

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

Rīga Stradiņš University

STUDY FIELD

Management, Administration and Management of Real Property

STUDY PROGRAMME

Doctoral study programme “Social Sciences”

*Code: 51380 – Law, 51312 – Political Science, 51314 – Social Anthropology,
Sociology, Social Work, 51321 – Communication Culture and Multimedia, 51345
– Health Management; 51345 – Business Management and Economics*

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I. Summary of the Assessment

The doctoral study programme (DSP) “Social Sciences” is created by combining five programmes “Law”, “Communication Culture and Multimedia,” “Political Science,” “Business Management and Economics” and “Sociology,” which were implemented separately, and one new sub-programme “Health Management”.

DSP was licensed on 16.11.2022. (09.11.2022. Joint experts report on licensing) and started implemented on 01.03.2023. (additional information from RSU to The Quality Agency for Higher Education (AIKA)).

Study field “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” accreditation period at RSU is till 25.11.2027, accredited for 6 years (<https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=site%2Fprogram%2Fview&id=854>) that is the maximal period.

RSU has strong positions in all sub-programmes of DSP concerning academic staff (elected, non-elected and visiting), resources, facilities, research process administration (including support for PhD students) and results, mobility options, internationalisation.

However, some concerns are linked to the current legal framework that any DSP must be included in one study field and for DSP with six sub-programmes covering a wide spectrum of Social sciences it is challenging (according to 13.06.2023. Regulation of Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 “Regulations of the Classification of Education in Latvia” that define the thematic groups and areas of education, according to the programme (in this case sub-programme) codes, for instance: 51380 – goes under law thematic group; 51312 and 51314 goes under Social and Human Action Sciences thematic group; 51321 – goes under Information and Communication Sciences thematic group; 51345 goes under Commercial Sciences and Administration thematic group).

According to classification of science fields in Latvia (Regulation of Cabinet of Ministers No 595 (27.09.2022)). Social sciences (group 5 of scientific branches) included wider fields and research direction rather than just the study field of “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” according to the current legal framework.

RSU admits the situation and stresses that the selection of study field “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” is a result of discussion before, during and after the licensing process. Other alternatives also considered, the study field “Management, Administration and Management of Real Property” is a compromise selection (Visit 04.09.2023., HEI management, DSP and Study field management).

It must be highlighted that the planned changes in the legal framework will discard the accreditation of study fields, instead planning the transition to cyclical institutional accreditation from 2025.

II. Description of the study programme

1. Indicators describing the Study Programme

1.	Name of the higher education institution/college	Rīga Stradiņš University
2.	Name of the study field corresponding to the study programme	Management, Administration and Management of Real Property
3.	Name of the study programme	Academic doctoral study programme “Social Sciences”
4.	Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification	EQF level 8, subprogrammes: 51380 – Law 51312 – Political Science 51314 – Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work 51321 – Communication Culture and Multimedia 51345 – Health Management 51345 – Business Management and Economics
5.	Language of study programme implementation	Latvian and English
6.	Amount, duration, form and type of the study programme (also distance-learning)	full-time, intramural form 4 years part-time, distance learning 4 years and 6 months
7.	Admission requirements	1. Law: academic or professional master’s degree in Law or equivalent higher education. Applicants with a Master’s degree or an equivalent degree in another social sciences sector, other group of sectors should pass an entrance examination. 2. Political Science: academic or professional Master’s degree in political science or equivalent higher education. Applicants with a Master’s degree or an equivalent degree in another social sciences sector, other group of sectors should pass an entrance examination. 3. Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work: academic or professional Master’s degree in social anthropology, sociology, social work or equivalent

		<p>higher education. Applicants with a Master’s degree or an equivalent degree in another social sciences sector, other group of sectors should pass an entrance examination.</p> <p>4. Communication Culture and Multimedia: academic or professional Master’s degree in mass media and communication or equivalent higher education. Applicants with a Master’s degree or an equivalent degree in another social sciences sector, other group of sectors should pass an entrance examination.</p> <p>5. Health Management: academic or professional Master’s degree in health care, health management or an equivalent degree. Applicants with a Master’s degree or an equivalent degree in another social sciences sector, other group of sectors should pass an entrance examination.</p> <p>6. Business Management and Economics: academic or professional Master’s degree in social sciences, economics, business, management, occupational safety or an equivalent degree. Applicants with a Master’s degree or an equivalent degree in another social sciences sector, other group of sectors should pass an entrance examination</p> <p>If a previous education has been acquired in a field of science other than that indicated above, the applicant should take an entrance examination – an interview. The entrance examination is organised in the form of an interview (the interview is recorded and the recording is stored for three months). The examination ascertains the knowledge of the applicant regarding the methodology of social sciences and research methods, as well as the current problems and research directions in the</p>
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		field of science of the relevant subprogramme. Studies in English in all sub programmes require knowledge of English of at least B2
8.	Address of the study programme implementation, indicating whether the study programme is implemented in the branches of the higher education institution / college	Rīga Stradiņš University, Dzirciema iela 16, Riga, LV-1007
9.	Degree, professional qualification or degree and professional qualification to be awarded	Scientific doctoral degree doctor of science (Ph. D.) in social sciences
10.	Date of study programme licensing	16.11.2022., license. No. 2022/31-L
11.	Date of starting the implementation of the study programme	2022/2023 2nd semester of the academic year (01.03.2023)
12.	Accreditation term of the study field	25.11.2027.

Analysis

1. Compliance of the study programme with the study field.

The doctoral study programme (DSP) “Social Sciences” (with 6 sub-programmes” Law”, “Political Science”, “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work”, “Communication Culture and Multimedia”, “Health Management”, “Business Management and Economics”) are run under the study field “Management and Administration, Real Estate Management”. DSP “Social Sciences” emphasis was placed on three main aspects: 1) development of study programmes in accordance with the modern science development and labour market requirements; 2) consolidation and reduction of fragmentation of study programmes; 3) increasing the importance of interdisciplinarity in education, science, research, and labour market (Description, p. 3). The aim of the doctoral study programme “Social Sciences” is to *offer inclusive and sustainable educational opportunities thus contributing to the development of society, enabling talented and motivated students to carry out innovative research in cross-sectoral social sciences based on individual scientific work, to address issues requiring a multifaceted approach, expanding traditional boundaries of social science sectors, emphasising a dynamic approach in research in sectors of law, political science, business, health management, communication, sociology, social anthropology and social work* (Description, p. 17). RSU outlines that DSP is developed on the conceptual report “On the Introduction of the New Doctoral Studies Model in Latvia”, which includes both the requirements for introduction of the new doctoral model and the planned transition to cyclical accreditation of higher education institutions, as well as the implementation of cross-sectoral studies and studies within the framework of doctoral studies (Description, p. 3). The interdisciplinary nature of DSP was also strongly highlighted and argued during the visit (04.09.2023) (in all audiences met: HEI management, DSP and study field management, academic staff, students and employers).

DSP consolidated five doctoral study programmes “Law”, “Political Science”, “Sociology” and “Communication Culture and Multimedia”, “Management Science” to date, as well as identified one new sub-programme “Health Management” corresponding to different study fields accredited by RSU (Description, p. 3).

DSP sub-programmes are according to the education classifier regulated by 13.06.2023. Regulation of Cabinet of Ministers No. 322 “Regulations of the Classification of Education in Latvia” that define the thematic groups and areas of education, according to the programme (in this case sub-programme) codes, for instance: 51380 – goes under law thematic group; 51312 and 51314 – go under Social and Human Action Sciences thematic group; 51321 – goes under Information and Communication Sciences thematic group; 51345 – goes under Commercial Sciences and Administration thematic group).

However, all sub-programmes according to Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 595 of 27 September 2022 “Regulations on Latvian Groups of Fields of Sciences, Fields and Sub-Fields of Science” (Classification of Fields of Science of Latvia) are all belonging to the group of social sciences sector (“5. Social sciences”): the sub-programme “Law” falls within the law sector (5.5.) , sub-programme “Political Science” – political science sector (5.6.), sub-programme “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” – sociology and social work science sector (5.4.) , sub-programme “Communication Culture and Multimedia” – media and communication science sector (5.8.), sub-programme “Health Management” and sub-programme “Business Management and Economics” – economic and business science sector (5.2.) (Description, p. 4).

The aim, objectives and learning outcomes of DSP are concordant. As an example, the DSP aim contains “(..) *enabling talented and motivated students to carry out innovative research in cross-sectoral social sciences based on individual scientific work (..)*” (Description, p. 17), the objectives of DSP include “(..) *to provide doctoral students with the opportunity to master innovative interdisciplinary and dynamic approach in research, extending the competences necessary for scientific research, to carry out industry-relevant, original and innovative research, to increase scientific excellence at the level of scientific articles published in international journals (..)*” (Description, p. 20) that fits with learning outcome No 3 (“(..) *Independently develops a new, creative understanding of existing knowledge, creates and justifies new approaches, develops original research (..)*” Description, p. 21).

In experts opinion the aims and tasks of sub-programmes (Description, p. 18-20) are consistent with the aim of DSP.

As the field of health care and social sciences are in the scope of activities of RSU in higher education and scientific research (Description, p. 6), also the research activities, including PhD thesis topics (for example, “Social Policy in Response to Population Aging”, “Integration of Ergonomics-based Patient Safety System into Process Management in Latvian Hospitals”, “The problem of determining the legal liability of the application of artificial intelligence and robotics technologies in healthcare”) (additional information “Title of thesis topics _DSP” (received 04.09.2023)) and publications, planned PhD Thesis Titles in 2023/2024” (for example, “The Role and Challenges of Patient Organizations in Patient Rights Protection”, “Specific Aspects of Human Resource Planning and Recruitment in Deficit Medical Specialties Post-Covid-19 Period in Baltic States”, “Challenges in Health Policy and Practice Regarding Children's Rights

Compliance in Latvian Hospital Pediatric Departments” (additional information “Doctoral theses Topics NEW” (received 04.09.2023)), DSP “Social Sciences” complies with the scope of activities of RSU and the study field.

2. Compliance between the title of the study programme, the degree to be awarded and the qualification (if applicable).

The title of DSP “Social sciences” and the titles of sub-programmes comply with the degree to be awarded: Scientific doctoral degree doctor of science (Ph. D.) in social science; upon graduation from all six 6 sub-programmes” Law”, “Political Science”, “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work”, “Communication Culture and Multimedia”, “Health Management”, and “Business Management and Economics” (Description, p. 11) . Experts conclude that all sub-programmes are representing *Social sciences* (Group: 5) according to Classification of Fields of Science of Latvia.

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

Third cycle doctoral study programme “Social sciences” complies with Cabinet Regulation No. 322 of July 13, 2017 “Regulations on the Classification of Education in Latvia”. Sub-programme codes are defined according to the classification of education in Latvia: “Law” (51380), “Political Science” (51312), “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” (51314), “Communication Culture and Multimedia” (51321), “Health Management” (51345), “Business Management and Economics” (51345).

DSP is developed for 4 years (full-time intramural, which is planned to be implemented both in Latvian and English) or 4.5 years (part-time distance learning, which is planned to be implemented both in English and Latvian), out of total 176 CP (264 ECTS) during studies, 76 CP/264 ECTS during studies, research accounts for 91% (160 CP), while the study course mastering – 9% (16 CP). DSP is planned with a workload of 22 CP per semester in full-time programme (Description, p.28). Regulations set by Law on Higher Education Institutions (edition in power since 11.07.2023.; applying the new definition of CP (close to ECTS); Part 57, section (2) are met. Admission requirements are clearly-defined and appropriate to achieve planned learning outcomes. It is an appropriate practice to have a Master’s degree or an equivalent degree in another social sciences sector as an Admission requirement, and applicants with a Master’s degree in other group of sectors should pass an entrance examination (Description, p.15-17). Hence, DSP management and academic staff have an option to examine and check the expected competences and be aware if some additional training, support or courses must be offered if needed to achieve planned learning outcomes. During the visit, HEI and DSP management stressed the importance and usefulness of entrance examinations (Visit, 04.09.2023.). In addition, experts emphasize RSU’s stated that admission regulations have been approved (taking into account the recommendations provided in decision No. 2022/31-L of the Study Quality Council of 16 November 2022). Those changes harmonize the conditions for admission requirements within sub-programmes, making them sufficiently clear, which at the same time provides an opportunity to better ascertain the relevant level of knowledge and understanding of the potential student in the scientific field of the sub-programme concerned .

At the same time, it should be noted that in accordance with the requirements of Paragraph 52 of order No. 1-PB-2/389/2022 of RSU Rector of 18.07.2022 "Rīga Stradiņš University Procedure of Admission to Study Programs in English", the applicant must prove to the university his/her English language proficiency at least at level B2 in accordance with the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Thus, it is ensured that English language flow students are required to have knowledge of English at least at level B2 (Description, p.48).

DSP contains seven defined learning outcomes (Description, p.20-21). Study courses are planned to gradually achieve them all, an individual study course covers 2-6 learning outcomes (Description, p.22). Learning outcomes in DSP and the study course descriptions are clearly and sequentially formulated in cooperation between the director of the study programme and the academic staff. Interdisciplinary focus and its topicality and actual importance is highlighted in many aspects in documentation and actual meeting with different audiences in-person (as Description, Visit).

During the visit DSP is implemented in Latvian, planned to be started full-time in English and part-time English after Accreditation finished (Visit 04.29.2023., HEI management, DSP management). On the basis of documentation examined (Description, Appendices, Application, additional information to AIK etc.) and during the visit, there were no major concerns identified that would interfere to implement the programme in English and distance learning programme. The admission requirement for Studies in English in all sub-programmes requires knowledge of English of at least B2 (Description, p.17) is consistent with the learning outcomes of DSP. The academic staff is highly capable (Application (27.02.2023), Appendix 6.1 (academic staff language skills self-assessment and certificates listed); Visit 04.09.2023. meetings with academic staff and HEI, Study field, and DSP management), facilities, technical etc. equipment, library, IT support etc. are appropriate to implement the distance programme.

DSP indicators are according to rules, regulations, or guidelines represented and measured by defined learning outcomes.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

It is noted that the aim of DSP, aims and tasks of sub-programmes are in compliance with the study field and learning outcomes of DSP, also strategic priorities of RSU, as well as the planned and upcoming amendments in the law concerning the accreditation process and application of concept of the study field. Experts have identified and discussed with DSP and Study field management the specifics (Visit, 04.09.2023.) that some sub-programmes (as "*Law*", "*Social Anthropology*", "*Sociology*", "*Social Work*") are wider and cover more aspects rather than only the framework of study field "Management and Administration, Real Estate Management". It is not identified as a concern, rather it gives the option for interdisciplinary research, if the results and findings are valuable also for the study field. All sub-programmes have aspects of "Management

and Administration, Real Estate Management”. DSP complies with the study field, the scope of activities of RSU.

Strengths:

1. Each of the sub-programme has some aspect of management and administration that is integrated, which leads to the conclusion that all sub-programmes and DSP in general, can be included in one study field.
2. The title of DSP complies with the awarded degree.
3. DSP code, duration, amount of programme complies with the defined learning outcomes.
4. Interdisciplinary focus (including health, medicine fields) that meets with RSU specialisations and strategy.

Weaknesses:

1. None identified.

2. Topicality of the study programme

Analysis

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.

DSP with 6 sub-programmes offers education in directions that is topical, demanded by the industry and unique, especially, firstly, due to its linkage with medicine and health, secondly, also interdisciplinary research covering other directions and fields. Private and public institutions from the industry have expressed the importance (Description, Annex 33 contains 11 feedback and references on DSP from the employers (as ministries, public institutions etc.) and large demand for graduates of DSP as in many fields there is a lack of specialists and experts with PhD degrees (Visit, 04.09.2023. meeting with employers). The planned number of graduates every year is 10-13 doctoral students (Description, p.37) is plausible, achievable and corresponds to the demand by the industry.

The documentation contains four activities on the structural and content changes made since the licensing: 1) composition of the DSP Study Quality Council has been clarified; 2) (Description, p.33-34); 2) Part A study course “Information Literacy in Science (Social Sciences)” replaced with Part A course “Scientific Writing and Scientific Communication” insure a common interdisciplinary course to all students in DSP ; 3) implementation of the communication plan of DSP “Social Science” has started (programme communication plan is prepared; joint activities with the RSU International Admissions Office etc.); 4) changes in the admission regulations on the basis of the recommendations provided by the Study Quality Council.

During the visit (04.09.2023) the management of HEI and DSP informed more on practical activities and steps that can be classified as organisational issues and do not change the content, aims or spirit of DSP licensed. DSP management informed on steps and actions taken to ensure

that all study courses have academic staff with demanded level of English, for example, additional academic staff members involved in “Law” ensuring that all study courses can be implemented in Latvian and English (Visit, 04.09.2023.meeting with DSP management). These changes have neutral or positive impact on the implementation of DSP, no evidence identified that they might have negative impact.

2. Dynamics of the student number and prospects of employment for graduates.

As DSP is formed combining several existing programmes then the given statistics represent the state before. The number of annual students graduating DSP is 10-13 doctoral (Description, p.35.). In 2022/23 study, there were 18 students in 1st year, 20 students in 2nd year and 39 students in 3rd year of study (Description, Appendix 16). In past five study years the situation is relatively alike. On average, from 0 to 4 students drop-out depending from the year of study in past five study years (Description, Appendix 16. The student drop-out rates within the study programme by academic year). Hence, the expected number of annual students graduating DSP is plausible and realistic.

According to RSU data, starting from 01.03.2023, a total of fourteen 1st year doctoral students have been transferred to DSP (in sub-programme “Law” – 3, “Political Science” – 4, “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” – 2, “Communication Culture and Multimedia” – 2, “Health Management” – 0 and “Business Management and Economics” – 3) (Description, p.34, Appendix 16). Starting from 01.10.2023, there are plans to transfer a total of fifteen 2nd year doctoral students (in sub-programme “Law” – 5, “Political Science” – 2, “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” – 3, “Communication Culture and Multimedia” – 2, “Health Management” – 0 and “Business Management and Economics” – 3) (Description, p.34, Appendix 16). In the summer/autumn of 2023, after students resume their studies after academic leave, it is planned to transfer a total of three 1st year doctoral students (in sub-programme “Law” – 0, “Political Science” – 0, “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” – 0, “Communication Culture and Multimedia” – 2, “Health Management” – 0 and “Business Management and Economics” – 1) and three 2nd year doctoral students (in sub-programme “Law” – 2, “Political Science” – 0, “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” – 0, “Communication Culture and Multimedia” – 0, “Health Management” – 0 and “Business Management and Economics” – 1) (Description, p.34.-35., Appendix 16).

It is identified that some sub-programmes, especially “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” have been having a very small number of students for some time (as “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” is already implemented programme and now it is transformed into sub-programme of DSP). In future, RSU and DSP management is responsible for monitoring and checking the proportions amid the sub-programmes (with respect to the number of students) that DSP aim is met and the number of DSP graduates (with PhD degree) corresponds to the demands of the industry; in order to ensure that one or some sub-programmes are not excluded and uncovered. Larger number of students might be achieved by attracting foreign students in sub-programmes that currently are relatively small (as “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work”) if DSP implements in English. That also might result in a larger total number of planned graduates as more students are involved.

Prospects for future employment are also linked to professional applied research skills that might be obtained in projects and activities managed by research platforms at university. RSU has three research platforms: Social Sciences, Medicine and Public Health that are linked to the

social science core research directions and interdisciplinary research corresponding to RSU strategy (Description, p.23-25).

The employers assured that the sector lacks specialists with PhD degrees, more PhDs are needed and quantity must be increased (Visit, meeting the employers, 04.09.2023.) in all sub-programmes and in both private and public sector. Concerns from the employers' audience indicated are linked with the risks caused by interdisciplinary, that combining several directions, a strong supervision and motivation is demanded to have valuable and high-valued results for each of the fields of science (Visit, meeting the employers, 04.09.2023.). In general, interdisciplinary education is admitted to be up-to date and highly-evaluated in the market with notable future prospects as well. Positive feedback from employers and experts in the field is justified. Description, Annex 33 contains references from eleven institutions:

- The National Electronic Mass Media Council
- The State Forensic Science Bureau
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- The Centre for European Policy Studies
- The International Centre for Defence and Security
- The Ministry of Culture
- The European Association in Health Law
- The Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development
- The Health Inspectorate
- The Ministry of Health
- The State Police.

Students of DSP are highly motivated to graduate, however, for the students of previously separate programmes, now sub-programmes, there are some organisational issues unclear (Visit 04.09.2023., Students). Students stress the option to study in larger groups, meet, do research and share research results in an interdisciplinary approach.

Dynamics of the number of students correspond to the planned number of annual graduates. And it is identified that the industry has stable demand for graduates of DSP in the long-term. Graduates of DSP are having good prospects of employment in both public and private institutions.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

It is concluded that there is demand in the labour market for PhD and high employment prospects foreseen. DSP's planned number of graduates is 10-13 students that is achievable on the basis of the number of students enrolled in DSP in various study years. Larger number of students are achievable by implementing DSP in English and attracting foreign students that might result in larger groups of students in currently specific and small sub-programmes (as "Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work").

Strengths:

1. Employers highly evaluate the graduates and are ready to hire more.
2. Clear plan on the transition process from separate programmes into DSP with sub-programmes concerning the students already enrolled in studies in one of previous separate study programmes.

Weaknesses:

1. Concerns that still small number of students are enrolled in some sub-programmes (for example, "Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work" (51314)) and hence still small number of graduates specialised in these fields.

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

Achieving the learning outcomes is not possible without ensuring a suitable learning and research environment. The university premises fully meet the needs. There are study rooms for working in both larger and smaller groups, as well as meeting supervisors and doctoral students. The university uses Zoom for teaching, which is sufficient and suitable for conducting distance learning. RSU has a functioning study information system and Moodle is used to conduct studies. To help with writing texts, RSU has subscription of Writefull tool.

The RSU has a library that is physically located in the main building of the university. There are enough working places in the library, as well as computers for use on site if necessary. The library provides information, consultation and other services to students that meet today's requirements. The report submitted by the RSU shows that the funding of the library has increased significantly over the past five years. Therefore, there is no doubt that with the existing allocation of funds, it will be possible to provide the necessary services to the students, as well as to the teaching staff.

The RSU Library provides lecturers and students with access to Latvian and international digital resources. Particularly for that PhD programme and for each sub-programme 27 online e-resources are available. Thus, there are adequate professional sources as well as opportunities for interdisciplinary research. RSU students and lecturers can access the library's subscribed databases remotely using the student portal MyRSU or the Academic Portal, using the username and password assigned by RSU. The base of methodological materials is specifically adapted to social sciences and also to each of the sub-programmes - "Law", "Political science", "Social anthropology, sociology, social work", "Communication culture and multimedia", "Health management" and "Business management and economics". Additionally, the 'Health

Management' sub-programme has a wide range of resources available to view in the catalogue under the heading 'Medicine and Healthcare'. The library's website has a list of recommended e-books by subject, and this distribution corresponds to sub-programmes, among other things. The materials are in both Latvian and English, which allows implementation of the programme in both languages.

RSU has confirmed that it has sufficient financial base. On the basis of the documents submitted, as well as the information received at the meetings held, there is no reason to doubt this. The problem may be that the state funding is small and therefore RSU finances study places from its own budget. The problem is certainly that in some sub-programmes there is interest in those who are able to pay for their studies themselves (for example, law), while in other sub-programmes there are no candidates with such ability (for example, "Social anthropology"). In the long run, this may lead to a situation where some sub-programmes are closed for purely financial reasons. However, it is very difficult to give any recommendations regarding this issue. Apparently, there is no problem here in the short term, and it is difficult to predict the future in the long term.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

RSU provides various up-to-date resources for the doctoral study programme "Social Sciences". It includes electronic resources (e-book databases and full-text journal databases). RSU offers a list of suggested e-textbooks for students to easily search. RSU has developed infrastructure and support for doctoral students. This complex of activities provided by RSU for the doctoral students of the doctoral programme "Social Sciences" provides the basis for achieving the learning outcomes.

Strengths:

1. For doctoral students of the sub-programmes of the curriculum, a wide range of e-resources, databases of e-books, full-text databases of journals are provided.
2. There is a modern research infrastructure and premises for doctoral students.

Weaknesses:

1. None identified.

Evaluation of the requirement [R1]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	
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	X			To achieve the learning outcomes, appropriate information, materials, and technical, scientific,

implementation of the study programme and for ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes.				and financial bases are provided.
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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

There have been no major changes affecting the composition of teaching staff and the qualifications of teaching staff have been identified since licencing procedure.

RSU faculty selection requirements ensure that faculty members are highly qualified researchers in their fields. Many members of academic staff have active Latvian Council of Science' (LCS) expert status, several professors conduct courses in all or several sub-programmes:

1. Communication culture and multimedia - 6 with a doctorate degree, of which 4 have valid LCS expert status - Mass media and communication;
2. Business management and economics – 8 with a doctorate degree, of which 3 have valid LCS expert status - Economics and business;
3. Health management - 7 with a doctorate degree, of which 4 have valid LCS expert status - 1 Medical basic sciences, including pharmacy, 1 Health and sports sciences, 2 Economics and business;
4. Law - 7 with a doctorate degree, of which 6 have valid LCS expert status Law
5. Social anthropology, sociology, social work - 4 with a doctorate degree, of which valid LCS expert status 1 Other social sciences, including interdisciplinary social sciences and military science, 2 Sociology and social work;
6. Political science – 5 with a doctorate degree, of which 5 have valid LCS expert status Political science (Additional information; Appendix 24.6/24.7).

During the visit (04.09.2023.) DSP director and also students met stressed that it is a relatively common practice that one student has one supervisor and one or two additional consultants from other fields to ensure guidance and supervision for interdisciplinary research.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

The academic staff engaged in the implementation of the doctoral study programme is highly qualified, following the requirements arising from the law and the guidelines for the implementation of the curriculum, ensuring the fulfilment of the objectives and learning outcomes of individual fields of study.

Strengths:

1. At RSU, the qualifications standards for choosing the academic staff have been set.
2. Many of the academic staff members of the doctoral study programme are recognized experts by the Latvian Science Council (LSC).
3. Academic staff take part in international and national research.

Weaknesses:

1. None identified.

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			Both the academic personnel and the visiting staff have excellent qualifications. Qualification standards are used in the RSU selection procedure for the teaching staff. Teaching staff members serve as LSC (LZP) experts in all relevant science fields.

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

The study process in DSP is based on scientific research and scientific input in the relevant field of science, linked to the requirements for starting promotion, determining compliance with the criteria (on achievements and findings in the respective field), as an example, the doctoral student needs two international publications to complete DSP and commence the promotion process (Description, p.45-46).

The number of DSP academic staff has been involved in various national and international projects (Application, Annex 6.2; Licencing Report, p.19) and research networks, including in COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology) actions promoting also the involvement of doctoral students in COST actions as well (Description, p.35). For example,

academic staff and students of new sub-programmes were involved in Horizon project MSCA-2022-DN-01 (MSCA Doctoral Networks 2022) “The European Network on Populism and the Environment” (Description, p.35).

Doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science.

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

RSU academic and research staff has publications in indexed data bases (as Scopus, Web of Science) and the entire study process in DPS is based on scientific research and scientific input in the relevant field of science, as well as is closely related to fulfilment of the requirements for starting promotion, determining compliance with the given criteria, as the doctoral student needs two international publications to complete DSP and commence the promotion process (Description p.45). DSP is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science and other fields, as DSP is highly focused on interdisciplinary research and results. RSU is strongly highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of DSP and its benefits to generate valuable, applicable results (Visit 04.09.2023., HEI management, DSP management).

Strengths:

1. Academic staff and students are involved in the research process, results published.
2. Academic staff and students are promoted to take part in research networks and facilitate networking.

Weaknesses:

1. Research might be a bit limited due to the study field framework; some sub-programmes might have wider topics.

Evaluation of the requirement [R3]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	
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).	X			Involvement of the academic staff in scientific activities, including projects, COST actions, and the outcomes of this involvement, such as scientific publications, which are used in the study process in the DSP proves the sufficient substantiation of the study programme content by the latest

				developments and discoveries in corresponding field of science and interdisciplinary results valuable to wider audiences and applications.
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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 for the profession), if a professional qualification is awarded after acquisition of the study programme				<i>Not applicable</i>
3.	The code of the study programme complies with the Cabinet regulations on the Latvian Education Classification	X			<p>Sub-programme codes are defined according to the classification of education in Latvia: “Law” (51380), “Political Science” (51312), “Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work” (51314), “Communication Culture and Multimedia” (51321), “Health Management” (51345), “Business Management and Economics” (51345).</p> <p>According to 13.06.2017. Cabinet regulations No. 322 on the Latvian Education Classification, the last three digits of the codes correspond to the following programme groups: (312 - Political Science; 314 - Sociology and cultural studies; 321 - Journalism and communication; 345- Management and administration; 380 - Law science).</p>
4.	The qualification of the teaching staff ¹ complies with the conditions and requirements set for the implementation of the study programme, which are	X			<p>More than the minimum required.</p> <p>11 elected professors (10 out them with in-power Latvia Council of Science expert’s</p>

¹ 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.

	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.				status; one submitted documents), 8 elected associate professors (6 with in-power Latvia Council of Science expert's status; 1 submitted documents). (Appendices 24.6. / 24.7)
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 www.europass.lv), if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language or 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.	X			According to Annex 6.1., 43 out of 45 teaching staff representatives declare at least B2-level English language knowledge (one B1, one A2 level). As well as knowledge of the official language complies with the Cabinet Regulations No 733 (Confirmation statements No. 60-6/258/2021 and 3- DPAD-6/52/2023) for 40, 5 are professors from abroad (*Lecturer from abroad).
6.	The study programme, which is intended to be implemented in a foreign language, complies with the requirements of Section 56, Part three of the Law on Higher Education Institutions	X			The RSU has ability to implement the programme in English (Description and observations and meetings during Visit (04.09.2023)), Description Annex 6.1. contains info on 40 members of the teaching

					staff who have English language proficiency level of at least B2.
7.	The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement (if applicable).	X			The sample of the study agreement was prepared for licensing, not changed.
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			The sample of the diploma was prepared for licensing, not changed.
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			The document and agreements were prepared for licensing, not changed.
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			The document and conformation was prepared for licensing, not changed
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	X			The exports of the Latvian Council of Science Data base and Description (p.13-14) confirm.

	are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. 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			Experienced academic staff, researchers, leaders of sub-programme sub-fields, young researchers, professionals are recruited and elected or employed as visiting professors, researchers and lecturers. (Description p.44-45)
13.	The joint study programme complies with the requirements prescribed in Section 55 ¹ , of the Law on the Higher Education Institutions (if applicable).				Not applicable

Evaluation of the requirement [R4]:

Requirement	Compliance			Justification
	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Non-compliant	
Compliance of the study programme with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.	X			DSP with six sub-programmes comply with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other laws and regulations.

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

There are one short-term and three long term recommendations given by the licensing experts. RSU describes in more detail the action taken and declares that a plan for implementation of the recommendations provided has been prepared (Description, p.47-48). The short-term recommendation was on larger involvement of the private sector in DSP. DSP management and also employers stressed the steps already taken to work together with companies and institutions, meanwhile highlighted the specifics of RSU due to interdisciplinary including health and medicine. It is a relatively short time period since the licensing (since 9.11.2022. Licencing report) to expect that the long-term recommendations must be fully implemented therefore experts encourage RSU to follow the plan for Implementation of Recommendations Provided by Licensing Experts and the Study Quality Council (added in annex 11).

Conclusions, strengths and weaknesses

DSP is focused on interdisciplinary approach and hence stable and consistent involvement of the private sector representatives from various sub-sectors and levels and also government institutions in DSP is taking place and ongoing.

Strengths:

1. Deep and long-standing cooperation with mainly public and but also private institutions concerning the study process and learning outcomes.
2. Recommendations from Licencing experts considered and elaborated the plan for implementation of the recommendations. RSU is open to meet the recommendations.

Weaknesses:

1. None identified

III. Assessment of the study programme

Excellent	<u>Good</u>	Average	Poor
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IV. Recommendations

The experts recommend to include the doctoral study programme “Social Science” in the study field “Management and Administration, Real Estate Management”.

On a short-term basis:

1. Communicate more with students and deliver the core and idea of changes taking place, especially for the final study year' students.
2. More common seminars, workshops for students of all sub-programmes in all study years are recommended to work and communicate in an interdisciplinary environment, share the results, learn from the best current practices and strategies by other students etc. Create conditions and environment for study community where to work and study together.

On a long-term basis:

1. For sub-programmes that are wider and partially are applicable to the study field "Management and Administration, Real Estate Management" as "Law", "Political Science", "Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work" to insure that the research results are valuable for the field of science and the study field limitations are not limiting the quality of research.
2. It is recommended to have a strong supervision in DSP due to its high focus towards interdisciplinary, that the scientific results and findings are valuable for the main field or all fields of science researched. In a result, that the obtained results are applicable and implementable in real case situations or are as the basis for further fundamental and / or applied research. It is recommended to consider two scientific supervisors (from each science field if interdisciplinary research) for PhD thesis, if it is applicable.
3. Promote more international mobility of students, as ERASMUS+, that is also valuable for future research prospects and networking.
4. RSU and DSP management is recommended to monitor and check the proportions amid the sub-programmes (with respect to the number of students) that DSP aim is met and the number of DSP graduates (with PhD degree) corresponds to the demands of the industry; meanwhile one or some sub-programmes are not excluded and uncovered.
5. It is recommended to consider the options to attract foreign students in sub-programmes that currently are relatively small (as "Social Anthropology, Sociology, Social Work"). In this case, the total number of planned graduates also might be changed (increased) as more students are involved.