par with similar domestic and foreign doctoral programmes. The consideration of regional needs and the development of local research niches provide a future-proof framework for the further development of the study programme. The joint doctoral study programme meets the needs of the Latvian and local labour market. The current design of the programme and the close relations with local partners help to ensure that graduates have good employment opportunities. The implementation of the joint programme is supported by an adequate study, scientific, information, material, technical and financial base. Doctoral students and teaching staff have full access to essential printed and electronic resources. The qualifications of academic staff involved in the delivery of the study programme are fully compliant with current legislation, study field requirements and international academic and scientific research trends. External visiting scholars help to increase the scope and range of research. The joint doctoral study programme is based on current scientific achievements and academic findings in the field of Language, Literature and Translation. The programme needs a more clear definition of the interdisciplinary nature of the humanities-rooted study programme in order to avoid misleading both students and potential partner institutions willing to cooperate. A better organised flow of information within the university and between the partner institutions should be established to ensure an effective quality management system and smooth coordination of joint activities.

### ***Positive aspects:***

1. The joint doctoral study programme helps to preserve national identity and strive for academic excellence.
2. The joint doctoral study programme is designed and implemented by the strong regional academic research leaders who have gained valuable experience in the field of Language, Literature and Translation.
3. The content of the joint doctoral study programme is topical and comparable with domestic and foreign programmes.
4. The available resources and premises provide all the conditions for running the programme and achieving the learning outcomes.

5. Well-balanced academic personnel involvement and renewal policy.

***Negative aspects:***

1. The interdisciplinary nature of the joint study programme is somewhat misleading.
2. The flow of information within the university and between the partner universities is fragmented.
3. The ratio of students between the sub-programmes could become untenable in the long run.
4. There is a lack of an overarching system for teaching staff workload planning, evaluation of commitment and awarding of remuneration.
5. Participation in high-profile international scientific projects is limited.

## **II. Description of the study programme**

### **1. Indicators describing the Study Programme**

1.	Name of the higher education institution/college	Daugavpils University
2.	Name of the study field corresponding to the study programme	Language and Culture Studies, Native Language Studies and Language Programmes
3.	Name of the study programme	Joint doctoral study programme “Language and Literature Studies”  (Daugavpils University, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, Liepāja University)
4.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	51226
5.	Language of study programme implementation	Latvian and English
6.	Amount, duration, form and type of the study programme (also distance-learning)	3 years Full-time on-site studies in Daugavpils DU Faculty of Humanities
7.	Admission requirements	<i>Master degree in humanities (linguistics and literary science, translation studies, history, philosophy) or social science (intercultural relations, social anthropology, social psychology, etc.) or similar 2nd level higher professional education in the respective branch</i>  <i>Entrance examinations:</i>

		-examination in linguistics/literary studies/ translation studies (depending on the selected sub-programme; discussion on the submitted research application (written paper); - examination in a foreign language (English, German, or French).
8.	Address of the study programme implementation, indicating whether the study programme is implemented in the <b>branches</b> of the higher education institution / college	DU: Vienības Str. 13, Daugavpils, LV-5401 LiepU: Lielā Str. 14, Liepāja, LV-3401 VeA: Inženieru Str. 101, Ventspils, LV-3601
9.	Degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification to be awarded	Doctoral degree ( <i>Ph.D.</i> ) in Humanities and Arts
10.	Date of study programme licensing	04.10.2022
11.	Date of starting the implementation of the study programme	In Daugavpils University : 16.12.2022
12.	Accreditation term of the study field	18.05.2029.

## Analysis

### *1.1. Compliance of the study programme with the study field*

The aim of the joint doctoral study programme “Language and Literature Studies” (study programme) is to prepare professional scientists in the field of linguistics, literary studies and translation studies with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research in the selected sub-programme of the study programme, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of modern literary studies, linguistics and translation studies developing and strengthening Latvia’s scientific potential; more broadly, it means participation in the formation of the intellectual elite of Latvia and Europe, as well as the ability to influence the trend of development and priorities of the above-mentioned branches of science. (Self-Assessment Report (SAR) page 7).

The joint doctoral study programme has been developed in accordance with the development trends of the branch in Europe and worldwide, based on the investigation of the experience of universities of different countries (e.g. University of Verona (Italy), University of Helsinki (Finland), Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic), Vilnius University (Lithuania), etc.), the acceptance of the current trends of high level international conferences, as well as the positions of the conceptual report *On the introduction of a new doctoral studies model in Latvia* (CM order No. 345). (SAR, page 9)

The study programme development strategy is part of the common development strategy of DU, LiepU, and VeA. (SAR, page 11)

The study programme provides a consecutive way of receiving education in the study field of “Language and Culture Studies, Native Language Studies and Language Programmes”, upon the completion of the Bachelor and Master Degree Study programmes in the respective field.

The given joint doctoral study programme complies with the study field of “Language and Culture Studies, Native Language Studies and Language Programmes” (study field) in terms of intradisciplinary focused language and literature thematic coverage. *Although SAR provides information on the interdisciplinary nature of the joint study programme, a better pronounced terminological scope of interdisciplinarity addressed as well as detailed information on the type of interdisciplinarity within clearly humanities rooted study programme would be required.*

During the assessment visit meetings with the representatives of DU administration, management of the joint study programme at DU, LiepU, VeA, and academic staff of all partner institutions, it was clearly stated that the study programme has been developed in compliance with the effective legislation of the Republic of Latvia, taking into account the mainstream trends. *It is advisable for the partners to establish a better information exchange system, sharing data on common and distinct aspects highlighted in the partner institutions' strategies and other documents. Since it is envisaged as joint study programme it cannot rely only on the strengths of one partner institution and should disseminate information on the common achievements. The questions on study programme development strategies and their compliance with university strategy, on the activities planned within the framework of the study programme, on the nature of interdisciplinarity addressed, on the number of guest professors, number of seminars and other related events, on the workload planning, etc. have been addressed in a rather fragmented and miscoordinated manner.*

### ***1.2. Compliance between the title of the study programme, the degree to be awarded***

The joint doctoral study programme “Language and Literature Studies” complies with the degree being awarded. Upon successful completion of the study programme the alumni are awarded the - *Doctoral degree (Ph.D.) in Humanities and Arts.*

The contents of the study programme generally fits the requirements formulated for the Doctoral study programmes, based on information provided in section 2.2. of the SAR and appendices granted. The contents of the study programme correspond to the requirements imposed by the State regulations for the joint study programmes implemented at the Doctoral level. The major number of the credit points is devoted to the development of Research (84 CP), which is in full compliance with the aims and tasks of the doctoral study programme. Given that there are three equally important partners involved in the implementation of the study programme, the curriculum contains study courses taught on the common basis and the ones ensured by each partner university. The study programme contains compulsory elective study courses, although their list seems to be incomplete (see section 1.3. Of expert report and section 2.2. Of SAR for more information) and study courses of free choice (see comment in section 1.3. of the given expert report). SAR (p. 16) states that “The content of the studies is designed according to Cabinet of Ministers regulations no. 1001 (27. 12. 2005) The procedure and criteria for awarding a doctoral degree (promotion), as well as taking into account the conceptual report of the Ministry of

Education and Science on the implementation of a new model of doctorate in Latvia, adopted in June 2020”.

The contents of the study programme is in compliance with the study programme title and awarded degree.

***1.3. Compliance of the study programme indicators (study programme code, amount, implementation duration) with the learning outcomes defined for it.***

The scope, duration, form and type of the study programme are justified. The proposed languages of instruction chosen for the given study programme are justified in terms of preserving national identity and pursuing scientific excellence on the global scale. The admission requirements are formulated in a rather clear-cut manner and can be supported. However the question if the students specialising in pedagogical aspects of language, literature and/or translation can be admitted to the study programme is open, as degree in pedagogy is not mentioned in the admission requirements.

The study programme is designed and implemented by the strong regional academic research leaders, who have accumulated valuable expertise in the field of Language, Literature and Translation. As it can be judged from the documents provided and from the meetings with study programme administration, academic staff and students, the study programme contains common interdisciplinary study courses amounting to 10 CP, which are taught to the students of all three sub-programmes, then 20 CP of specialisation study courses are implemented by the corresponding partner institution (including 5 CP of free choice study courses, which are assigned per specialisation, rather than given to the students for the actual free choice - see comments below in this section). It might be concluded that except for the common study courses, doctoral colloquium and some parts of the research approbation, which are provided across the sub-programmes, the rest of the study courses are implemented by each partner institution.

The study programme is structured taking into account the effective legislation of the Republic of Latvia. The SAR (page 13) states that, “The structure of JDSP “Language and Literature Studies” is subject to the Order of the CM No. 345 *On the conceptual report “On the implementation of a new doctorate model in Latvia”* <sup>4</sup>, which determines the distribution of CP for research work (~ 70% of time in full-time studies) and study course acquisition (~ 30% of time in full-time studies), accordingly, research – 84 CP, study courses – 36 CP. ”

The following information on the research component of the study programme has been provided in SAR (page 13/14): The research includes *Elaboration of the Doctoral Thesis* – 60 CP and *Internationalization and research approbation* – 24 CP.

A clear methodology of acquiring 24 CP for the approbation of research results is given. *However, the SAR does not contain information on the type of publications expected, i.e. should the publications be published in Q1-Q2 indexed journals, or are there any exclusions admitted; should the publications be individual or co-authored contributions are recognized; should the publications be published in the local issues (even though internationally recognized) or there is a demand for at least one publication in the foreign database indexed issue.*

Some clarification on the status of the specialisation and free choice study courses is required. The SAR states that students develop their competences in the selected specialisation. Whereas, the structure of the study programme and the instructions on choosing study courses within the particular category are in certain conflict and indicate the mispronounced academic freedom and unclear recognition of student-centred education principles. Only 3 study courses within the category of compulsory electives (each devoted to one specialisation of the study programme) are provided. *It is recommended that the students of each specialisation should have an opportunity to choose the required number of courses from a wider list.*

The SAR states that the free choice course will be selected by doctoral students from their specialisation or other specialisation, however, it is in clear contradiction with the principle of academic freedom, as students should have the opportunity to choose any course they like even from other HEI. It is not recommended to provide any list in this category as it can be interpreted as an attempt to influence their choice and limit their academic freedom. *No evidence of an existing extra-curriculum competence recognition system is provided.*

Since the given study programme is the joint study programme, it should have a clearly developed system of competence recognition, including extra-curricula activities, however, during the meetings with administration and academic staff of the study programme, as well as discussing this issue with students and alumni, no evidence of an existing curriculum-based and extra-curriculum competence recognition system is provided.

### **Conclusions:**

The joint study programme generally complies with the degree being awarded. The thematic scope, overall duration, proposed education form and type of the study programme are generally justified. It can be traced that the joint study programme makes a contribution to pursuing scientific excellence, as it is designed and implemented by strong regional leaders, who have accumulated solid expertise in the field of Language, Literature and Translation. However a more sound definition of what an interdisciplinary education and research is and how it is implemented within the framework of the given study programme, should be introduced. A rather high risk of misusing interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary approaches is present, which could potentially mislead both students and the members of academic staff.

It is also highly recommended to improve the information flow system within the given university and among the partner universities, i.e. information on how the given study programme fits strategies of all partner institutions, what are the main research trendlines and priorities supported, how the learning outcomes of the study programme reflect the strategic development of the DU, LiepU, VeA as the major region player, etc. should be constantly updated and available to all parties involved.

Students should have a set of clearly explained guidelines on the choice of the study courses per sub-programme, especially in the free choice category. It is recommended that the students of each specialisation should have an opportunity to choose the required number of courses from a wider



list. It demands introducing not only the sound study course registration system across the partner institutions, but also raises the question of establishing a clearly developed system of competence recognition, including extra-curricula activities, which currently was not evident.

***Strengths:***

1. The study programme contributes to preserving national identity and pursuing scientific excellence.
2. The study programme provides a consecutive way of receiving education in the study field of “Language and Culture Studies, Native Language Studies and Language Programmes”, upon the completion of the Bachelor and Master Degree Study programmes in the respective field.
3. The study programme is designed and implemented by the strong regional academic research leaders, who have accumulated valuable expertise in the field of Language, Literature and Translation.

***Weaknesses:***

1. A more clear definition of the interdisciplinary nature of the humanities-rooted study programme is required to avoid misleading both students and potential partner institutions willing to cooperate.
2. A better organised information flow within the university and among the partner institutions should be established, e.g. on how the given study programme fits strategies of all partner institutions, what are the main research trendlines and priorities supported, how the learning outcomes of the study programme reflect the strategic development of the DU, LiepU, VeA as the major region player.
3. Not clear if potential students holding Master Degree in pedagogical aspects of language, literature and/or translation can be admitted to the study programme.
4. Certain evident conflicts between the structure of the study programme and instructions on choosing the particular study courses in the free electives should be resolved. A better recognition and observation of the student-centred education principles should be ensured.
5. No evidence of an existing extra-curriculum competence recognition system is provided.

## **2. Topicality of the study programme**

### **Analysis**

#### ***2.1. The topicality of the study programme and the compliance of the content with the tendencies of the industry (area), the changes made since the licensing of the study programme***

According to the study programme SAR p. 9, the programme follows current global trends in linguistics and literary studies. The study programme description emphasises the importance of

socio-cultural context, hybrid genre research, cross-cultural, functional and applied aspects of languages. The curriculum included in the annexes (Appendix 1. Plan of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies") confirms the timeliness of the programme content, e.g. courses targeting interdisciplinary aspects of the Humanities. The expert group appreciates the latter approach, yet it should be noted that the study programme is rather intradisciplinary. The three sub-programmes "Linguistics", "Literary and Cultural Studies" and "Translation Studies" belong to the same branch of science "Humanities and Art Science". The Digital Humanities constitute an exception here and are taken into account in the design of the programme content. The study programme courses cover both synchronic and diachronic aspects of language research and offer a wide range of research topics in the Humanities.

Based on the study programme SAR and assessment visit interviews with employers in the field, it can be concluded that the study programme content meets the needs of the labour market. Employer representatives confirmed that PhD students are equipped with up-to-date knowledge that enables them not only to conduct high-level research but also to run successful businesses, which is a commendable practice. Stakeholders are naturally involved in the study process and contribute to linking theory and practise. The compulsory entrepreneurship practice is a unique approach to an up-to-date and modern study programme. This is certainly a unique selling point of this study programme. Moreover, the topicality is ensured by comparing it with similar programmes in Latvia (University of Latvia) and Europe (DSPs at University of Verona (Italy), University of Helsinki (Finland), Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic), Vilnius University (Lithuania). The joint study programme also takes into account international and national conceptual documents, e.g. Horizon Europe papers on cross-cutting integration of Humanities in the upcoming EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation, positions of the report "On the introduction of a new doctoral studies model in Latvia" (CM order No. 345).

The expert group believes that the regional focus of the study programme is a strength that needs to be developed. In addition to the programme's ambitious goal of training professional scholars in the field of linguistics, literary studies and translation studies with high research potential at the international and national level, DU, LiepU and VeA pursue a no less important goal of serving regional needs. In this respect, the relevance of the study programme benefits from the research niches embedded in the respective regions.

According to the study programme SAR (p. 10), DU is part of a long tradition of Slavic and Russian studies as well as research on Latvian-Slavic, Latvian-Germanic language contacts and Latvian-Lithuanian languages under a contrastive aspect, which certainly reflects the specifics of a border region. LiepU contributes to the topicality of the programme by playing to its strength in Kurzeme cultural space research. VeA is evidently taking advantage of its applied profile by focusing on translation, lexicography, terminology and the application of modern digital tools.

According to SAR p. 18, important changes have been made since the programme was licenced. First, the Council of the study programme was introduced (DU Senate decision 6/3, 30.05.2023). During the assessment visit meetings the expert group learned that the council will play the leading role in programme management and monitoring student progress. Other changes include enrolment regulations and admission requirements, requiring English proficiency at a minimum of

B2 level for foreign students and providing detailed information on entrance exam requirements. The DU has clarified the information in the model diploma by indicating the branch of science in which the doctoral degree is awarded.

## ***2.2.Dynamics of the student number and prospects of employment for graduates.***

According to the study programme SAR (p. 18) and the annexes (Appendix 12. Statistical data on KDSP "Language and Literature Studies" students), the number of students is moderate despite the lack of ratio between sub-programmes. The study programme at DU has a total of 14 students: 3 students in the 1st year of studies, 5 students in the 2nd year of studies (3 – in the sub-programme “Literature and cultural studies”, 2 – in the sub-programme “Linguistics”); 6 students in the 3rd year of studies, all of them in the sub-programme “Literature and cultural studies”. There were 5 PhD students at VeUAS and 3 PhD students at LiepU. The programme has no dropouts, which proves that motivated students are admitted. The 100 percent acceptance rate reconfirms student motivation. Since the majority of doctoral students are enrolled in the sub-programme “Literature and Cultural studies”, it would be advisable to attract more students to the sub-programmes “Linguistics” and “Translation Studies”.

As of October 2023, the programme included 3 international degree-seeking students from Ukraine, Italy and Israel. During assessment visit meetings the administration was not able to specify a number of students to run this programme cost effectively.

The possibility to study in English, the flexible design of the study programme with formal and informal educational methods and methodological techniques, as well as the use of e-studies indicate a growth potential of the programme on an international level.

*Notwithstanding the recent licensing of the study programme, the DU should take more active measures to promote the programme.* The discussions in the assessment visit confirmed that promotion of the study programme involves joint efforts of the central administration, programme directors at DU, LiepU and VeA, teachers, doctoral students and external partners (employers), even though the division of roles for the promotion process needs some coordination.

*The same applies to the student enrolment process, as the expert group found some fragmentation in communication between the 3 universities and a lack of coordination for the joint programme.* According to the study programme SAR (p. 17), matriculation takes place at each partner university following their procedures, which is reasonable. Nevertheless, doctoral students and staff should be confident that they are enrolled in a single joint programme and not in 3 separate programmes at their respective universities. The Council of the joint study programme should take the lead role in coordinating communication between the three universities. Targeted promotion and a good reputation of the programme (this was highlighted by the PhD students during the meeting) can help to keep the number of students constant in the future.

Based on the data presented in the study programme SAR and the evidence gathered during the assessment visit meetings, the expert group is confident that the programme will meet the needs of the Latvian and local labour market. The solid structure of the programme and the close relations with local partners help to ensure that graduates have prosperous employment opportunities. They

can work in higher education institutions (e.g. University of Latvia, Daugavpils University, Liepāja University, Rēzekne Academy of Technology, Latvian Academy of Culture), research institutes (Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art and the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia, Kurzeme Humanities Institute of Liepāja University), public, municipal and private institutions, libraries, museums, translation services, publishing houses and professional associations (SAR p. 20).

The PhD students confirmed during the assessment visit that they have good chances on the labour market, at least two of them are already employed (at DU and in a private language school). The employers showed their full confidence in the graduates they hired and regretted the lack of direct financial support for PhD students due to national legal obstacles and tax problems. Nevertheless, they support PhD students by giving them flexible working hours, contributing to Slavic research, funding conferences, disseminating practical knowledge, and so on.

Post-doctoral positions or a post-doctoral programme would attract young scholars and raise the research profile of the implementing universities. Furthermore, a post-doctoral programme would increase employment opportunities for graduates and enhance the national and regional importance of the study programme.

### ***Conclusions:***

This joint doctoral study programme is a solid endeavour to consolidate human and study resources in the Language and Literature field in Latvia. The topicality of the programme is firmly rooted in the exploration of modern issues in linguistics and literary studies at the national and international levels. Its interdisciplinary character and close relations with local partners help to ensure that graduates have good employment opportunities. The joint programme is on a par with similar domestic and foreign programmes. The consideration of regional needs and the development of local research niches provide a future-proof framework for the further development of the study programme. There are still some areas of concern. In particular, the expert group points to the importance of smooth communication between the 3 universities when running a joint programme. Another concern is the ratio of students between the sub-programmes in the long run and the lack of a post-doctoral initiative to promote the career prospects of graduates.

### ***Strengths:***

1. The content of the study programme is up-to-date and comparable to good practice examples at home and abroad, incorporates the use of modern digital tools and is based on the latest research in the Humanities.
2. The introduction of an entrepreneurship practice facilitates the career prospects of the doctoral students.
3. The involvement of stakeholders in the study process is an added value for both the doctoral student and the university.
4. Serving regional needs and conducting research in niche areas is a prominent feature of the study programme.

**Weaknesses:**

1. The lack of communication coordination between the three universities in the implementation of the study programme.
2. The ratio of students between the sub-programmes could become unsustainable in the long run.
3. The lack of a post-doctoral initiative to promote the career prospects of graduates.

### 3. Resources and provision

**Requirement [R1]:** Compliance of the study base, science base (if applicable), information base (including library), material and technical base and financial base with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.

**Analysis**

Adequate infrastructure resources are allocated to support the study and research processes of the study programme. According to the study programme SAR (p. 22), the study programme “Language and Literature Studies” is conducted at the Faculty of Humanities, Daugavpils University (Vienības Street 13, Daugavpils). During the assessment visit tour of the facilities at DU and the video presentations of the study base of LiepU and VeA, the expert group gathered evidence that the doctoral students and professors have access to essential resources. The premises shown are modernly equipped and offer comfortable space for study and research. The DU library has a modern RFID system for processing library materials, computerised workstations, free internet access, free printers, scanners and photocopiers, magnifiers for the visually impaired, individual workstations and reading rooms, relevant scientific journals and books, access to all major databases including ScienceDirect, Scopus and EBSCO, the possibility to use the inter-library loan system. Teachers can request new books or subscriptions to relevant databases on an annual basis. During the on-site meeting, teachers confirmed that they update the lists of recommended literature every year. The university offers a wide range of Moodle courses (<https://estudijas.du.lv/>) to provide flexible study options for all students. Tools used in e-studies also include e-mail, communication and collaboration platforms such as Zoom, Skype and Microsoft Teams (SAR p. 22).

A separate commendation applies to DU's premises. The university devotes ambitious efforts in terms of inclusion and diversity to create a family-friendly and disability-friendly accessible environment for all students and faculty. As stated in the study programme SAR (p. 25), the premises are modernised and adapted for persons with special needs and functional disorders. Elevators and a lift make it easier for wheelchair users to access classrooms, thresholds have been removed and the width of the door has been adjusted. The expert group noted facilities for young parents (nursery, baby feeding room and a playroom for students’ children during classes).

The study and science base is further supported by the shared resources of the partners. As indicated in the study programme SAR (p. 21), PhD students can benefit from national and international partnership activities, including lectures and seminars by guest lecturers, joint organisation of conferences and other scientific events, mobility of academic staff and students, joint elaboration and implementation of projects, joint research, publication of research materials by academic staff and students of the joint PhD study programme, summer schools and festivals for PhD students, scholarships, among others.

During the assessment visit, there was no opportunity to meet the staff responsible for budget planning. According to the study programme SAR (p. 23) and the Tripartite Agreement on the Establishment of the study programme "Language and Literature Studies" in annex (7. The tripartite agreement on the establishment of JDSP "Language and Literature Studies), the financial basis of the participating structural units of DU required for the implementation of the study programmes is provided by tuition fees and state budget funds for studies (subsidy). The expert group appreciates different administration measures to reduce the financial burden on students by offering discounts on tuition fees and covering tuition fees from the various funds of natural and/or legal persons. Judging by the description of the budget planning provided by the university (p. 23), the expert group concludes that the financial base is properly managed and sufficient to efficiently implement the study programme.

### ***Conclusions:***

The study, science, information, material, technical and financial base of the study programme fully meets the conditions for implementing the study programme and ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes. DU has created a modern study and research environment that is suitable and accessible for different student groups. Library resources include the most useful databases, key electronic resources and printed materials to ensure that postgraduate students have access to the latest research in the field of Humanities. The e-learning environment complements the traditionally taught courses with flexible study options. The overall base is further supplemented by the resources of partners at home and abroad. The financial base is managed according to settled procedures.

### ***Strengths:***

1. Modern and family-friendly premises ensure convenient study and research environment;
2. A well-equipped e-study base creates flexible study conditions;
3. A large partner network complements the existing resources with other important additional services;
4. Access to a wide range of databases enables doctoral students to keep abreast of the latest research developments.

### ***Weaknesses***

None.

**Evaluation of the requirement [R1]:**

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), information provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	The material base of the study programme is fully compliant with the conditions for the implementation of the joint programme and provides adequate prerequisites to carry-out high level doctoral research.
	X			

**Requirement [R2]:** Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of the laws and regulations.

**Analysis**

The SAR indicates that the qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme is in full compliance with the effective legislation, study field requirements and international academic and scientific research trends. The list of 30 academic staff members is provided (Appendix 3. List of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies")..

During the meetings in assessment visit with the representatives of the academic staff of all partner institutions involved in the implementation of the study programme it was clearly stated that only academic personnel with full professional proficiency, corresponding education and scientific degree, language proficiency level and international research expertise, are employed.

Currently 11 members of academic personnel involved in the implementation of the programme have the status of Latvian Council of Science (LCS) expert in the humanities and arts sciences in the field of linguistics and literary studies.

8 outgoing mobility and 4 incoming mobility cases are registered (Appendix 4. Erasmus mobility of JDSP "Language and Literature Studies" teaching staff).

According to the study programme SAR, 30 teachers are involved in the implementation of the joint programme. All the teachers have the required scientific degree. Most of them (93.3 per cent) are elected from their respective universities. The positions range from professors and lead researchers to associate professors, docents and researchers. The teaching staff are proficient in English, with level C1 or higher according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) held by an impressive 63.3 per cent of the total staff. The requirement that at

least five teachers with a doctoral degree among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of whom are experts in the respective field of science approved by the LCS, in the respective field of science is not only met, but far exceeded. The information in study programme SAR p. 28 shows that 11 lecturers hold the right of LCS expert in the humanities and arts sciences in the field of linguistics and literary studies, which is 36.6 per cent of the total staff.

The study programme benefits from joint national and international activities. The local teaching and research potential is strengthened by external visiting scholars, e.g. from the Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art of the University of Latvia, jointly implementing the State Research Programme Letonika project Culture and Identities in Latvia: Heritage and Contemporary Practice (SAR p. 21). At the international level, teaching staff mobility will be the main tool to extend projects and scholarly activities with Vytautas Magnus University (Lithuania) and Southeast Norway University College (Norway). The Erasmus+ mobility statistics in Appendices (Appendix 4. Erasmus mobility of JDSP "Language and Literature Studies" teaching staff) show a slight disproportion between outgoing and incoming mobility flows, probably due to the short reporting period from December 2022 to July 2023. There were 8 outgoing mobility flows compared to 4 incoming mobility flows during the period indicated. The mobility geography is not limited to European countries and extends to the Middle East and the Central Atlantic (Cape Verde). Considering the very limited time frame, the mobility rate of 26 percent of study programme staff is sufficient to sustain international cooperation.

During the discussions on assessment visit, the expert group was able to convince itself that the teachers are fully dedicated to the implementation of the study programme. They not only give lectures, supervise doctoral students and conduct research, but also participate in promoting the study programme. The provided list of publications of the teachers involved in the implementation of the KDSP "Language and Literature Studies" includes cited publications in Scopus and Web of Science, methodological publications, monographs and textbooks for the last 6 years (2016–2021). The volume of publications is adequate and confirms the compliance of the academic staff's qualifications with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. *The expert group noted that the professors' annual workload is 900 contact hours. This rather high workload could possibly be reconsidered by the university management in order to give professors more time for research.*

The teaching staff enjoys the support of the university administration. Teaching staff can receive financial support for publishing articles and attending conferences and seminars. There are support mechanisms for both academic staff members and PhD students aimed at increasing the number of publications indexed by SCOPUS, WoS and ERIH+. The lecturers confirmed that there is a reward system for outstanding research achievements, cited publications are financially rewarded. It should be noted that recommendations given by study programme licensing experts include the recommendation to facilitate publications of the academic staff involved in the study programme in research journals or conference paper collections in editions indexed in SCOPUS and Web of Science Core Collection or included in database ERIH+. Information on the composition of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme see in Appendix 3. List of teaching staff involved in the implementation of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies".



**Conclusions:**

The qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme is in full compliance with the effective legislation, study field requirements and international academic and scientific research trends. The study programme is led by highly qualified and dedicated professors, associate professors, docents and lead researchers. The current staffing meets and exceeds the requirement of having at least five professors and associate professors together who have been elected to academic positions at the respective higher education institution. The level of English proficiency according to the CEFR scale is more than sufficient to run the study programme and develop it internationally. National and foreign cooperation initiatives add a significant contribution to the existing human resources. The teaching staff is fully supported by the university administration, but some imbalance between teaching and research activities can be observed.

**Strengths:**

1. Well-balanced academic personnel involvement and renewal policy.
2. The academic staff has considerable potential to raise the profile of the JDSP at the national and international level.
3. The existing collaborative network complements the programme staff with visiting scholars from home and abroad.
4. There is a support mechanism for both academic staff members and PhD students aimed at increasing the number of indexed publications.

**Weaknesses:**

1. An indistinct personnel workload, commitment evaluation and remuneration granting system.
2. The rather high teaching load can create unfavourable conditions for research.

**Evaluation of the requirement [R2]:**

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	
Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements of the laws and regulations.	X			In full compliance. The qualifications of the academic staff of the study programme fully comply with the established national statutory requirements for the conduct of an academic doctoral study programme. A couple of risks have been identified, but they do not affect the

				evaluation of this requirement.
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**Requirement [R3]:** The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or artistic creation (if applicable).

### Analysis

Based on the information provided in SAR and during the meetings with academic staff and students in assessment visit, as well as alumni of the given study programme, it can be concluded that the content of the study programme is deeply rooted in the scientific achievements of the personnel. The academic staff of the study programme participates in various scientific conferences and seminars on a regular basis, as well as organises high-reputation scientific events with publishing opportunities, which are recognized not only in Latvia, but also abroad. Students have an opportunity to get immediate access to recent publications and scientific innovations discussed at the university. Multiple workshops, individual tutorials, regular workshops are organised to ensure information exchange and transfer. According to the study programme SAR (p. 25-26), new trends in the development of doctoral studies in Latvia are taken into account, a new section “Internationalisation and research approbation” was developed. In order to raise the international profile of the study programme, *the faculty should consider participation in international scientific projects funded by the European Research Council (ERC), Horizon Europe, Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions etc.*

### Conclusions:

The joint study programme is considerably based on the topical scientific achievements and academic findings of the respective field of science. High-level scientific events and barrier-free access to scientific literature ensure that the doctorate is at the cutting edge of developments in language and literature.

### Strengths:

1. Solid traditions in conducting academic and scientific research.
2. Doctoral students benefit from niche research embedded in the respective regions.

### Weaknesses:

1. Limited number of international scientific projects.

### Evaluation of the requirement [R3]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	The study programme is firmly based on the

degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or artistic creation (if applicable).	X			current scientific achievements and academic findings in the field of Language and Literature.
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**Requirement [R4]:** Compliance of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.

No.	Requirement	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	Justification
1.	<p>The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard, including the minimum requirements for the content of the compulsory civil protection course and the content of civil protection training for employees specified for the implementation of the study programme.</p> <p>The study courses of the professional study programmes include a module for the development of professional competence of entrepreneurship in the amount of at least 6 CP, if it has not been acquired in the previous professional study programme or is not included in the theoretical basic courses of the study programme branch (field of professional activity).</p>				<i>Not applicable</i>
2.	The study programme complies with a valid professional (occupational) standard, or with the requirements of professional qualification (if it is not necessary to develop a professional standard				<i>Not applicable</i>

	for the profession), if a professional qualification is awarded after acquisition of the study programme				
3.	The code of the study programme complies with the Cabinet regulations on the Latvian Education Classification	X			<i>The code (51226) of the study program corresponds to Cabinet Regulation No. 322. (13.06.2017) on the Latvian Education Classification.</i>
4.	The qualification of the teaching staff <sup>1</sup> complies with the conditions and requirements set for the implementation of the study programme, which are specified in the regulatory enactments in the field of education including the participation in the implementation of an academic study programme of at least five professors and associate professors together who have been elected to academic positions in the respective higher education institution, except in the cases provided for in Section 55, Part two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.	X			<i>The existing information has not changed since the decision on the licensing of the Study Programme was made</i>
5.	Confirmation of the higher education institution/college that the teaching staff members to be involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2-level knowledge of a related foreign language, according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (the division of levels is available on the website <a href="http://www.europass.lv">www.europass.lv</a> ), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign	X			<i>Annex 10 and Annex 11 meet the requirement</i>

<sup>1</sup> As used in this document, the term “teaching staff” refers to the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting lecturers, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants of the corresponding higher education institution / college.

	language <b>or</b> proficiency of the Latvian language at least on the B2 level, if the study programme or a part thereof is intended to be implemented in the Latvian language and the lecturer has not acquired secondary or higher education in the Latvian language.				
6.	The study programme, which is intended to be implemented in a foreign language, complies with the requirements of Section 56, Part four of the Law on Higher Education Institutions	X			<p><i>Taking into account study field in which the Study Programme is planned to be included, the evaluation of the Study Programme (which is <b>Good</b>) as well as its <b>joint</b> study programme, the expert panel strongly believes that the Study Programme must be implemented in English and complies with the requirements of Section 56, Part four of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.</i></p> <p><i>This is especially true since it meets the requirements of Section 7 of Article 56 of the Higher Education Law, which mandates Latvian language study courses for foreign students (Appendix 1. Plan of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies").</i></p>
7.	The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement (if applicable).	X			<p><i>The existing information has not changed since the decision on the licensing of the Study Programme was made</i></p>
8.	The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure by which state recognised documents of higher education are issued (if applicable).	X			<p><i>The sample of joint doctor diploma provided in the Annex 1 (Piel 1 Kopīgais diploms.) meet the requirements set out in the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers (202 <a href="https://likumi.lv/ta/id/25615">https://likumi.lv/ta/id/25615</a></i></p>

					<u>7-kartiba-kada-izsniedz-valsts-atzitus-augstako-izglitiba-apliecinossus-dokumentus)</u>
9.	The higher education institution/ college has confirmed that it will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education in another study programme or at another higher education institution/ college (a contract with another accredited higher education institution/ college), in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued (if applicable).	X			<i>The quadripartite agreement with the University of Latvia was concluded on November 14, 2022 (within two months of receiving the Study Quality Commissions's decision). Quadripartite agreement with the University of Latvia on continuing studies in Latvian in appendix no. 3 (Piel_3_Vienosanas_KDSP_Valodu_un_literaturas_studijas_DU_LiepU_VeA_L_U)</i>
10.	The higher education institution/ college has confirmed that it guarantees to the students a compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence of the study programme is revoked due to the actions of the higher education institution/ college (actions or omissions) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme (if applicable).	X			<i>Appendix 5 (DU_apliecinājums_zaudēju_mu_kompensācija) confirm that DU guarantees compensation for damages caused to the student if, due to DU conduct (act or omission), the joint doctoral study program "Language and literature studies" is not accredited or the license of the study program is withdrawn, or the student does not wish to continue his studies in another study programme</i>
11.	At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science.	X			<i>Based on the information provided in SAR, 30 members of the academic staff hold doctoral degree and 11 members of the academic staff are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science.</i>

	At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts (if applicable).				
12.	The scientific and pedagogical qualification of doctors of science complies with the criteria specified in the regulatory enactments regarding the evaluation of the scientific and pedagogical qualification of a candidate for the position of a professor and an associate professor (if applicable).	X			<i>The existing information has not changed since the decision on the licensing of the Study Programme was made</i>
13.	The joint study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in Section 55 <sup>1</sup> , of the Law on the Higher Education Institutions (if applicable).	X			<i>According to the information provided in the Appendix 9. "Compliance of the study program with the requirements set for the joint study program", the study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in Section 55<sup>1</sup>, of the Latvian Law on the Higher Education Institutions.</i>

**Evaluation of the requirement [R4]:**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Compliance</b>			<b>Justification</b>
Compliance of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	See sections 1.2. and 1.3 of this joint opinion report which provide analysis on how the programme is meeting requirements of the national regulations.
	X			

**4. Implementation of the recommendations received during the licensing of the study programme**

Assessment of the implementation of the recommendations provided by the licensing experts of the study programme.

## Analysis

The Section 4 of the SAR and *Appendix 8. Overview of the implementation of the recommendations* provides information on the implementation of the short-term and long-term recommendations in the clear-cut manner. It states, that observing the short-term recommendations indicated, the HEI has:

- introduced changes to the matriculation procedure - SAR (page 26) states: “Changes have been made in matriculation regulations and admission requirements, setting for foreign students a requirement of English language proficiency at least of B2 level providing more detailed information on entrance exam requirements (see appendix 5). Information is provided similarly for all partner HEIs.”
- Provided the sample of the Diploma - SAR (page 26) states: “Specified information in the diploma sample indicating the branch of science wherein the doctoral degree is obtained.”
- Made technical clarifications in acknowledgements of the loss compensation for students - SAR (page 26) states: “Technical clarifications are made in acknowledgements of the loss compensation for students, if the study programme is not accredited due to the action (action or inaction) of the HEI or college or the license of the study programme is revoked and the student does not want to continue studies in another study programme.” (Annex 5-DU\_apliecinājums\_zaudējumu\_kompensācija)
- Sign a new written agreement among DU, LiepU and VeA about elaboration and implementation of a joint doctoral study programme - SAR (page 27) states: “New written agreement was concluded among DU, LiepU and VeA about elaboration and implementation of a joint doctoral study programme “Language and Literature Studies” (see appendix 7)”.

Long-term recommendations envisaged conducting the comparative analysis of the given study programme with the study programme implemented at the University of Latvia (addressed several times during the meetings with the representatives of HEI as well as in SAR pages 9 - 11) and strengthening the clarification of the interdisciplinary nature of the study programme (partially fulfilled). It was also prescribed that the university should update the description of the study courses (SAR page 27 and during the assessment visit meetings). Additional materials have been provided, which included detailed description of 3 study courses, i.e. “Interdisciplinary Aspects of Literature and Culture”, “Literary Theory and Culture Process Paradigms” and “Social Ontology, Information and Global Processes”. The description of the provided study courses is quite detailed and contains all obligatory parts, including short abstract, objectives and goals, learning outcomes and competences, as well as information on themes covered and literature consulted. However it is recommended to ensure a better correlation of the title, objectives and learning outcomes, e.g. in the study course “Interdisciplinary Aspects of Literature and Culture”, one of the objectives states the necessity to: “Advance students’ experience in the sphere of interdisciplinary research on boundaries of literary science, linguistics, culture anthropology and other disciplines”, whereas no interdisciplinarity is expected in the learning outcomes and no interdisciplinarity-devoted



themes/methods/research paradigms are addressed in the course content. The same objective is included in the description of the study course “Social Ontology, Information and Global Processes” and again no traces of interdisciplinarity in learning outcomes. Quite similar situation is with the study course “Literary Theory and Culture Process Paradigms”.

It was envisaged that the university should follow-up the renewal of the expert status (information provided in SAR page 28), provide support for publishing in the issues indexed in SCOPUS, WoS and ERIH+ (partially fulfilled).

The documents provide the comparative analysis of the study programme with other study programmes implemented at other universities. During the meetings in assessment visit with academic staff and administration the question of comparing the joint study programme and the study programme implemented by the University of Latvia was addressed and some information was provided (addressed several times during the meetings with the representatives of HEI as well as in SAR pages 9 - 11). There is no complete comparison granted in the documents, which would pave the road for the objective decision, to what extent the joint study programme coincides or stands out if contrasted to the study programme implemented by the University of Latvia.

However the interdisciplinary aspect of the study programme is still rather vague and requires better substantiation. The fact that the study programme contains a few study courses aimed at interdisciplinary setting does not make the whole study programme interdisciplinary. It is recommended to update the description of the study programme, shaping it into a clearly interdisciplinary humanities structure as most of the thematic content, research advancement, scientific contribution and academic expertise lies within the scope of multiple humanities fields.

It is recommended to continue developing the motivation and support mechanisms for the academic staff to get a better access to publishing the results of their research in internationally recognized and database indexed issues.

### ***Conclusions:***

The DU has implemented all short-term recommendations and contributed greatly to the partial implementation of the long-term recommendations. More time and human resources can be allocated to move the process forward.

### ***Strengths:***

1. The initial motivation and support system has been introduced and advanced greatly, providing both the members of the academic staff and doctoral students with the opportunity to benefit from publishing the results of their research in the indexed issues.
2. The on-time short-terms recommendations introduction system is in place.

### ***Weaknesses***

1. The high risk of misleading both the members of the academic staff and the potential students rooted in the misinterpretation of interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary scope of the programme.

2. Vague correlation of the title, objectives, learning outcomes in the description of some study courses provided.

### III. Assessment of the study programme

	Excellent
<b>X</b>	<b>Good</b>
	Average
	Poor

### IV. Recommendations

<b>X</b>	<b>experts recommend that the study programme be included in the accreditation form within this study field</b>
	experts do not recommend including the study programme in the accreditation form within this study field

#### ***1.Short-term recommendations:***

1.1. A more clear definition of the interdisciplinary nature of the humanities-rooted study programme is required to avoid misleading both students and potential partner institutions willing to cooperate.

1.2. Certain evident conflicts between the structure of the study programme and instructions on choosing the particular study courses in the free electives should be resolved. A better recognition and observation of the student-centred education principles should be ensured.

1.3. It is recommended that the students of each specialisation should have an opportunity to choose the required number of courses from a wider list.

1.4. Balancing the teaching load and research load of the personnel.

1.5. A better correlation of the title, objectives and learning outcomes in the description of the study courses should be provided, making sure that the ideas/themes/methods/research paradigms mentioned in the objectives and/or learning outcomes are also addressed in the course content.

#### ***2. Long term recommendations:***

2.2. A better organised information flow within the DU and among the partner institutions should be established.

2.3. Introduce extra-curriculum competence recognition system.

2.4. Designing efficient specialisation promotion campaigns to avoid the risks that uneven ratio of students between the sub-programmes could become unsustainable in the long run.

2.5. Introduce and support a post-doctoral initiative to promote the career prospects of graduates.

2.6. A better pronounced personnel workload, commitment evaluation and remuneration granting system should be introduced.

2.7. Consider several options to participate in high-profile international scientific projects for this study field.

2.8. Continuing to work with previous recommendations.

In the event that the opinions of the experts regarding any of the requirements or criteria differ, please indicate the dissenting opinion.

*Name and surname of the expert, the dissenting opinion, a justification of the dissenting opinion.*