

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Turība University

Study field: Law

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## Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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Summary of the Assessment of the Study Direction and the Relevant Study Programmes, as Carried Out by the Experts

Turiba University (hereinafter – the BAT) study direction “Law Science” provides 4 programmes:

1. First Level Professional Higher Education Programme “Law Science” (41380)
2. Academic Bachelor Study Programme “Law Science” (43380)
3. Professional Master Study Programme „Law Science” (47380)
4. Academic Doctoral Study Programme „Law Science” (51380)

According to BAT Strategy 2016-2020, the University has set several important strategic goals that will help to improve the quality of the provided educational product. There are several vital tasks provided f the BAT strategy, for instance, to improve the study content in accordance with current trends in Latvia and the world, to develop high quality, interdisciplinary and university-level academic staff, to promote research and publications in internationally quoted publications, directing and supporting staff development in international programs, participation in projects, and experience development etc. In general the BAT has achieved the goals, but there are some problematic aspects that shall have to be improved to provide modern, qualitative study programmes. It is still necessary to improve the research field. In general the BAT has a few proactive academic staff members who actively participate in the research field and who are authors to 80% of existing scientific publications indexed in the Web of Science or Scopus databases. The collaboration in the research field (scientific publications) between the students of the Masters or Doctoral study programmes and the academic staff/guest lecturers could be improved as well.

It must be noted that since 2010 the BAT has been publishing the Scientific journal “Acta Prosperitatis” and it is indexed in EBSCO database.

It follows from the information provided by SER that the BAT has become more active in Research project writing. This is a big advantage of the university, but one of the weaknesses is that the participants of the projects are usually academic staff from the main building. Participation of guest lecturers as well lecturers from the branches of the University (unless they are Doctoral study programme students) in these projects is insufficient The low level of students involved in the projects should be mentioned as well.

The management and the structure of the BAT is clear and logical. So is also the main BAT’s long-term planning document - the Strategic Guidelines 2016-2020 approved by the TU Senate are clear, direct, relevant and constructive. The good and transparent quality policy is one of the positive examples worth mentioning.

First Level Professional Higher Education Programme “Law Science” (41380)

The programme is designed with potential and logic. The students are being prepared for the examination of the qualification. The aim of the study programme is to train and educate students for the profession of the legal assistant, promoting their development into a mentally and physically developed, free, responsible and creative personality, ensuring competitive specialists for the labour market. Besides, the good cooperation with stakeholders, state institutions at program content level has to be mentioned. And according to the research made by the experts the aim has been achieved. The BAT provides opportunity to the students to receive practical and theoretical knowledge. Nevertheless, it must be noted that the First Level Professional Study Programme “Law Science” takes place in several branches. This is related to several shortcomings. Links between the main office in Riga and the branches should be improved in terms of the variety of lecturers. The institution has already recognised this issue as important and has made plans on how to tackle this task but it seems that it still should be improved. More guest lecturers should be provided to

branches. The library resources are poor in branches.

#### Academic Bachelor Study Programme "Law Science" (43380)

The study programme is integrated into the BAT structure and its development stems from the BAT development strategy. It follows from the Self-evaluation report (hereinafter - SER) that the strategic goal of the study programme is to provide students with theoretical knowledge and research skills. This is established in the course descriptions as well, but the involvement of the students of the Academic Bachelor Study Programme "Law" into the research (scientific articles with Doctoral students or academic staff as co-authors) probably will increase the potential of the research skills. The SER states that the difference of this programme lies in its research orientation, allowing its students to gain in-depth academic knowledge and develop the competencies of a specialist in law science, as well as to promote independent research and analysis of current issues and problems in law science. But it is difficult to distinguish this in practice, considering the practical aspects of those differences. The positive factor is very strong and professional academic staff/guest lecturers, who are involved in the programme. In order to improve the quality of the programme it is suggested to work with the international cooperation staff. This cooperation could be more active and broader (not only Lithuania, Estonia, but putting more emphasis on Central Europe etc.). Cooperation in research areas with private and public sectors can be recommended as well (ministries, law offices etc.).

#### Professional Master Study Programme „Law Science" (47380)

New professional standards for lawyers were approved in 2020. The BAT did not make comparison analyses with the new standards, as a result the experts were not able to not assess the programme's compliance with the new professional standards. It is recommended to improve the cooperation in the research field between Doctoral = students, the academic staff and the students of the Masters study programme students. Otherwise the Professional Master's Study Programme "Law Science" is qualitative, especially the content of the study and the original study courses are worth mentioning. The programme is well positioned. In general, the teaching staff is highly qualified, and a high percentage of Ph.D academics are involved in the programme.

#### Academic Doctoral Study Programme „Law Science" (51380)

The aim of the program is to provide high-level studies and active research work to Doctoral students, to enable the Doctoral students to acquire in-depth competences necessary for independent research work and its completion with original and empirically proven results in the field of Law Science, testifying the use of international experience in research work and in its organization and management. The qualitative content of the study programme is worth mentioning. The content of the Doctoral programme covers the main subdivisions of Law, Theory and History of Law, National Law, International Law, Criminal Law, Civil Law, Forensic Science and Theory of Operations etc. It follows from the SAR that the Doctoral study programme is provided in both Latvian and English languages, which is important from the antiracialisation perspective. The advantage of the programme is that the Doctoral students are involved in all level Law programmes at the BAT. But the shortcoming is the cooperation of the Doctoral students (at research and project level) with, for instance, the Master's students and the academic staff. In the last 5 years several Doctoral theses have been defended. It can be suggested to work on increasing the number of the defended dissertations.

Professional academic staff are involved in the implementation of the study programme. Among the lecturers involved in the implementation of the programme are: 1) 8 lecturers in the university, who have the following positions: 6 professors, 1 associate professor, 2 docents. 2) 18 guest lecturers: 15 guest professors, 3 guest docents. Seven professors or associate professors elected in full-time academic positions at the BAT participate in the compulsory and the elective part of the programme.

## 1. Management of the Study Field

### Analysis

1.1. In the SER was stated that aims of the study Direction is to educate qualified legal professionals capable of independently carrying out activities relating to the application of substantive and procedural law, the application of case law and doctrine in the fields of public and private law at national, European Union and international level, with respect to the interests of Latvia. Accordingly the main tasks are formulated: ensuring access to higher education, measures to support higher education export (combining of outstanding programmes and creation of joint programmes in other EU languages in no fewer than 10 fields of study; international publicity of the programmes and development of support centers for foreign students; recruitment of foreign instructors), competitiveness and consolidation of higher education, development of material and technological provision (equipment), improvement of the internal quality system, encouraging a higher rate of scientific publication by university staff, launching of international journals, increased effectiveness of the governance system. In addition, cooperation among BATs, research institutions and private sector as well as the transfer of research and innovation to the industry/business are also pointed out as priorities for Latvia's and accordingly study Direction's development.

1.2. BAT (Biznesa augstskola Turība) has in place the managing structure which includes: study programme directors, head of study Direction, head Vice Dean, Council etc. and at the top BAT Senate. The Self-Evaluation procedure for the study process (Approved by Senate 22.01.2014. decision) states that the goal of self-evaluation of study programmes and processes is to ensure continuous improvement of study quality management. Several structural units of BAT are involved in the implementation of the study Direction. The Faculty and the departments are primarily involved in academic activity whereas the Study Department and the Rector's Council deal with the implementation of study processes. The annual study programmes SER should analyse the current situation in the Latvian and international market, the problems related to the implementation of the study programmes and make recommendations for improvement of the study process and increase the demand for the study programme.

All changes in the programme are initiated by the director of the respective study programme and it is considered by the faculty council with the participation of all study programme directors. For instance, the Master's programme in Law had to be restructured to better align with the structure of the Lawyer Qualification Exam by removing specialization opportunities and providing all students with current knowledge, skills and competences in the five areas that will be tested. Accordingly, the Senate's decision of 25.11.2019 was to amend the content of the Master's study programme. When making changes to the Master's study programme, it was also necessary to specify the content of the Bachelor's study program. Thus, the director of the Bachelor's study programme also made the necessary additions to the academic bachelor's study programme in order to achieve the common goal of the Master's study programme - to achieve knowledge, skills and competences for successful passing of the lawyer's qualification examination.

Management of BAT stated during the site visit that it provides a stable and financially stable situation which enables them to invest in the fulfillment of goals set. It created a scheme to motivate lecturers to publish more papers, organise courses to improve lecturers' skills for online teaching,...etc. The institution also strives to follow the trends in the development of society. For instance in the area of green thinking it tries to provide knowledge and skills for students in the area of "green rights".

1.3. The enrolment regulations are in compliance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Cabinet of Minister regulations No. 846 "Regulations on requirements, criteria and procedure for enrolment in study programmes" and the Study regulations of BAT Procedure and requirements for student enrolments are laid out in the Enrolment regulations. All citizens of the Republic of Latvia, persons who are entitled to the non-citizen passport issued by the Republic of Latvia, permanent

and temporary residents of Latvia or persons based on inter university agreements shall be entitled to study at TU. TU Rector issues a decree on enrolment. Opportunities for recognition of professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education are specified in the Regulations on procedure for recognition of study results gained through previous education or professional experience. The study results achieved through previous education or professional experience are evaluated and determined in accordance with the study programs implemented by BAT; if they meet the relevant requirements of the study programs implemented by BAT, they shall be recognized and the relevant credits shall be awarded. A person, who is not a student of the respective study programme may be enrolled in the corresponding study period of this study programme, after recognition of the study results and if necessary, the scope of additional study courses or study modules and respective examinations to be completed are determined individually. There are criteria established necessary to be met in order to complete recognition of either study achievements or professional.

The Study Regulations approved by the Senate determine the procedure of examination and assessment, types and forms of examinations, as well as the duties and rights of educators and students. More precisely, it regulates the procedure of the examination, examination grading (from 1 to 10 of which 4 is the lowest successful assessment to which qualification shall be awarded), appellate procedure, cases of plagiarism and in which cases graduation with honours is awarded.

Institution regularly assesses results of final examinations. The State Examination Commission is formed by external evaluators and as such provide the opportunity to judge the level of quality of the academic process at the university by looking at trends in ratings. It is the opinion of the institution that the performance of graduates in the labour market can be judged three years after graduation in a particular study programme and that obtaining information on the subject is relatively difficult and one can not always be certain of its impartiality. Therefore, from this point of view, it is absolutely necessary to regularly analyse changes and trends in the state examinations assessments. Although each evaluation is subjective in some respects, the overall tendency of the evaluation can help us discuss the improvements in the quality of the study process at the institution of higher education. For the last five years it could be noted that the grades for the First Level Professional Higher Education Programme "Law Science" are a bit lower compared to the grades for other two programmes: Academic Bachelor Study Programme "Law Science" and Professional Master Study Programme „Law Science". The last one is the best rated of three.

1.4. There are several documents which regulate academic integrity principles and mechanisms. The Regulations on compilation of students' independent papers determine the sequence and procedure for writing individual papers, with particular attention to procedure for references. The Regulations on academic integrity and plagiarism identifies certain types of plagiarism, describing each of them (e.g. absolute plagiarism, word by word plagiarism, unethical plagiarism, incorrect sources). The Study Regulations stipulate the students' obligation to study in good faith within the framework of the respective study programme and to use the works of other authors only to the amount corresponding to the purpose of their use in carrying out research, obligatory indicating the author and title of the work used. The Study Regulations foresee cases where a student has not acted in good faith and has submitted a plagiarism or repeatedly submitted the same work without any significant additions. The State Examination Regulations regulate cases when students have submitted plagiarism for defence of their final thesis (qualification paper, bachelor's thesis or master's thesis). One of the tools for discovering plagiarism, the origin and the lawful use of which is unquestionable, is the unified computerized plagiarism control system (VDPKS). Turība has joined this system and examines every qualification, bachelor, master and doctoral thesis submitted. Every student who is not admitted to the defence and is forced to rewrite and submit his work and pay an additional fee for the defence. There are established procedures and penalties for cases in which the plagiarism is detected (over 30% of the text). In 2019, BAT joined the international plagiarism prevention platform Turnitin, which enables both students and lecturers to check the extent of the

text against the works of other authors before submitting their works.

1.5. The list of study programmes implemented at BAT is accessible on the Turiba webpage: <http://www.turiba.lv/lv/studijas/studiju-programmas/184/>.

The responsibility for correspondence of the information available on the website to the information available in the official registers lies with each study programme director and the Development Department as a whole.

BAT made a development plan aiming to overcome detected challenges such as improving cooperation and preventing overlapping:

1. Students are offered the opportunity of learning modules, subjects and/or undergoing practice (fully or partly) in study programmes implemented by other Latvian HEIs. However, very low activity has been observed in this field. Students will be repeatedly informed of this possibility at the beginning of each study year. In the sphere of cooperation and international exchange students are motivated to undergo short term studies and/or research abroad by both awarding additional financing as well as transferring their study results/credit points.
2. It is planned to offer students the possibility of undergoing practice abroad in a professional environment, e.g. Great Britain.
3. Individual study programmes offered by other Latvian HEIs have not been targeted but students do have such a possibility.
4. Further cooperation is promoted between the development department and the vice rector for International Relations to keep the students informed about opportunities to participate in mobility programmes/projects.
5. Cooperation with Latvian and foreign HEIs: joint programmes, Erasmus, research projects, double degree programmes.
6. Cooperation with professional non-governmental organisations (NGO) is being furthered. It is also planned to sign cooperation agreements with newly registered NGOs in Latvia in the field of Law.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The institution has defined aims and tasks in accordance with the development goals of Latvia and study Direction, which are clearly defined and attainable. There is a clear line of responsibilities during the self-evaluation process and quality improvement in Turiba. As an example of good cooperation the institution explained the cooperation of the study programme directors. From the documentation and site visits, interviews it appeared that the management structure is oriented towards improvement and the decision making process is efficient and effective. The information on study programmes for candidates and students are accessible on the institution's website in Latvian and English etc.

### **Strengths**

1. Well established connection with practitioners who transfer their knowledge and practical skills to BAT students, which BAT itself puts on the forefront of the strengths is SWOT analysis and which was confirmed by students, alumni and employers during the site visit;
2. Well established processes for self evaluation with a clear line of responsibilities.

### **Weaknesses**

1. Cooperation with BAT branches should be improved.

## **2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System**

### **Analysis**

- 2.1. As provided by the SER, the BAT has established a quality policy and a quality assurance

system. The BAT has adopted the Quality Management Manual (Document v 139, approved by the Senate on 22.05.2019) and Quality Policy. The documents are available in the BAT's internal network. According to the report the system has been developed in accordance with the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area and the strategic guidelines of BAT. It can be concluded that the established quality assurance system ensures improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction and the relevant study programmes.

2.2. The SER provides information on assessment and feedback system to ensure quality of education process. The evaluation and feedback process is organised involving teaching staff, management, students and graduates. The feedback process mainly takes place through surveys and questionnaires as explained by the SER on pages 32 and 33. The results of the student surveys are collected by the Development Department and passed to the faculties, which further analyse student recommendations and decide on necessity to amend the study content. The Development Department keeps track of where the graduates continue their professional career, gathers case studies and feedback on whether skills and competences received during studies give alumni opportunities to grow in a professional career.

It was not clear how the faculties pass the decisions on necessity to amend the programme if the feedback is controversial, for instance some of the students consider the programme too intense, the other would like to have more hours on particular subjects. During the interviews the students, graduates and employers confirmed that they participate in the surveys and provide feedback. In particular, students were content with the possibility to provide feedback and underlined the availability of lecturers to give feedback to students, for examples for the results of the tests, and hear feedback from students. Some representatives of employers informed that they participate in the Council of the Faculty of Law and provide their views on improving the quality of education, in particular expertise and skills that need to be developed for students. The employers also informed that the study programme reacts and adopts to the developments in law. This cooperation is stable and active. The employers involved in the Council give input on latest developments and necessities for knowledge. They also highlighted that students arrive for practice and are usually informed on the latest developments, which shows that lecturers follow and adopt the programme accordingly. Therefore, it can be concluded that the feedback system is established, it is applied in practice, is efficient and available for all stakeholders, students, graduates and employers.

2.3 The BAT has procedures in place to collect data relevant to the study programme and uses this information to improve relevant portions of the programme. As indicated in BAT's SER it complies with relevant provisions of its internal Personal Data Processing Policy in collecting and retaining quality control data. There is a formal process for collecting student and faculty complaints and resolving issues that are raised by them. Data on student dropouts are collected, and used by BAT to make changes to ensure that students will complete their studies.

During the site visit, it was clear that any student complaints were treated very seriously and corrective measures were implemented shortly thereafter. Likewise, employers had a mechanism to communicate any issues with internships or trainee programmes directly with BAT. It was likewise apparent that BAT was attentive to any concerns raised by employers. There was an instance where staff from one of the satellite campuses expressed a concern about getting more laptops from BAT administration (rather than relying on faculty to bring their own laptops), especially given the expansion of online learning during the Covid pandemic. It appeared that no formal request was made, and perhaps a better and easier mechanism for making these kinds of requests would have made it easier for the staff member to express their concerns with management. However, with that exception, overall BAT does adequately use and collect data regarding quality control to good effect.

2.4 The BAT has identified the areas set forth in Part 1 of the ESG that require special attention, and has adopted and utilized a quality assurance programme to address these issues. In its SER, BAT listed 10 areas identified in the ESG, and specified how it has addressed these issues. These include

1)quality assurance policy, 2)programme design and appeal, 3)student centered teaching/learning, 4)matriculation of students, study processes, qualifications/certifications, 5)educators, 6)learning resources, 7)information management, 8)informing the society, 9)programme monitoring, and 10)cyclic external quality assurance. During the site visit, it was obvious that BAT put special emphasis on the factors of programme design and appeal, student centered learning, educators and learning resources. As a private institution, it has increased flexibility to react to changes in market demand for particular skills and related educational programmes. The needs of the students are put front and center in its legal programmes. The faculty staff has excellent teaching ability, and while there are some deficiencies in research, BAT has tried to address this weakness by providing incentives and support for faculty to increase their research output. The library resources for law students were addressed, and sufficient online legal databases were made available. There were some concerns, however, about whether the law programme was prepared for the new requirements for becoming a licensed attorney in Latvia. However, BAT administration was quite responsive to immediately addressing these concerns.

Overall, BAT's quality assurance system is well-equipped to address all the points contained in Part 1 of the ESG. In all areas where improvements and changes are called for, BAT is very proactive in making any necessary changes.

### **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

Overall, the BAT has an efficient and effective internal quality control system. There is a process for obtaining feedback from students, faculty, employers and stakeholders, and BAT uses this information to improve the quality of its law programmes. Data protection appears to be respected and the issues raised in part 1 of the ESG are given appropriate attention. While the quality control system is generally effective, some additional structure could be provided to ensure that feedback can be formally collected in a more systematic way.

#### **Strengths:**

1. The BAT is very responsive in addressing quality issues that may arise, particularly from students and employers.
2. An effective quality assurance programme is in place to ensure that complaints may be addressed and the quality of the programme is maintained.
3. Special attention is given to the issues raised in part 1 of the ESG.
4. The evaluation and feedback process is organised involving teaching staff, management, students and graduates.
5. Lecturers are available and responsive to give feedback to students in the learning process.
6. Employers are involved in the Council of the Faculty of Law and provide their views on improving the quality of education.
7. BAT has established mechanisms for assessment of the quality of its work.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. Some feedback is provided on an ad hoc basis, and more structure to the system of encouraging and soliciting feedback (complaints/suggestions) would be welcome.
2. A lack of attentiveness to new certification and licensing requirements in the field of law.
3. There was some evidence of a reluctance of staff to provide negative feedback. One example was at a branch campus where there was a need for additional laptops for faculty, but the administrative person responsible did not make a request for additional laptops from BAT's central office in Riga. Instead, the person appealed to faculty to bring their own personal laptops. A process should be instituted to ensure that requests for resources made by faculty or staff are encouraged (even if they may not always be granted), and that no retaliation will be taken against anyone making such



requests.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field**

#### **Analysis**

3.1. BAT is a privately funded higher education institution. As such, without regular and substantial state support, it would appear that there could be a risk of a sudden loss of revenue that may affect its study programmes, including its law programme. However, this does not appear to be the case, thanks to BAT excellent financial planning and steady stream of revenues and profits. BAT has regularly recorded a profit. This was a 27% increase (in after tax profit) over the figures for 2016/2017. Importantly, during the same term (2016/17 to 2017/18) tuition revenues increased by 5.4%. According to the SER, the annual budget for the programme is determined by revenue. As there has been a relatively long record of steady (and even increasing) revenue and profits, this has assured a regular and sufficient level of funding for the law school. Finances are centrally allocated at BAT, and the branch campuses do not determine their own budgets. However, BAT is sensitive to the specific financial needs and budgeting requests from the branch campuses. Also importantly, during the current COVID pandemic - a time of financial stress - BAT has been able to function relatively well. It set aside a financial reserve to withstand a one year downturn in revenue, and to the extent the COVID crisis continues for a longer term, Turība has an excellent credit rating and would be able to borrow the necessary funds to adequately maintain its programmes, including law. More specifically, BAT maintains a reasonable and adequately funded system to finance and support the scientific research activities of its law faculty. A bonus system is in place, providing approximately EUR 500 for the publication of an article in a scopus listed journal. Financial support is also provided for faculty to translate their work into English, so as to enable them to have better prospects for publishing articles in various foreign journals with stronger academic reputations. Furthermore, BAT regularly finances faculty visits to participate in international scientific conferences. The faculty almost universally praised BAT financial support of their scientific research activities. In terms of long term financial planning and strategy, Latvia's demographic situation (less young students forecast for the future) presents challenges for the law school in the future. While the business school has emphasized internationalization, and the recruitment of foreign students, these solutions may not be practical in the field of law. Foreign students naturally might not have a great interest in learning Latvian law and becoming lawyers in Latvia, and therefore there is a reliance on Latvian students into the future. The PhD programme, to its credit, has greater potential for foreign students and has made efforts to recruit them for studies in English.

3.2 The relevant necessary physical infrastructure and technical resources have been provided by BAT. BAT boasts a modern campus in Riga, with a commensurately modern library and study spaces. There are sufficient legal texts in the library's collection and numerous electronic legal databases are available. However, during the site visit, there were some examples where the library did not have the most up to date version of a legal text (such as for Latvian labor law), and there was a question whether or not all students fully understood how to access every legal database. Therefore, care needs to be taken to ensure that legal texts are constantly updated and that necessary training for using legal databases is provided. A process does exist whereby the department heads and programme directors provide input into how the library resources should be updated each academic year; however, as noted above, BAT should have a more formal process to ensure that legal texts containing information about changes in the law are constantly updated. The infrastructure of its branch campuses, while not as modern as Riga, appear to be adequate. There was a minor problem at the Cesis campus regarding the provision of a sufficient number of modern laptop computers; in fact, BAT in that case often relied upon lecturers to use their own laptops. Law students enjoy the benefits of using all the facilities of BAT, including those used for its business

programme. In terms of technical resources, law students have access to a wide array of academic and legal databases. During the COVID crisis, BAT adapted well in transitioning its courses from being in person to taking place online. Less technically proficient lecturers were given necessary IT support so that their courses continued rather seamlessly. Again, revenue is sufficiently allocated to improving infrastructure so that law students enjoy and maintain access to a relatively high standard of physical and technical resources.

3.3 BAT has assembled and maintained a qualified group of teachers at its law faculty, that is especially well tailored for its programme. In many cases the teaching staff are practicing legal professionals, such as attorneys and prosecutors. Likewise, in the branches, there is ample involvement from lawyers and court professionals working in the local community. The lecturers appear satisfied with the compensation and benefits provided by BAT. There was a comment from the employers that in general - at BAT and most higher education institutions in Latvia - salaries are low, and therefore it is a necessity for lecturers to maintain other employment as a lawyer, etc. Even so, BAT appears to pay sufficient compensation to its law faculty that is both in line with Latvian norms and adequate to ensure that there is not high turnover. A main advantage of BAT's law programme is that students gain a high level of practical legal skills, which are much appreciated by employers during internships and also when the students come to work for them on a permanent basis after graduation. In this sense, the heavy use of practitioners as lecturers reinforces this advantage. While the academic publishing credentials of the law faculty is relatively weak, and could be improved, in some sense it is a natural disadvantage of using practitioners as faculty- natural in that they have built-in time limitations that make it difficult for them to concentrate on publishing while maintaining two full-time jobs. Even with this structural problem, as mentioned earlier, BAT is making efforts in improving faculty scientific production. There is a focus on the didactic skills of lecturers and most law students seem to be quite satisfied with the quality of teaching at BAT. Where there are concerns raised, especially by students, there appears to be a quick response by both the administration and faculty and any deficiency is quickly corrected. Even so, BAT is lacking a more formal process to improve its faculty's teaching skills. It appears that corrections are made on a reactive basis (in response to student complaints). While this approach has been effective, a more proactive process would be better. Faculty are eager to take part in teaching mobility programmes, especially Erasmus +. There were numerous examples of lecturers going on exchanges to a variety of different countries, including Germany and Lithuania. These exchanges have a direct benefit to the law students at BAT in terms of the introduction of new teaching methods and new perspectives acquired abroad. Of course teacher mobility could be expanded further but it seems to be headed in the right direction in terms of both faculty interest and opportunity.

3.4 BAT does provide a support network for students, but this could be improved. During the assessment visit, there was a focus on determining the level of support provided to students in the areas of: career placement/guidance, financial assistance, and psychological assistance. Law students do receive significant support in finding jobs and ultimately careers. Alumni support is enlisted to help place students in internships and jobs, and there is considerable outreach to employers. In one example BAT students were placed in positions at Ernst & Young, a prestigious firm. At the branch campuses, career placement and support is concentrated in the public sector (courts and local police). In many instances, students at these campuses already have jobs in the public sector and use their degrees at BAT to advance their careers internally with their current employers. Even in these cases, however, BAT provides support by ensuring that students have a flexible schedule so that they can combine their work and studies. Still, in both Riga and the branch campuses, BAT should improve the level of career support provided to those students seeking employment in the private sector. Financial support to students seems to be provided on more of an ad hoc basis, but BAT does respond to student concerns in this area. For example, in the current COVID crisis, with many students having problems with paying their tuition, BAT instituted a policy whereby students would no longer have to pay a penalty for the late payment of tuition. In the area

of providing law students with psychological support services, unfortunately BAT was lacking. In normal times, and even more so during the pandemic, there are high levels of stress for law students and a higher education institution should make counseling services available to help them.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

BAT is a financially healthy higher education institution with a proven record of maintaining high (and increasing) levels of revenue and profits. These funds are used to maintain adequate and high levels of quality for teaching, infrastructure and support services. Financial planning is also well developed so that BAT can withstand a sudden economic downturn (as occurred during the pandemic) by drawing on financial reserves and even borrowing funds at reasonable rates due to its high credit rating. Sufficient resources are provided to maintain the law faculty's scientific research, although the reliance of BAT on heavily using practitioners means that there is not sufficient time for them to publish more articles. Student support services are relatively strong in the areas of career advice and placement and financial aid, but could be better organized. Psychological support services for law students do not yet exist and this is something that should be established in the very near future.

### **Strengths:**

1. As a private institution BAT has a strong financial balance sheet, sufficient to support its law programmes in both good economic times and bad.
2. BAT's management of its finances also appears to be excellent, with sufficient flexibility to deal with unexpected conditions and changes in market conditions.
3. Good integration with the labor market, especially between public sector employers and the branch campuses.
4. The retention of a strong law faculty which, because of their practical experience, provides students with much needed legal skills that are appreciated by employers upon graduation.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. Somewhat of a failure to improve the scientific publishing output of its law faculty, or to otherwise attract faculty with an existing record of publications.
2. The lack of any psychological support services for law students.
3. An overemphasis of career placement and support in the public sector, rather than the private sector.

## **4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation**

### **Analysis**

4.1. According to SER p. 52 there are three directions of scientific research: 1) lecturers who are scientists and continue scientific research in their field and transfer research results to students in the study process; 2) students' scientific research work; 3) lecturers, who are scientists, carry out scientific research in cooperation with the graduates of the higher education institution. The aim of the study Direction according to SER p.51 is to educate qualified legal professionals capable of independently carrying out activities relating to the application of substantive and procedural law, the application of case law and doctrine in the fields of public and private law at national, European Union and international level. Therefore the scientific directions comply with the development aims of the BAT.

4.2. The design of the Doctoral study programme "Law Science" shall be noted as well. The strategic goal set during the programme mentioned before provides students with theoretical knowledge and

necessary research skills. As a result the students are able to achieve the learning outcomes of the Doctoral study programme "Law Science". Unlike the master and bachelor programmes, the doctoral programme is a research oriented programme. The information provided by SER shows that the Doctoral study programme "Law Science" provides opportunities for foreign students as well as Erasmus Mobility students to obtain quality education which they can then use in their home countries. The programme includes areas of public administration and their impact on economic development in both countries. The aim of the Doctoral study programme "Law Science" is to provide studies and active research work of doctoral students, to enable doctoral students to acquire in depth competences necessary for independent research work and its completion with original and empirically proven results in the field of Law Science. It shows that there are science-based studies provided that help students to use theoretical, research based knowledge and skills on national and international level. The doctoral study programme complies with the directions of scientific research in line with the development aims of the BAT and relevant to the study direction. According to the SER p. 54 scientific research at BAT is linked with the study process. As the example mentioned, the final results of scientific research of lecturers, reflected in scientific monographs, scientific publications, etc. as well as are applied in the study process. According to several study course description content, in the part of literature review there are several scientific works of BAT lecturers and academic staff mentioned. It shows that scientific works are available for students on study course descriptions level as mandatory/non mandatory literature. Students are required to compile various research papers or reports within the framework of several study courses. According to the information provided by SER there are special lectures organized for the students of the Bachelor's program on how to successfully compile scientific works, how to work with library databases, etc. On doctoral programme level students work with scientific research methodology in law to prepare doctoral theses. It must be noted that in BAT doctoral students approbate their research results in the study process for instance, by giving lectures. Information mentioned above shows that the relation between scientific research and artistic creation in the study direction and the study process defined and ensured, and it is efficient. Scientific research and the outcomes thereof are integrated in the study process in the study programmes of all provided levels, more detailed information with the examples provided in SER p. 54-56.

4.3. Documents provided by BAT show that academic staff have participated in the international 57 cooperation research project Nordplus. Higher education program Project, where BAT was the international cooperation partner with Kazimieras Simonavičius University (Lithuania), and Laurea University (Finland). The project is co-funded by Nordplus Higher Education Program. Project No.NPHE-2017 / 10115.It started in September 2017 and completed in October 2018. The lecturers participate in the ERASMUS + Strategic Partnership "Interdisciplinary Skills Development for Collaboration and Conflict Resolution" project will be successfully launched and will continue until 2021. The project is implemented by an international team that consists of representatives from BAT, Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Graz University (Austria), Genoa University (Italy), Dutch Business Academy (Netherlands) and Jagail University (Poland). Summer school participated by BAT students shall be noted as well (Nordplus Higher Education Program Intensive Course Mediation in Civil and Criminal Matters 2018, August 14-25, (Project Number: NPHE-2018/10311). But, it must be noted that academic staff are not involved enough in main institution projects, activities. Especially academic staff from branches.

The positive from the interdisciplinarity and internalization perspective is the BAT published scientific journal *Acta Prosperitatis*, indexed by the international EBSCO. From the mentioned above it follows that BAT has good international cooperation in the field of scientific research within the study direction.

4.4. The documents provided by BAT shows that 13 lecturers of the BAT have worked as experts of the Latvian Council of Science during the reporting period. Which is a good number. According to SER p.59 there are four publications in journals indexed in the Scopus database; eleven publications

in the EBSCO, ProQuest indexed journals; four monographs; fifty-one publications in scientific journals; forty-one papers at international scientific conferences; participating in or managing thirteen projects during the reporting period. The involvement of academic staff in research is at a high level.

4.5. According to the documents BAT students compile research papers, are involved in the organization of conferences and are also given the opportunity to attend lectures in conference sections. Students are invited to participate in conferences, participate in a moot court etc. Nevertheless there are lack of student's publications written, for instance in cooperation with lecturers, masters and doctorates students. But in general, the students of the study programmes of all levels are involved in scientific research.

4.6. Research activities and participation in international research projects have resulted in creation of innovative solutions in the study process. Several examples were mentioned – materials and books on topical issues "Organizational and Individual Security" etc.

As well BAT mentioned participation in specific seminars as „Academic Integrity“, October 2019, "Aspects of administrative efficiency, quality and finance management" etc. as the result there innovative methods were applied in the study process.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The BAT has specified challenging goals in research, and they are taking actions to reach these aims. Active involvement in international research projects, active academic staff shows the good scientific results. Nevertheless stronger emphasis on research methods also in the bachelor level programme could be recommended. As well the cooperation between bachelor/master/doctoral students could be recommended as well (common publications, participation in conferences etc.) The involvement of academic staff from branches shall be improved as well.

Strengths:

1. Strong research background (projects, BAT scientific journal).
2. Active academic staff participation in the research area (number of publications, expert status).

Weaknesses:

1. International cooperation could be more active and broader (not only Lithuania, Estonia, more central Europe etc.).
2. Lack of cooperation in the research area between the public/private sector.
3. Not so strong research tradition in BAT, which is also recognised in documents analysis

## **5. Cooperation and Internationalisation**

### **Analysis**

5.1. The BAT SER as well as interviews during the visit showed that BAT established a good cooperation with employers, employers' organisations and municipalities within the study direction. The BAT focuses on preparing legal practitioners which is highly valued by employers, as well as municipalities who act as employers of the BAT graduates. Some of the employers participate in the quality assessment of the BAT study programme, which contributes to regular improvement of the study programme quality and helps to achieve aims and learning outcomes of the study direction, in particular, to prepare graduates to start professional life and whose expertise and skills respond to the needs of employers. Nevertheless, cooperation is established only with public sector employers, with an exception of several advocate bureaus.

According to the BAT SER the BAT actively cooperates with the Association of Colleges of Latvia and organizes joint information events, co-organizes and promotes the exhibition „Skola”.

Both the SER and the interviews during study visit did not allow to conclude that the BAT actively cooperates with higher education institutions, scientific institutes and non-governmental organisations in Latvia, therefore, it can be concluded that this type of cooperation has not been properly explored.

In relation to international cooperation with higher education institutions the SER provides information that the BAT has successfully developed cooperation with more than 50 foreign partner universities. Collaboration agreements with these partners allow for better quality and broader organization of scientific forums, exchange of students and educator internships abroad.

BAT has developed cooperation with Kazimieras Simonavičius University (Lithuania), Laurea University (Finland), Mykolas Romeris University (Lithuania), Tallinn Technical University (Estonia) and Turku School of Economics and Business Administration (Finland) within implementation of the project co-funded by Nordplus Higher Education Program. It can be concluded that this cooperation contributed to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study direction. However, this cooperation was established so far within one project.

5.2. The BAT attracts both students and the teaching staff from abroad within Erasmus+ programme. Since with the exception of the doctor programme the studies do not offer special courses on European and International law in English and the BAT focuses on preparing practitioners for the local labour market, there are not many international students.

At the same time the SER and the information obtained from the visit, shows that the BAT could use more international staff as international perspective would contribute to the quality of the study programmes. The employers showed interest in graduates being able to research and contribute to the working process best practice of other countries. International guest lecturers therefore could broaden the perspective of students, contribute to improvement of language skills and provide examples of best practice of other countries.

Regional branches make use of visiting lectures coming from Riga, however do not benefit from international guest lecturers.

5.3. The BAT has a developed system for the provision of traineeships within the study direction. The students are offered a possibility of traineeship in various judicial, enforcement and public institutions. At the same time the BAT could explore more cooperation with the private sector employers.

5.4. The BAT is planning to broaden cooperation with other higher education institutions both locally and abroad and according to the SER has assessed the compatibility of study programmes. The BAT develops a joint doctoral programme in cooperation with Kazimieras Simonavičiaus University in Vilnius, Lithuania and received a licence for the implementation of the joint doctoral study programme "Law Science". Therefore, the work has been started in the right direction, but it is early to make the first assessments.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

BAT has established a good cooperation with employers, employers' organisations and municipalities within the study direction and a common system for the provision of traineeships in various judicial, enforcement and public institutions. Cooperation with employers contributes to both preparing students-practitioners for their professional life and improving the quality of studies. BAT should however explore more cooperation also with private sector employers to broaden traineeship opportunities for students and prepare them for work in the private sector. BAT has a system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad, which however is not sufficiently used due to the focus on preparing practitioners for the local market and foreign language barriers. BAT could enrich the study programme and improve the study process by attracting foreign lecturers. This would provide possibilities for students and local teaching staff to learn good case practice and broaden the perspective of students. Considering COVID-19 created

obstacles, foreign lecturers could be attracted through various online webinars using modern digital technologies. Finally, BAT established first successful practice with local and foreign partnering higher education institutions. This cooperation should continue within the next projects, as well as joint study programmes, for instance joint doctoral programs.

#### Strengths:

1. Successful cooperation with employers, employers' organisations and municipalities, in particular within the public sector.
2. The BAT focuses on preparing legal practitioners which is highly valued by employers and fills a unique niche at the local market.
3. The BAT is highly valued by employers for preparing practitioners ready to start work.
4. Employers are involved in the quality assessment of the BAT study programmes (for instance, professional Master's study programme "Law Science" and Doctoral study programme "Law Science").
5. The BAT has developed cooperation with more than 50 foreign partner universities.
6. The BAT has a developed system for the provision of traineeships within the study direction.
7. The BAT helps the students to find the traineeships possibility.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Cooperation is established only with public sector employers, with an exception of several advocate bureaus.
2. Not sufficiently explored cooperation with the scientific institutes and non-governmental organisations in Latvia.
3. Low numbers of attracted foreign teaching staff, guest lecturers, including through digital (online) tools in particular in regional branches.

## **6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures**

### **Analysis**

Recommendations of experts given in the previous accreditation of study field during the reference period can be summarized in following points:

- Constant update of the library resources by purchasing the latest editions of academic publications in foreign languages, including EU law. Institution constantly updates library resources and its collection is updated each academic year with requested materials from the teaching staff. Recommendation can be considered completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

- To encourage academic staff and students to publish more scientific articles related to their research.

Institution has a good level of research activity. Staff is encouraged to participate in various further qualification activities and conferences. Institution has good links with industry in order to provide and involve its staff and students with actual research topics. Students participate in student conferences and have opportunities to publish. Recommendation can be considered completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

- Strengthen the links between BAT and its branches, for example by expanding distance learning and, where possible, working with other local HEIs.

Overall integration of branches with the main campus still has room for improvement mainly in fields of integration of academic staff and distance learning opportunities provided for students. Recommendation is partially completed and demands extra attention.

- In the area of cooperation and international exchange, more law students, especially doctoral students, should be motivated to pursue short-term studies or research abroad.

Overall level of exchange students in the field is still comparatively low. There is still room for improvement. Recommendation can be considered completed, yet it still demands some attention.

Recommendations considering Academic Bachelor's Study Program "Law Science" in particular can be summarized in following points:

- It is desirable to specify the tasks of the study program which are broader than its content.
- Define more clearly the forms of assessments, requirements and criteria for study course acquisition and successful passing of examinations in the study course descriptions.
- Review the study course descriptions for "Study paper 1", "Study paper 2", "Bachelor's paper", including research methods in the introductory part

These recommendations were made within the implementation period before the licencing commision meeting and can be considered completed. Recommendation with implementation period before beginning of student enrolment are as follows:

- It is necessary to update the list of recommended sources for some study courses, including in them some of the latest publications

Study courses are being constantly updated and latest sources are being included. Recommendation can be considered completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

- Optional Part B courses should include a second foreign language

Institution has added another foreign language in Part C. Recommendation is partially completed as there is no Part B optional course in the second foreign language.

- Choice of Optional Part C study courses should be increased to provide students with more elective courses.

The number of elective Part C courses has been increased to include four courses. Recommendation can be considered completed.

- The CVs of the lecturers involved in the study program should be in a uniform Europass format, including information about scientific activities, completed projects, publications in peer-reviewed publications.

CVs of teaching staff are well prepared. Recommendation can be considered completed.

Long term recommendations considering Academic Bachelor's Study Program "Law Science" in particular can be summarized in following points:

- Academic staff with irregular research work and insufficient publications in peer-reviewed publications are involved in the academic implementation of the Bachelor's program. More attention should be paid in the management and development of the study program to the organization and provision of research work of the academic staff, so that all the lecturers have publications in peer-reviewed publications within two years.

Staff is taking part in various conferences and publishing activities, however only two of staff members are published in Web of Science/Scopus indexed journals. It is noted that the institution provides necessary opportunities for staff to strengthen its research output. Yet it seems that overall research levels as far as recommendation goes is low - institution should continue to pay more attention to organization and provision of research work. Recommendation can be considered partially fulfilled.

- It would be desirable to change the study course "Philosophy" into the course "Philosophy of Law". At the same time, it is desirable to consider the possibility of including the study courses "Logics", "Practical Communication", "Conflictology and Mediation", "Forensic Medicine and Psychiatry".

Institution has provided proof that it is taking action regarding study courses in question within objective capabilities. Recommendation can be considered completed.

- To increase the proportion of the academic staff elected at BAT as permanent place of work, which would allow more lecturers to engage in scientific work, preparation of teaching methodological materials, and ensure more frequent contact with students



Increase of elected academic staff is correlated with overall financials and given the fact that overall potential student body has a tendency to decrease current levels of elected staff is acceptable. It is the policy of the institution to increase the count of elected positions. Therefore recommendation can be considered completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

- To increase the proportion of lecturers with a doctoral degree, especially a doctor of law, who would determine the involvement of lecturers who are oriented towards scientific research work in the study process. This would correspond to the nature of the academic study program

Institution is in the continuous process of increasing the proportion of lecturers with doctoral degrees each year both as offering permanent positions or as guest lecturers. Recommendation can be considered completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

- To develop scientific and academic cooperation with foreign educational institutions implementing study programs of law, ensuring joint scientific project development, mobility of lecturers and students, including involvement of guest lecturers in the implementation of the study program.

Institution has developed partnerships with colleagues from Lithuania and Finland. There is both inbound and outbound staff movement regarding conferences and other various activities. Institution also provides mobility opportunities for its students and staff. However based on on-site visit it seems that benefits from internationalization activities are not felt in branches - for example - mobility levels for branch students are low and participation in visiting guest lectures are also at low levels. Recommendation can be considered completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

As the study program is planned to be implemented in the form of distance learning, it would be desirable to develop video lectures, organize video conferences (seminars) for further development and successful implementation of the study programme.

Institution has an ongoing project of digitalization of its curriculum. Despite the fact that overall transition to online learning is at good levels, the current situation should be used to fully develop online courses and materials that could benefit for studies later on when in-class activities can be safely conducted. Recommendation can be considered

completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

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Institution has an ongoing project of digitalization of its curriculum. Despite the fact that overall transition to online learning is at good levels, the current situation should be used to fully develop online courses and materials that could benefit for studies later on when in-class activities can be safely conducted. Recommendation can be considered completed and must be implemented constantly in order to stay compliant.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The institution takes into account recommendations made by previous assessment and licensing procedures. Out of 17 recommendations, only 6 can be considered fully implemented.

Strengths:

1. BAT made a lot of improvements according to the recommendations provided during the previous procedures .

Weaknesses:

1. BAT did not improve the research part, which according to the SER provided information is still at

relatively low levels.

2. The cooperation between BAT Riga campus and branches has not improved (internationalisation, research etc.).

## 7. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

- 1 Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BAT ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems. All necessary criteria established by the Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, have been met, some of them partly. However, experts have identified some areas for further improvement. For instance, whether the programmes covers the research of the specific area. To work with academic staff motivation to write more programme-related scientific articles.

- 2 1.1. The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BAT has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.

The information about the Quality policy, quality management manual, faculty regulations, hospitality procedure, survey procedure can be found in SER Article 1.3.

- 3 1.2. A mechanism for the development and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof has been developed.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the information provided by BAT, regulations for the Development, Approval and Change of Study Programs, Process measurement system included in the Quality Management System Manual etc. are provided in SER and in the Appendix to paragraph 1.2. of the SER

- 4 1.3. The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students' results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Information about the BAT study regulations, as well as examination regulations, state examination regulations, study course descriptions etc., provided in. Appendix to SER paragraph 1.2

- 5 1.4. Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** There are hospitality procedure, survey procedure, Quality Management System Manual etc. that help to improve the quality of the processes. Best professionals, practitioners, with good qualifications are attracted by BAT. Nevertheless, in practice there are lecturers who have not proper publications on particular area, one lecturer covers several different study courses.

- 6 1.5. The higher education institution/ college ensures the collection and analysis of the information on the study achievements of the students, employment of the graduates, satisfaction of the students with the study programme, efficiency of the work of the academic staff, the study funds available and the disbursements thereof, as well as the key performance indicators of the higher education institution/ college.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Institution regularly conducts surveys and makes analysis. The procedures as Quality Management System Manual process measurement system, Survey procedure, questionnaires etc. help to achieve the goals set up by BAT Development strategy.

- 7 1.6. The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The improvement of the study direction is ensured by the constant cooperation with companies and organizations, which ensure the achievement of the study goals. Study programs are developed in cooperation with stakeholders. The directions of scientific research correspond to the strategy of the BAT. (SER p.17).

- 8 R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** There are cooperation agreements concluded with the several governmental institutions, private institutions as well as NGOs etc. But the number of cooperation agreements and practical cooperation (in research field, educational field etc. can be more productive and practical

- 9 R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There is a good research strategy. BAT has its own scientific journal, BAT provides support for academic staff in the research area. But, considering all these advantages higher results can be achieved. Passive research from the academic staff side shall be noted.

- 10 R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations has been realised. In common, BAT implemented the recommendations, but there are still some improvements needed. Only 6 out of 17 recommendations are fully implemented.

## 8. Recommendations for the Study Field

### Short-term recommendations

BAT has to improve the cooperation between the Riga Campus and branches (research, books, participation in projects etc.), hence, to show how the cooperation can be improved.

BAT should provide more opportunities for BAT Riga and in particular BAT branch students to participate in online webinars by foreign lecturers.

### Long-term recommendations

BAT should work on the encouragement of mobility for students, administrative and teaching staff.

It is suggested to improve international cooperation through various projects.

BAT should increase cooperation with employers in the private sector as well as NGOs.

It is suggested to broaden the system for the provision of traineeships to the private sector.
It is necessary to provide more structure to the system of encouraging and soliciting feedback (complaints/suggestions).
BAT should give attention to new certification and licensing requirements in the field of law.
Achieve a better balance between providing career placement opportunities in both the public and private sectors.
Reassure administrative staff and faculty that they can freely point out that a lack of resources exists in a given area.
Cooperation in the research area with the private and public sector can be recommended (ministries, law offices etc.).
It is necessary to create a system of psychological support for law students.
It is recommended to improve the research part (it is recommended to involve more academic staff in the research, not only several active persons).
BAT should attract more foreign teaching staff, guest lecturers, including through digital (online) tools in particular in regional branches.

## II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

The name of the study programme is the first level professional higher education study programme "Law Science" (classification code 41380), which provides Part-time extramural and distance form studies with given Professional Qualifications - Legal Assistant (code 341102).

According to the information provided by BAT SER p. 142. the aim of the programme is to prepare the student for the profession of Legal Assistant, promoting his / her development as a mentally and physically developed, free, responsible and creative personality. But the task of the programme is to implement the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences in the various sub-sectors of the Law Science, by providing the capacity to develop and apply legal norms, to use technology and to prepare for creativity, research and teaching in this scientific field. According to the results, the programme gives the ability to present comprehensive and specialized knowledge; ability to use analytical approach to solve practical problems in a changing environment; ability to understand one's field of activity in a wider social context, and participation in the development of science. Learning outcomes -ability to present comprehensive and specialized knowledge in Law science; ability to apply analytical approaches to solving practical problems in the profession of a legal assistant in a changing environment; ability to understand his/her field of activity in a broader social context, to participate in the development of the Law science, to evaluate one's and other people's activities.

The admission criteria given by the SER p. 141 shows that there is previous education - secondary education needed. The admission takes place on a competitive basis on the basis of the results of the centralized examination in the subjects: Latvian and Foreign Language (English, German, French or Russian), except those who have completed secondary education before 2004 as well as persons who have completed secondary education abroad or persons with special needs. Nevertheless,

persons who have completed secondary education before 2004 and persons with special needs shall be enrolled in the study programme on the basis of the assessment of secondary education in subjects: Latvian and Foreign languages (English, German, French or Russian). The assessment shall be compared to the centralised examination assessment. Mentioned comply with necessary criteria. Nevertheless, it should be mentioned that the form (part-time studies) and length of studies (2 years, 3 months) and the amount of credit points (100 CP) are not compatible with Law on Higher Education Institutions, which states that part-time studies are a type of studies that corresponds to less than 40 credit points per academic year. Additionally, there seem to be some discrepancies between credit points mentioned under parameters of study programme, application (100 CP) and study programme plan, Compliance of the study programme with the State Education Standard (92 CP) etc. Even if the correct amount of credit points is equal to 92, this still would pose a question about compliance with regulations. This means that these parameters of study programme and its plan must be looked at by BAT.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, criteria fulfill the necessary requirements. The name of the study programme, degree and professional qualification meets the requirements. The aim, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are intercorrelated. However, there seems to be a problem with the form and length of studies and the amount of credit points to be compatible with Law on Higher Education Institutions. It is not fully clear what is the correct total amount of credit points for this study programme.

Strengths:

1. Programme is well received by stakeholders. They are involved in study process and in general - links with industry are strong.

Weaknesses:

1. Given the fact, that programme is conducted in part time extramural format, there is risk that all the provided learning outcomes can not be met as good.
2. The form and length of studies and the amount of credit points are not compatible with Law on Higher Education Institutions.
3. There are discrepancies about the correct amount of credit points for this study programme.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

2.1 The study program has been developed in accordance with the professional standards, including the courses necessary for the development and improvement of professional qualification. Each study course is constantly updated to include current issues in the field, supplemented with theoretical approaches and topical issues and case studies. The program is periodically reviewed with the involvement of students and other stakeholders. The content of study courses is updated before the beginning of each study year, when updating the content of study courses, scientific findings are taken into account.

The structure of the program compliance with the state education standards:

The scope of the program - 92 CP. Duration of the study program - 2 years and 3 months. Structure of the programme: general education study courses - 21 CP, field (speciality) study courses - 47 CP; practice - 16 CP and qualification paper - 8 CP. Contact hours are not less than 30% of the study courses must be implemented practically during the study process. The independent tasks and the

ways to control their fulfilment are defined in the curriculum descriptions of the study courses of the program. The study program consists of lectures, seminars, practical works, consultations and independent work. The study program consists of lectures, seminars, practical works, consultations and independent work. The compulsory content of study courses consists of general study courses (21 CP), field (speciality) study courses (47 CP), Optional study courses (4 CP). The content of the program includes a module for the development of business professional competencies - Commerce; Fundamentals of Accounting; Record keeping and state language; Labour law; Property law; Contract Law). The study program includes a study course Civil and Environmental Protection in the amount of 2 CP. At the end of the program, the State Final Examination in the amount of \* CP shall be taken. Qualification awarded - Legal Assistant. Possibility to continue further studies in the BAT academic bachelor study program in the 3rd study year or in any other higher education institution in the later stages of Bachelor study programs in Law science. The basic forms for assessing program acquisition are examinations. Examinations are assessed on a 10-point scale. Practice is implemented in accordance with the practice agreement, which the higher education institution concludes with the employer for the provision of practice placement. The practice agreement shall include the aim of the practice, its objectives, the planning of practice, the procedure for assessing the achievements of the practice, and the obligations and responsibilities of the parties. When defining the goals and objectives of the practice, the content of the practice shall include the student's familiarity with the management structure and principles of operation of the practice enterprise. Representatives of the organizations with whom the practice agreements have been concluded shall participate in defining the aims and objectives of the practice, as well as in the assessment of practice. The Higher Education Institution implements a certain part of the internship at the beginning and at the end of the studies in order to form and consolidate the students' perception of the profession to be acquired and to consolidate the acquired theoretical knowledge. In general the content is in line with professional (occupational) standard.

The programme is compatible with similar programmes across the EU:

Institution concluded agreements with numerous institutions for the purposes of cooperation in order to achieve the goals of the study programme.

The SER, as well as the study visit provided an impression of focus on Criminal law in the study programme and, for instance, missing attention to such subjects as Labour law. All the necessary subjects are provided by the study programme, however, it seems that Criminal law and Civil law are better promoted or more popular among the students. This is visible also from the lists of topics that students choose for their qualification work. There is only 1-2 work devoted to Labour law. At the same time Labour law is important to the students to prepare them to participate in the labour market and know their rights, as well as to be able to work with Labour law profiles within the judicial and enforcement system.

2.2. Taking into account the tendencies of the education market in Latvia, the study program envisages realization of part time studies (part time extramural studies and part time distance learning). Part-time students are given review lectures, which provide the most important directions for the study course. Distance learning students have the same rules for studying and the same requirements for regular part time students. Lectures as a teaching/learning method is used mostly in those subjects/study courses where there is a possibility of giving more theoretical knowledge and there is not enough necessity for group work or discussions. Seminars as teaching/learning methods are used in those subjects where students have greater possibility of carrying out independent research. Students have the opportunity of presenting and defending their opinions during such seminars. Group work, as a teaching/learning method is used in those subjects where teamwork is necessary to understand the theory.

Despite the fact that BAT overall focus is on practical knowledge, the description of the study subjects regarding pedagogical methodology used do not always mention practical work, for instance, solving cases, disputes, as well as simulations are not used as a method. Most methods

used are presentations by lecturer, discussion and individual work.

In accordance with the basic principles of student-centered education, lecturers regularly evaluate and improve study course delivery methods, promote student independence, providing tutor guidance and support. During each course the student has to pass the regular tests specified in the study course descriptions- tests and / or independent work. The student receives an explanation of the grade and tips for further improvement. There is a system for reviewing student appeals, which is described in the Study Regulations. The implementation of the new study program will follow the policy already provided by BAT, both in terms of quality, teaching staff, and fair and transparent information to students and the public. The evaluation of the study program is carried out in accordance with the Regulations on the state standards for first level professional higher education. At the end of the program, a final state examination must be passed.

The student-centred approach is followed by updating the study courses of the study program, paying special attention to the meaningful formulation of the learning outcomes, thus promoting the dialogue between the lecturer and students about the study content, organizational forms and methods. Students receive support and feedback from the lecturers during the study process. The study process is dominated by methods where student activity is important. The study process takes into account the diversity of students' learning needs by choosing pedagogical methods, promoting students' learning motivation and participation in the study process. Employers are involved in the implementation and improvement of study courses. Student mobility (recognition of learning outcomes) is promoted. Students have the opportunity to consult individually with each lecturer at specific consultation times.

### 2.3. BAT regularly conducts student surveys.

During the reporting period, an electronic student survey was conducted to determine the level of student satisfaction, from which it was concluded that the students are satisfied with all the processes in the university, including the study program and its organization. Students were also satisfied with learning outcomes, accessibility and sufficiency of information on the processes related to the study process, independent studies as well as the material and technical facilities at the university. Each lecturer is acquainted with the results of the students' survey, which gives the opportunity to make necessary improvements in further work. If necessary, the director of the study program meets with the lecturer, whose evaluation differs from the common tendencies.

BAT conducts graduate surveys, but lately it has been difficult to carry out due to the increased protection of personal data. This partially limits the ability to follow a graduate's work and life after graduation. 508 respondents, including 179 graduates of the Faculty of Law participated in the last BAT alumni survey.

Graduates are asked if they work in their speciality, how long after graduation they got a job and what their income is. Analysing the answers obtained, study course descriptions are improved, new study courses are added or old ones are removed, as well as the sequence of study courses in the program is specified.

The involvement of employers takes place through council meetings, individual discussions, as well as through evaluation in practice reports. Employers, when evaluating the report, pay attention to the actualization of study courses, including orientation to specialization and connection with business. In order to ensure that the most up-to-date information is passed on to the students, guest lecturers - industry specialists and employers - are invited to lectures. Cooperation with employers is ensured by organizing JF Council meetings.

2.4. Each academic year, the Faculty of Law receives information from the Department for Study Development and International Cooperation regarding the opportunities for students and lecturers to use the Erasmus + mobility program offered for the respective academic year.

As a rule, students of the first level professional higher education program have the opportunity to use the Erasmus + mobility program offer. The table shows that the opportunities have been little used. This can be explained by the fact that it is practically difficult for students who are already

working permanently to combine work with studies abroad. Student mobility is regulated by Erasmus+ mobility program regulations. There is in place a clear set of rules for mobility of students.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The description of the study courses and its contents are of a good quality and comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. During the site visit students confirmed satisfaction with BAT. Students confirmed they have good cooperation with lecturers, they receive comments on the exams and that lecturers put them in the center and try their best to meet their needs. Most methods used are presentations by lecturer, discussion and individual work. BAT conducts surveys among students, graduates and employers and representatives of these groups, to which the experts had an opportunity to talk during the site visit, claimed that TU takes the results of surveys seriously and constantly strives to improve the curricula and teaching methods. Institution includes foreign teaching staff in study programmes. However, the level of foreign students is not that high. BAT recognizes the challenge of motivating its students to use mobility opportunities, and it took some measures, but the mobility is still rather low.

#### **Strengths**

1. Strong orientation towards practical skills of students and involvement of practitioners in the teaching process.
2. Well established QA system for improving the content of the study programme.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. Low mobility of students.
2. Low diversity of pedagogical methods, for instance, solving cases, simulations.
3. In practice stronger focus on two subjects Criminal and Civil law.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

3.1. BAT is a privately funded higher education institution. As set forth in Section I, part 3, BAT's finances are managed quite well, and this programme (along with all the other law programmes) have been adequately funded. Even during the COVID pandemic, enough financial reserves existed to ensure that the programme continued at a high level of quality. The relevant necessary physical infrastructure and technical resources have been provided by BAT for this programme. BAT has a modern campus in Riga, with a commensurately modern library and study spaces. The infrastructure of its branch campuses, while not as modern as Riga, appear to be adequate but need some improvement. In terms of technical resources, students in the programme have access to a wide variety of academic and legal databases. During the COVID crisis, BAT adapted well in transitioning its courses from being in person to taking place online. Less technically proficient lecturers were given necessary IT support so that their courses continued rather seamlessly. Again, revenue is sufficiently allocated to improving infrastructure so that law students enjoy and maintain access to a relatively high standard of physical and technical resources.

The situation in branches shall be improved. In branches latest literature mostly not available. But, there are options for the students to order necessary books from the central office.

3.2. BAT has assembled and maintained a qualified group of teachers at its law faculty, that is especially well tailored for this programme. In large part, the teaching staff are practicing legal professionals, such as attorneys and prosecutors. Likewise, at the branch cases, there is ample involvement from lawyers and court professionals working in the local community. This is



particularly important for this first level professional programme, as it places a special emphasis on practical skills, and less on legal theory. The lecturers appear satisfied with BAT and their employment arrangements. The emphasis on practical knowledge is also an advantage for students seeking internships and ultimately permanent employment after graduation. BAT does provide a support network for students, but this could be improved. During the assessment visit, there was a focus on determining the level of support provided to students in the areas of: career placement/guidance, financial assistance, and psychological assistance. In terms of this programme, there is a great deal of support provided to students in helping them find jobs and ultimately careers. Alumni support is enlisted to help place students in internships and jobs, and there is considerable outreach to employers.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

As BAT is a financially healthy higher education institution with a proven record of maintaining high (and increasing) levels of revenue and profits, this programme, like the other law programmes at BAT, is ensured a relatively high level of resources. Such resources include finances, infrastructure, library materials, teaching and support services. With respect to the first level professional programme, the fact that most faculty are also experienced practitioners is a major advantage. Students in the programme do not need the higher level of education in legal theory, but are focused on how to perform an entry level legal assistant position. Thus, the teachers' skills nicely match the students' needs. Deep connections with alumni and local employers also help the students attain their career goals.

#### **Strengths:**

1. BAT is a financially sound HEI and possesses sufficient resources to maintain this programme.
2. The focus on practical knowledge by the faculty suits the needs of the programme's students in obtaining the necessary skills to become a legal assistant, and obtain a job in that field.
3. Good integration with the labor market, especially between public sector employers and the branch campuses.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. A lack of focus on helping the students find private sector jobs.
2. The resources at the branch campuses are not at the level of the main campus in Riga, and should be improved, particularly with respect to ensuring that up to date legal texts are available.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

4.1. First Level Professional Higher Education Study Programme "Law Science" is delivered by the staff mentioned in the SER p.157. There is no doubt about the professionalism of particular academic staff. Nevertheless, according to the information given by the students during the on site branch visits, there is a lack of lecturers provided by academic staff from Riga. As students explain, mostly in branches one lecturer from the particular branch is responsible for more than one study course. And from the students point of view academic staff from Riga are not involved enough in the educational process in branches.

4.2. The study program is provided by 43 Teaching staff - 12 lecturers of the BAT have the desired positions: 3 professor, 1 associate professor, 8 lecturers. And 31 visiting lecturers. But, there are lecturers who are responsible for study courses, but the qualification for a particular study course is not provided in CV. For instance, responsible of study course Civil and Environmental protection. There is no information about the lecturer's competence on Environmental protection issues. Valija

Ulmene is responsible for study course Civil law. General provisions. From the CV provided by BAT, Valija Ulmane is a specialist on Labor Law.

4.3. There is no doubt about the academic staff participation in scientific conferences or other scientific work, but academic staff from branches are less motivated and active in the research field. Except those, who are both - academic staff in branches and doctoral students at BAT. In general, the high maturity of academic staff was noticeable during onsite visits. Permanent academic staff is strengthened with invited visiting lecturers with a high reputation in the law field. Qualification of academic staff is raised during different seminars and by involving them in international projects. There are some examples of research results, which related to the education process, provided in the SER p.157. As well as the SER p.158 demonstrates, that legal professionals are involved in the implementation of the study program and continue their education, improving their qualification in the doctoral study program in law in BAT.

Besides, it shall be noted that academic staff publish in scientific journals. But, from the information provided by BAT (lists of scientific publications) there are just 2 persons, who have publications listed in Web of Science/Scopus, and 5 persons who have publications listed in EBSCO, ProQuest etc. The qualification of teaching staff complies with necessary criteria. Mostly, academic staff links to the taught subject in Law. As SER p.158 shows Sworn attorneys who are involved in the implementation of the study program improve their qualifications every year, which is a mandatory requirement of the Council of Sworn Advocates. BAT teaching staff are involved in developing new course descriptions, methodological seminars etc.

During the onsite visits BAT academic staff confirmed that they are involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme. BAT gives the possibility and support to every teaching staff to publish monographs or collective monographs, or participate in conferences. But, nevertheless according to the BAT provided annex List of publications, comes that there are several active lecturers who use the opportunity given by the BAT at national and international level.

4.4. The academic staff is involved in scientific research in the fields related to the content of the study programme, it shows the list of scientific topics provided by BAT SER p.162. And the particular scientific information is used in the study process.

4.5. Regarding the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses, the following should be noted. As SER p.163.illustrates cooperation among lecturers is promoted in various seminars organized by the higher education institution for the improvement of lecturers' qualification, as well as within the ESF project Nr. 8.2.0 / 18 / A019. As the result, lecturers have the opportunity to participate in masterclasses, such as the use of state-of-the-art IT and digital solutions in business etc. There are annual strategic seminars organized, where lecturers work in groups to find solutions for different situations. There is a clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members, even on BAT branches level.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Composition of academic staff is strong and professional, that are able to provide good knowledge to the students as well as to achieve the aim to ensure teaching quality and compliances with the national regulations. Scientific activities of the several academic staff are excellent, but, in general academic staff shall be proactive to make better contributions to the study process. BAT and students as well could get more advantages if academic staff from branches would have more

Strengths:

1. In general, high qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD.
2. Good support for research

## Weaknesses

1. Weak cooperation between Administrative staff, lecturers from branches and central office in research field (publications, international projects)
2. Low academic staff activity in the research field, especially on guest lecturer level.
3. Not all lecturers according to the information provided in their CV, responsible for study courses do have enough competence .

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law Science"

### Requirements

- 1 1. 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. BAT provided Diploma shows that 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. (Diploma provided in the Appendix 7).

- 2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with SIA "Biznesa vadības koledža" and "Alberta Koledža" has been signed. This agreement ensures that the students will be able to keep studying institutions mentioned before. (Agreement 18.04.2012., Appendix 8)

- 3 3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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 failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to BAT letter from 21.01.2020. For compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence is revoked. Appendix 17

- 4 4. The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BAT Testimonial (06/11/2019). On knowledge of State Language (Appendix 13). CV of the teaching staff indicates the proficiency of the official language. Annex 4. Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae)

- 5 5. 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, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 6 6. 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. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance. Contract on acquisition of education. Appendix 12

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented. Provided information comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education

- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Compliance of the first level professional higher education study program "Law Science" with professional standards. Profession Standard Legal Assistant. Appendix 3

- 11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The program complies with the state standards for first level professional higher education as defined in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 141 dated 20 March 2001 "Regulations on State Standards for the first level professional higher education". Accessible at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/6397-noteikumi-par-pirma-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-valsts-standartu> (Appendix 2)

- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.1, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

14 14. Each member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, including international editions (if they have worked for a shorter period of time, the number of publications shall be in proportion to the work period), or artistic creation achievements (for instance, exhibitions, films, theatre performances, and concert activity), or a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. There are several active lecturers who have publications in International reviewed and indexed scientific journals and whose publications correspond to lecturer specialization and provided study courses. According to BAT provided information academic staff has professional experience.

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme is compliant with the above-mentioned requirements. However, there seems to be a problem with the form and length of studies and the amount of credit points to be compatible with Law on Higher Education Institutions. It is also not fully clear what is the correct total amount of credit points for this study programme.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

1 R6 - The compliance of the study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The programme has a good resource base, the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. Nevertheless, the situation in branches shall be improved. In branches latest literature is mostly not available. But, there are options for the students to order necessary books from the central office.

2 R7 - The compliance of the qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The study program is provided by 43 Teaching staff - 12 lecturers of the BAT have the desired positions: 3 professor, 1 associate professor, 8 lecturers. And 31 visiting lecturers.

3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The first level professional higher education study program "Law Science" name, and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, and admission requirements are interrelated and can be regarded as programme strengths. Programme design and content of the study courses correspond to the legal field requirements. Strong material and technical resource base. Good library in the central office, good reading room, which is available for students' individual work.

Professional and enthusiastic programme director and high qualification of the teaching staff, engaged in scientific research of the programme. Good cooperation with stakeholders, state institutions on programme's content level.

Strengths:

1. Programme is well positioned.
2. Enthusiastic and motivated teaching staff and programme director.
3. In general, high qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of Ph.D.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited possibilities for student international mobility related to the programme specifics.
2. Weak cooperation between Administrative staff, lecturers from branches and central office in research field (publications, international projects).
3. Low academic staff activity in the research field, especially on guest lecturer level.
4. The form and length of studies and the amount of credit points are not compatible with Law on Higher Education Institutions.
5. There are discrepancies about the correct amount of credit points for this study programme.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Law Science"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law Science"**

#### **Short-term recommendations**

It is suggested to improve the situation on the branches level, where one lecturer responsible for several study courses even if the qualification is not so inappropriate

Infrastructure needs to be improved at branch level. There are lack of literature in branches.

BAT needs to look at the form and length of studies and the amount of credit points, as these are not compatible with Law on Higher Education Institutions, and make appropriate changes.

BAT needs to correct the information about the total number of credit points for this study programme and to revise appropriate documents (application, programme parameters, study programme plan etc.).

#### **Long-term recommendations**

It is necessary to improve the collaborations in the area of teaching staff involvements in the projects, research area.

To improve cooperation between administrative staff, lecturers from branches and central office in research field (publications, international projects).

Diversify pedagogical methods for building practical skills.

## **II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT**

### **II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT**

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

### **Analysis**

The Academic Bachelor programme under assessment is titled 'Law Science' (43380). It is implemented in full-time three-year or part-time three-year and three-month programs (latter being additionally offered as extramural studies and extramural distance studies). Programme is equivalent to 120 credit points (180 ECTS). Language of studies is Latvian.

To enter the programme, applicants must have their secondary education as well as the centralized examinations on Latvian and Foreign language completed. Persons who have completed secondary education before 2004 and persons with special needs can be enrolled in a study programme on the basis of the assessment of secondary education in equivalent language subjects.

Graduates at the successful completion of all requirements and successful defence of promotional thesis are awarded Social Science Bachelor degree in Law Science.

The aim of the programme is as follows: To provide a set of knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences of the 6th level of the Framework of Latvian Education Classification. However in further explanation in the SER we can conclude this aim is interpreted as providing competitive graduates that can be successful in the labour market. Institution has strong and long traditions regarding implementation of study program. The difference that sets this program apart is in its research orientation, allowing its students to gain in-depth academic knowledge and develop the competencies of a specialist in law science as well as to promote independent research and analysis of current issues and problems in law science. Therefore according to the institution, to provide faster access to the labour market for law students. In general the program aims to provide qualified legal professionals capable of independently carrying out activities relating to the application of substantive and procedural law and the application of case law in civil, administrative, disciplinary, public, international and European Union law. Also it prepares students with basic knowledge to further education and potentially receive qualification by advancing studies later on.

The SER lists numerous learning outcomes that the programme sets to achieve: Ability to present basic and specialized knowledge in the field of Law and to apply it to professional, artistic, innovative or research activities; ability to take a scientific approach to problem solving, take responsibility and initiative; ability to make decisions and find creative solutions in changing circumstances. Of course, as we can see, the aspect of artistic application of specialized knowledge of Law is highly questionable – there is no study course present that corresponds to this statement. Nevertheless the programme aim, degree, qualification, admission criteria and learning outcomes are interrelated and coherent.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, the programme aim, degree, admission criteria and learning outcomes are interrelated and well structured.

Strengths:

1. The study program is well received by its partners and potential future employers of graduates.
2. Study program is well prepared and in accordance with current requirements and trends in teaching of Law in Latvia.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

2.1. When developing the study program, which ensured its conformity with the trends of the sector

in European Union countries and worldwide BAT took into account OECD's Education at a Glance 2019 and The Education Development Guidelines. Taking into account the continuous involvement of employers in the implementation of the study program, the descriptions of study courses are regularly updated in order to address important and topical issues in the study courses that correspond to the development tendencies of the respective sub-branch of law science. The main directions of activities of the Faculty of Law to be implemented during the academic year 2019/2020 were approved at the meeting of the JF Council on October 9, 2019 (Minutes No. 19/2019) and they determine the following directions of activities in the field of ensuring sustainability. The study program is organized in accordance with the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No.240 "Regulations on the state academic education standard" dated 13th May 2014 that set out academic education standards and also taking into account the requirements of the legal profession standard, as well as other regulatory enactments, in particular the Environmental Protection Act and the Civil Protection and Disaster Management Act. The compulsory part of the study program includes the respective courses Civil Defence and Environmental Protection and its Legal Aspects.

The SER, as well as the study visit provided an impression of focus on Criminal law in the study programme and, for instance, missing attention to such subjects as Labour law. All the necessary subjects are provided by the study programme, however, it seems that Criminal law and Civil law are better promoted or more popular among the students. This is visible also from the lists of topics that students choose for their bachelor's thesis. There is only 1-2 work devoted to Labour law. At the same time Labour law is important to the students to prepare them to participate in the labour market and know their rights, as well as to be able to work with Labour law profiles within the judicial and enforcement system.

2.2. This programme involves the following types of studies: Full time studies; Part time studies; Part time extramural studies and Part time distance learning. Full-time studies take place every working day. In the case of part-time studies, lectures and practical lessons take place on weekday evenings. Taking into account the tendencies of the education market in Latvia, the study program envisages implementation of part-time extramural studies. Part-time extramural students have overview lectures, which provide the most important directions for the study course. In order to achieve the aims of the study program, more attention is paid in part-time studies to the students' independent work, which is determined by the scope, content and specifics of each study course. Distance learning students have the same rules for studying and the same requirements as for full time study. The only difference is that there are no scheduled contact hours. But there is a possibility, if a distance learning student can and wants, then there are opportunities to attend lectures, face-to-face seminars. If necessary, students are provided with face-to-face counseling. More detailed information can be found in the Study Regulations, which contain additional provisions on the distance learning process. The type and form of the Examination are regulated by the Examination Regulations

In accordance with the norms of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Article 56, third paragraph), studies in this program are conducted mainly in the state language. At the same time, taking into account the interest of the students as well as the possibilities of cooperation, study courses in English are offered and included in the plan in case of visiting foreign lecturers at BAT

The implementation of study courses in the study program is organized in the form of lectures and seminars. The main task of lectures is to provide students with theoretical knowledge. In seminars, the number of which is defined in the course description, students apply theoretical knowledge in practice.

A detailed course description has been developed for each study course, which provides a description of the course content, defines the course plan, the course acquisition requirements, the results, the literature to be used.

All information related to the study courses is placed in the BATIS database, including assessments (marks) are published only in this database.



The students' independent work plays an important role in studies and its scope, content and assessment of which depends on the particular study course.

Students acquire practical skills for applying theoretical knowledge: within study courses, preparing procedural and other legal documents, drafting reports, presentations and working in groups seminars, case studies, discussions and group work; in multi-level moot trial games. In addition to studies, some students are involved in other research-related work.

Students have to pass regular tests foreseen in each study course programme – tests and/or independent study papers. The form of assessment is set out in the study course descriptions. Student achievements are evaluated on a 10 point grading system in accordance with the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers. There are also appropriate procedures for dealing with student complaints. A "Procedure for acceptance and review of Claims" has been developed. The procedure of contesting the study course results is stipulated in the Study Regulations. There is also an academic arbitration court. The evaluation of the study program is carried out in accordance with the Regulations on the state standards for academic education.

2.3. BAT regularly conducts student, graduate and employer's surveys. The results are analysed and implemented in order to improve the quality of studies.

2.4. Each academic year, the Faculty of Law receives information from the Department for Study Development and International Cooperation regarding the opportunities for students and lecturers to use the Erasmus + mobility program offered for the respective academic year. According to the students provided information they are informed about the opportunity, but do not use it actively.

In common, the programme is in compliance with the state regulation: The scope of the programme: 120CP. Full time studies six (6) semesters Part time studies seven (7) semesters. Mandatory courses: 86 CP, professional optional courses: 20 CP, free optional courses: 6 CP, Compiling Bachelor's thesis: 10CP, Basic guidelines for the branch of science: 53CP, Development history and current problems in the branch or sub-branch of science: 14 CP; Description of the branch or sub-branch of science and problems in the interbranch context: 51 CP; The number of contact hours is at least 40% of the study program scope; Civil and Environmental Protection course included; Degree awarded - Social Science Bachelor degree in Law Science; The basic principles and procedure for the assessment of the acquisition of the study program according to the requirements of the education standard are specified in the internal regulatory enactments: „Examination regulations" and „State examination regulations". This SP is comparable with similar programs in the EU countries.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, study methods are adapted to the needs of students and during the site visit students stated they feel in the center of learning and that the institution is doing its best to meet their needs. BAT regularly conducts surveys and makes analysis based on data collected. Students do not use mobility opportunities.

### **Strengths**

1. Strong orientation towards practical skills of students and involvement of practitioners in the teaching process.
2. Well established QA system for improving the content of the study programme.
3. Strong Student Centered Learning orientation.

### **Weaknesses**

1. Low mobility of students and HEI education staff.
2. Not all courses (for instance Mediation, Municipal law etc.) have pedagogical methods focused on building practical skills, namely solving cases, simulations (moot courts).
3. In practice stronger focus on two subjects Criminal and Civil law.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

BAT does not allocate resources separately to each of its law study programmes. Therefore the analysis set forth in Section I, part 3 of this report generally applies here. The bachelor's degree students in this programme benefit from the same financial, educational and support resources provided to all the law programmes. As set forth in the main analysis, BAT is a private institution and has a strong record of financial stability. Financial reserves are maintained by BAT to offset costs incurred by any downturn, and BAT has the ability to borrow money in the event of a long term financial crisis due to its solid credit rating. During the current pandemic, BAT has permitted students to defer some tuition payments, in that way giving them financial support.

The information resources (including library resources) provided to the programme are adequate. Physical copies of essential law books and periodicals are held in the library. However, newer books containing recent changes in Latvian law were found to be lacking during the site visit. BAT must ensure that books and all other legal materials are regularly updated for students in the Bachelor's programme. The library staff is generally helpful, although an issue was raised with their willingness to provide cost-effective copying services to the students. Sufficient electronic legal databases are maintained. Students appear to be trained on how to use these databases, but a more formal process could be instituted to ensure that every student is adequately trained. The branch campuses have generally weaker infrastructure, particularly in the area of library and other information resources. An upgrade should be made to ensure that Bachelor's students in the branch campuses also have access to the necessary materials for legal research. Scientific resources, in the form of a strong law faculty with good teaching and research skills, are provided by BAT. The faculty's composition is somewhat skewed towards practitioners in the field rather than scientific researchers. For the Bachelor's programme, this is not a big flaw as the students are generally seeking more practical knowledge. In this sense, it is even an advantage for the Bachelor's students to have teachers with more day to day, "hands on" legal experience. Still, some theoretical knowledge is needed for students completing the Bachelor's programme and therefore the scientific qualifications of the faculty could be improved. Some steps have been taken in this regard by BAT in terms of bonuses and other support offered to faculty in order to improve their scientific output. Support resources provided to students in the Bachelor's programme are sufficient. Placement opportunities are provided in both the public and private sectors, although there is a special emphasis on placing students in jobs in the public sector. The branch campuses have even more of an over-emphasis on placing graduates of this programme in local public sector employment (public safety, courts). Internships are used effectively in the programme so that students have not only more practical skills but also have contacts with potential employers which may have positions open for them. On one hand, this matches the needs of the local job market to a large extent. Even so, BAT should try to make contact with more private employers in order to provide Bachelor's students more job opportunities in that sector. Psychological services for students in the Programme, unfortunately, appear to be entirely lacking. It is essential for BAT to provide such services to students in the programme.

#### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, BAT does not allocate resources separately to each of its law study programmes. Therefore the conclusions set forth in Section I, part 3 of this report apply here. Students have a good level of local job placement, particularly in the public sector, but BAT could do more in helping them find private sector positions.

#### Strengths:

1. Good career placement resources focused on providing local job opportunities for students.
2. Scientific resources in the form of a good law faculty with excellent teaching ability are very strong.
3. Solid library and other information resources are provided, particularly at the main campus. Bachelor's students mostly have sufficient materials for their studies.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Lack of physical and library resources at the branch campuses, which need to be upgraded by BAT's central administration.
2. Scientific credentials of the law faculty in the Bachelor's programme should be improved in the form of increased publications.
3. Lack of the latest law books in some instances.

## 4. Teaching Staff

### Analysis

4.1. Academic bachelor study programme "Law Science" (43380) according to SER p.131 programm's academic staff take participation in conferences, presentation of papers at conferences, preparation and publication of publications. As well as there are examples, where lecturers improve the qualifications by starting the study process at a doctoral study programme.

4.2. Academic staff at BAT is recruited on a regular basis in accordance with Regulations on election of academic personnel of BAT. There are the procedure of electing the associated professors and professors at the BAT that is determined by the regulations of the Council of Professors of Social Sciences at BAT and the Regulations of the Joint Professors' Council of Riga Stradins University, Daugavpils University, BAT and the respective professors' councils regulations of other higher education institutions.

According to information provided by SER p.131 the procedure for the selection of scientific research assistants, researchers and leading researchers at the Turiba Institute of Business Technology is determined by the by-laws of the Institute of Business Technologies. SER p.132 states that vacant positions of academic staff in BAT departments are appointed by the Rector on the proposal of the Dean of the Faculty, the Director of the study program or the head of the department. Competition is open.

The staff involved in the study programme mentioned in the SER p.132 . BAT undertakes appropriate measures to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme. In general the programme complies with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments

4.3. According to SER p.133 the qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the study program implementation conditions and the requirements of regulatory enactments. Academic staff , as well as guest lecturers from other Latvian universities participate in the implementation of the study process.

SER demonstrates that the study program is provided by 53 lecturers - 25 lecturers in the BAT have the following positions: 6 professors, 2 associate professors, 2 assoc. professors, 12 lecturers and 28 visiting lecturers: 1 guest professor, 6 guest docents, 21 guest lecturer. Permanent academic staff is strengthened with invited visiting lecturers with a high reputation in the law field. SER shows that qualification of academic staff is raised during different seminars and by involving them in international projects. There are some examples of research results, which related to the education process, provided in the SER p.134-135. As well as the SER p.135 demonstrates, that legal professionals are involved in the implementation of the study program (practicing lawyers sworn advocates, judges prosecutors).

Besides, it shall be noted that academic staff publishing in scientific journals. But, as shows BAT provided informations (lists of scientific publications) there are just 2 persons, who has publications listed in Web of Science/Scopus I.Veikša and J.Načisčionis, and 5 persons who has publications listed in EBSCO, ProQuest etc.

The qualification of teaching staff complies with necessary criteria. Mostly, academic staff links to the taught subject in Law. As SER p.158 shows Sworn attorneys who are involved in the implementation of the study program improve their qualifications every year, which is a mandatory requirement of the Council of Sworn Advocates. BAT teaching staff are involved in developing new course descriptions, methodological seminars etc.

During the onside visits BAT academic staff confirmed that they are involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme.

BAT gives the possibility and support to every teaching staff to publish monographs or collective monographs, or participate in conferences. But, nevertheless according to the BAT provided annex List of publications, comes that there are several active lecturers who use the opportunity given by the BAT.

4.4.The academic staff is involved in scientific research in the fields related to the content of the study programme, it shows the list of scientific topics provided by BAT SER p.137. And the particular scientific information is used in the study process.

4.5. Regarding the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses, the following should be noted. As SER p.163.

illustrates cooperation among lecturers is promoted in various seminars organized by the higher education institution for the improvement of lecturers' qualification, as well as within the ESF project Nr. 8.2.0 / 18 / A019. As a result, lecturers have the opportunity to participate in masterclasses, such as the use of state of-the-art IT and digital solutions in business etc. There are annual strategic seminars organized, where lecturers work in groups to find solutions for different situations. There is a clear mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members, even on BAT branches level.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Composition of academic staff is strong and professional, that gives the possibility to provide good knowledge to the students as well as to achieve the aim to ensure teaching quality and compliances with the national regulations. Scientific activities of the several academic staff are excellent, but, in general academic staff shall be proactive to make better contributions to the study process.

Strengths:

1. In general, high qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD.
2. Good support for research, clear, understandable provision.

Weaknesses

1. Low academic staff activity in the research field, especially on guest lecturer level.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law Science"**

### **Requirements**

1. 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. BAT provided Diploma shows that 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. (Appendix 7. Draft Diploma of Academic Bachelor's Degree Programme. )

- 2 2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with Daugavpils university has been signed. This agreement ensures that the students will be able to keep studying institutions mentioned before. (Agreement 2017, Appendix 8)

- 3 3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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 failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to BAT letter from 20.01.2020. For compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence is revoked. Appendix 17

- 4 4. The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BAT Testimonial (06/11/2019). On knowledge of State Language (Appendix 13).CV of the teaching staff indicates the proficiency of the official language. Annex 4. Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae)

- 5 5. 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, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 6 6. 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. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BAT (04/11/2019.) Testimonial on compliance of the academic staff with the requirements of the third paragraph of Section 55, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance. Contract on acquisition of education. Appendix 12

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented. Provided information comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Appendix 6. Academic bachelor study programme "Law Science" study course.

- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Annex 13 The opinion of the Council for Higher Education

- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The program complies with the state standards for academic education, set out in the Cabinet Regulations No. 240 of 13 May 2014 "Regulations on the state standards for academic education". Accessible at: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/266187-noteikumi-par-valsts-akademiskas-izglitiba-standartu> (Appendix 2).

- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.1, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 14 14. Each member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, including international editions (if they have worked for a shorter period of time, the number of publications shall be in proportion to the work period), or artistic creation achievements (for instance, exhibitions, films, theatre performances, and concert activity), or a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. There are several active lecturers who have publications in International reviewed and indexed scientific journals and whose publications correspond to lecturer specialization and provided study courses.

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme has a good resource base, the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. In common, provided information complies with the requirements.

## **Requirements (R6-R8)**

- 1 R6 - The compliance of the study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme has a good resource base, the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. In common, provided information complies with the requirements

- 2 R7 - The compliance of the qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The study program is provided by 53 lecturers - 25 lecturers in the BAT have the following positions: 6 professors, 2 associate professors, 2 assoc. professors, 12 lecturers and 28 visiting lecturers: 1 guest professor, 6 guest docents, 21 guest lecturer.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Academic Bachelor study program "Law Science" name, the degree, the aims, objectives, and admission requirements are interrelated and can be regarded as programme strengths. Programme design and content of the study courses correspond to the legal field requirements. Strong material and technical resource base. Good library in the central office, good reading room, which is available for students' individual work. Professional and enthusiastic programme director and high qualification of the teaching staff, engaged in scientific research of the programme. Good cooperation with stakeholders, state institutions on programme's content level.

Strengths:

1. Programme is well positioned.
2. Enthusiastic and motivated teaching staff and programme director.
3. In general, high qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD.
4. Good support for research.
5. Strong Student Centered Learning orientation.
6. Well established QA system for improving the content of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

1. Limited possibilities for student international mobility related to the programme specifics.
2. Fact that the program is implemented in four different ways - full-time, part-time, part-time extramural and part-time extramural distance can be a risk factor to ensure that all learning

outcomes can be achieved at the same level across all learning forms.

3. Not all courses have pedagogical methods focused on building practical skills, namely solving cases, simulations (moot courts).
4. Weak cooperation between Administrative staff, lecturers from branches and central office in research field (publications, international projects).
5. Lack of physical and library resources at the branch campuses, which need to be upgraded by BAT's central administration.
6. Low academic staff activity in the research field, especially on guest lecturer level.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Law Science"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law Science"**

#### **Short-term recommendations**

It is necessary to make upgrades to the physical infrastructure and information resources of the branch campuses.

Ensure that the law library keeps up to date with the latest books in each legal field, especially where there have been significant changes in the la

Add psychological support services for the students.

#### **Long-term recommendations**

It is suggested to make some improvements of internalisation.

It is suggested to work on cooperation between Administrative staff, lecturers from branches and central office in research field (publications, international projects)

Make upgrades to the physical infrastructure and information resources of the branch campuses.

Continue to make efforts to increase the scientific output of the faculty, especially in the form of legal scholarship,

## **II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT**

### **II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT**

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

##### **Analysis**

The Professional Masters programme under assessment is titled 'Law Science' (47380). Programme is equivalent to 60 points in full time studies - 1 year and 5 months, in part-time extramural distance form - 1 year and 6 months, 80 points in full time studies - 2 years, in part-time extramural distance form - 2 years and 1 month. Study language is Latvian. To enter the programme, applicants must have a professional or academic bachelor degree in Law Science or professional qualification that has been obtained after 4 years of studies in the Law Science study programme. Graduates after the successful completion of all requirements and successful defence of Master thesis and completion of



unified vocational qualification examination of a lawyer are awarded with the professional Master's degree in Law science and professional qualification of lawyer. The main objective of the programme is as follows: To provide professional studies that meet the economic, cultural, national defence and security, as well as social needs, are based on the theoretical foundations of the law science, comply with the standards of the legal profession and are applicable in practice. From the BAT provided information (Appendix 3. Compliance of the professional master's study program "Law Science" with the state education standards) the programme compliance with the new Lawyer's professional standard: Agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on April 8, 2020, protocol no. 3.

But it is worth noting that the Master's study program is designed in such a way that the student is orientated and prepared for the unified Lawyer qualification examination, which is an integral part of the given program. Successful passing of this exam is the key to obtaining a Lawyer's qualification. The SER lists numerous learning outcomes that the programme sets to achieve- Ability to present basic and specialized knowledge in the field and to apply it to carry out professional and research activities; ability to take a scientific approach to problem solving, take responsibility and initiative; ability to make decisions and find solutions. The programme aim, degree, qualification, aims, objectives, and learning outcomes are interrelated and well prepared.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

The programmes aim, degree and qualification to be acquired, aims, objectives, and learning outcomes are interrelated. The admission requirements are clear. The professional master's study programme with its own name attracts those interested to study law directly, to study higher than the bachelor's level in studies, and admission to the programme takes place only after mastering the bachelor's level programme Law science.

Strengths:

1. Study program is well prepared and in accordance with current requirements and trends in teaching of Law in Latvia.
2. Study program prepares students for qualification examination.

Weaknesses:

1. The research related capacities and skills included in study outcomes and aims can be improved as shown by example of provided graduate theses overall research quality.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

2.1. The aim of the program is to educate legal specialists who would be able to act as advocates, prosecutors, judges, notaries, bailiffs, insolvency process administrators or other qualified lawyers, as well as to provide their knowledge in the education process to students of higher education institutions. In addition, the graduate of the Master's program is prepared for further studies in the doctoral program. From 2019 the study courses in second level professional master's study program in Law Science, subject to specializations, focused on current issues in criminal law and criminal procedure, such as reopening criminal proceedings due to newly discovered circumstances. The specialization in civil law, in turn, focused on current issues in property and contract law. In all specializations (four) the use of mediation is a topical issue. A study course on current issues of commercial law is now offered to foster the qualitative training of future specialists, who are oriented to providing business services. The actual issues to be acquired in the study courses are specified depending on actual needs in practice, depending on what problematic issues are

considered and resolved in courts and relevant scientific research on these problematic issues in Latvia and abroad is taken into account and noted down in the list of literature in study course descriptions. The study content is important for applicants who choose to study at BAT. Thus, in the 2019 applicants' survey, it was stated that one of the first criteria for choosing BAT for studies was the "Content of the study program". The content of the study program is now subject to the requirements of a central law examination. This means that the study program must abandon the specialization that was oriented towards business services and move on to preparing students for the lawyer's qualification examination: criminal law and criminal procedure law; civil, civil procedure and commercial law; constitutional law, administrative law and administrative procedure law; international law; theory of law, philosophy of law and history of Latvian law. If the candidate in the qualification examination meets the requirements and demonstrates knowledge and skills regarding the above-mentioned fields of law, then the qualification "Lawyer" is awarded. The study courses provided for in the study program, defence of internship and master's thesis are requirements for obtaining a master's degree. In addition, the Master's thesis as a result of scientific research is based on the achievements and findings of the field of Law Science. For the topic of the Master's thesis, the student chooses the topic and the problematic issues that are theoretically debatable, either due to the shortcomings of the legal regulation or the incorrect implementation of the legal regulation or all together. The Master's thesis itself contains an empirical study of the actual situation in the national economy in the exercise of rights. Thus, the actual situation is investigated by evaluating both positive and less positive achievements and proposing solutions of either theoretical or practical nature. Practical solutions are accompanied by proposals to improve the regulatory framework. Proposals of a theoretical nature involve refining the conceptual approach. Upon successful completion of the study program the professional qualification of a Lawyer (fifth level of professional qualification with master's degree in law, profession code - 261101) shall be awarded in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 264 dated 23 May 2017 "264 "Regulations on the classification of occupations, basic tasks and qualification requirements relevant to the occupation. The state standards for this programme are met: The scope of the program is 60 and 80 credit points. The duration of full-time study is one year and five months for students who have previously completed a professional bachelor's study program of four years and two years for students who have previously completed an academic bachelor's program of three years. According to the Bologna process the total duration for the award of Masters degree and the qualification lawyer's in full-time studies is at least 5 years. The content of the Master's program provides the acquisition of the knowledge, skills and competences required for professional activities in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences of the Framework Level 7 of the Latvian Education Classification. Contact hours in the implemented study courses exceed 30% of the scope. The Mandatory content of the program corresponds to those required by the standards: 1) study courses, which ensure the acquisition of the latest achievements in the theory and practice in the field, include the following courses of Block A: Human Rights Enforcement Mechanisms (2CP), Division of Power (4CP), Jurisdiction of International Courts (3CP), Social Psychology (3CP), Innovations in legal enactments (2CP), European Union Competition Law (4CP). Skills enhancement are provided for in Block B study courses such as Mediation (2CP), Common Law 1 (2CP), Alternative Dispute Resolution (2CP) Insolvency Law (2CP);

2) research work, innovation, design work and management can be acquired in the courses of Block B: Management Information Systems (2CP), Economic Principles and its Analysis (2CP);

3) Block A of the program provides for pre-master thesis practice in the amount of 6 CP for students who have previously completed the professional Bachelor's program. Students who have graduated an academic Bachelor's study program shall undergo practice of 6 CP and pre-master thesis practice of 20 CP.

4) The total scope of the state examination is 20 CP. The State Examinations consist of: Compilation and defence of Master's thesis - 16 CP and State examination for lawyer's qualification (examination)

4 CP.

Students will acquire these competences in the following study courses: Current trends in Data protection law (2CP), Quality systems (2CP). In addition, these skills can be further developed through optional courses in European Union Social and Labour Law (2CP), International Legal Cooperation (2CP), Common Law 2 (2CP)

Students have already acquired some of the knowledge required by the standards in their Bachelor's study program Labour Law, (2CP), Finance and Taxation Law (2CP), Drafting Legal Documents (2CP) The requirements of the Environmental Protection Law and the Civil Protection and Disaster Management Law are acquired in academic and professional bachelor programs in the Block A study course Civil and Environmental Protection (2CP). Students enrolled in this program who have not acquired these skills will be able to acquire it alongside their masters program

Graduates of the program receive a professional master's degree in Law, as well as a fifth-level lawyer's qualification. The qualification exam is part of a professional master's degree program. The qualification examination is taken to obtain the professional qualification of a lawyer.

Graduates of the professional Master's study program have the right to continue their doctoral studies, subject to enrolment requirements.

A student centred standard form has been developed for inclusion of assessment criteria in each study course, both for final examinations and regular examinations (refer appendix). When approving the descriptions of independent studies for the new study year in the department, the lecturers are required to include an assessment table not only for the final examination but also for each regular examination.

The institution for internship (practice) is chosen by the student in connection with the final thesis so that they can collect the materials needed for the research. The student chooses the practice place independently. The student can choose any company, state or municipal institution, a person belonging to the court and court system or a non-governmental organization. It is the student's responsibility to evaluate the possibilities to complete the practice tasks at the chosen practice place.

The program is compatible with similar study programmes in the EU.

Programme also complies with the sector specific regulatory framework of professional Master SP Law: The content of the study programme is subordinate to the requirements of a unified lawyer exam. In the curriculum it is no longer possible to select specializations that are business-oriented. The programme includes courses of study whose knowledge will be tested in the exam. According to the curriculum plan, the amount of proficiency exam is four credits. After the examination, students will be admitted only after they have successfully completed all their courses and defended their master's work. The BAT will inform the Ministry of Justice in writing at the beginning of each academic year. The BAT shall publish, twice a year, information on the predicted number of students who will be the subject of a qualifying examination on an electronic medium. Basic knowledge in all five areas listed in paragraph 24 of the MK rules is already acquired under the Bachelor's degree programme. In the Masters ' programme, this knowledge is repeated, refreshed, supplemented and their skills are tested in their respective field trainees, as well as in individual courses of study specific to each field: Criminal Law Practical workshop and Criminal Policy; Civil-law Practical workshop, Mediation, Alternative Dispute Resolution and The challenges of commercial law; State Law Practical workshop, Division of Power and Legislative innovation; International law Practical workshop and European Union competition Law; The history, origins and philosophy of each sub-sector, as well as theoretical questions related to this sub-sector, are repeated and the skills tested in each of the trainees.

The qualification exam consists of the following parts: 1) The theoretical questions of the subsector of each law shall be repeated in the relevant fields, as well as in specific courses corresponding to the field concerned; 2) A great deal of attention is devoted to skill testing in the fields concerned, with various practical tasks (casus): Practical workshop in criminal law, civil law, state law and

international law. The descriptions of the study courses comply with the provisions set forth in the regulatory enactments. The content is relevant and complementary and ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes. It also meets the needs of the market and the scientific trends. From the BAT provided information (Appendix 3. Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard) the programme compliance with the new Lawyer's professional standard: Agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on April 8, 2020, protocol no. 3. 2.2. Studies in BAT are implemented in different ways. In this study programme there are: full time studies and part time distance learning. Full-time studies take place every working day while for part time students lectures and practical lectures take place on weekday evenings. Part-time extramural students have overview lectures, which provide the most important directions for the study course. In order to achieve the aims of the study program, more attention is paid in part-time studies to the students' independent work, which is determined by the scope, content and specifics of each study course. Distance learning students have the same rules for studying and the same requirements as for full time study. The only difference is that there are no scheduled contact hours. But there is a possibility, if a distance learning student can and wants, then there are opportunities to attend lectures, face-to-face seminars. If necessary, students are provided with face-to-face counseling. The final examinations are usually taken by the student in person. The main task of lectures is to provide students with theoretical knowledge. They are read using the latest pedagogical methods by the teaching staff, including technical tools and, where appropriate, special tools and aids (in separate courses). In seminars, the number of which is defined in the course description, students apply theoretical knowledge in practice. This is done both by making sure of the theoretical knowledge and by organizing individual work, group work, individual or group homework, report preparation, discussion, debate, moot court play and case solving.

Despite the fact that BAT overall focus is on practical knowledge, the description of the study subjects regarding pedagogical methodology used do not always mention practical work, for instance, solving cases, disputes, as well as simulations are not used as a method. Most methods used are presentations by lecturer, discussion and individual work.

In accordance with the norms of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (Article 56, third paragraph), studies in this program are conducted mainly in the state language. At the same time, taking into account the interest of the students as well as the possibilities of cooperation, study courses in English are offered and included in the plan in case of visiting foreign lecturers at BAT.

The students' independent work plays an important role in studies and its scope, content and assessment of which depends on the particular study course. Students must independently study the compulsory literature specified by the lecturer, prepare specific case study solutions, draft legal acts, presentations, etc.

In addition to studies, some students are involved in other research-related work. The development and defense of study papers is included in the study program from the first year onwards in order to ensure that the student is introduced and involved in the research work as soon as possible.

Master's thesis is one of the essential parts of this study program.

The implementation of the second level professional Master's study program in Law Science takes into account the principles of student-centred education:

Involvement of students in the study process and improvement of content – participation of students in the work of the Council of the Faculty of Law by discussing and accepting the plans of the second level professional study program Law and its approval by the Senate. If changes to the program or plan are necessary, the issue is discussed in the Faculty Council with the participation of student representatives. The involvement of students in the improvement of the study program is also carried out by evaluating the students' feedback, which is present in the students' questionnaires, which take place both at the end of the study course and at the end of the study program. Proposals of students are taken into account as far as possible. The methods of study evaluation are chosen in

accordance with the basic principles and procedure of the evaluation of the professional study program, which are specified in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No.512: Regulations on the state standards for second level professional higher education;

The principle of openness of assessment - done in accordance with the aims and tasks of the study program, as well as with the aims and tasks of the study course. Study course descriptions define a set of requirements to achieve the learning outcomes. These include regular tests, assessments, reports, discussions, presentations, etc. According to the Study Regulations, during the course of each study course the student has to pass regular examinations (tests, reports, etc.) specified in the study course description. The lecturer of the study course can develop his/her own criteria according to the expected learning outcomes of the course, using the general evaluation criteria included in the study regulations;

Principle of obligatory assessment - At the end of the study course the student takes the final examination of the study course - exam or pass/fail.

Principle of possibility of review of assessment - There is clearly defined procedure applied if the student contests the objectivity of the marks received for the final concluding examination of the study course and wishes to get a higher mark.

Principle of diversity of assessment methods used in assessment - lecturers use such assessment methods in the professional master's study program as: answers to questions, situation solution, test, case studies. But they all involve the application of theoretical knowledge to demonstrate the student's skills in each course and in relation to other courses.

The assessment of learning outcomes on a 10 point scale. Grades from "excellent" (10) to "almost satisfactory" (4) and "passed" are considered successful. The program culminates in a state examination consisting of the elaboration and defence of a master's thesis, evaluated by the state examination commission, as well as the central examination for lawyer's qualification.

### 2.3. BAT regularly conducts student surveys.

During the reporting period, an electronic student survey was conducted to determine the level of student satisfaction, from which it was concluded that the students are satisfied with all the processes in the university, including the study program and its organization. Students were also satisfied with learning outcomes, accessibility and sufficiency of information on the processes related to the study process, independent studies as well as the material and technical facilities at the university. Each lecturer is acquainted with the results of the students' survey, which gives the opportunity to make necessary improvements in further work. If necessary, the director of the study program meets with the lecturer, whose evaluation differs from the common tendencies.

BAT conducts graduate surveys, but lately it has been difficult to carry out due to the increased protection of personal data. This partially limits the ability to follow a graduate's work and life after graduation. 508 respondents, including 179 graduates of the Faculty of Law participated in the last BAT alumni survey.

Graduates are asked if they work in their speciality, how long after graduation they got a job and what their income is. Analysing the answers obtained, study course descriptions are improved, new study courses are added or old ones are removed, as well as the sequence of study courses in the program is specified.

The involvement of employers takes place through council meetings, individual discussions, as well as through evaluation in practice reports. Employers, when evaluating the report, pay attention to the actualization of study courses, including orientation to specialization and connection with business. In order to ensure that the most up-to-date information is passed on to the students, guest lecturers - industry specialists and employers - are invited to lectures. Cooperation with employers is ensured by organizing JF Council meetings.

Students of the professional Master's study program usually choose topical issues for the Master's thesis, because they are already working in the field and face problematic issues on a daily basis. Students address these issues in their Master's thesis and use the results in the labor market. If the

student has not worked in the relevant field before commencement of studies, the topic of the Master's thesis is usually found during the internship - the student identifies the problem issues together with the internship provider and investigates them in the master's thesis. Of course, students have opportunities and they choose the research topics offered by the industry. There is no specific breakdown by years which topic would prevail.

2.4. Each academic year, the Faculty of Law receives information from the Department for Study Development and International Cooperation regarding the opportunities for students and lecturers to use the Erasmus + mobility program offered for the respective academic year.

As a rule, students of the professional Master's program have the opportunity to use the Erasmus + mobility program offer. The table shows that the opportunities have been little used. This can be explained by the fact that it is practically difficult for students who are already working permanently to combine work with studies abroad. Student mobility is regulated by Erasmus+ mobility program regulations. There is in place a clear set of rules for mobility of students. The table: statistics on student mobility (outgoing student mobility) shows that from 2013 to 2020 8 students went abroad within the Professional Master Study Programme „Law Science“.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general in all subjects more diverse pedagogical methods focused on building practical skills are advisable, namely, solving cases, simulations. Outcomes of the surveys are implemented in the SP for its improvements. BAT recognizes the challenge of motivating its students to use mobility opportunities, and it took some measures, but the mobility is still rather low.

#### **Strengths**

1. Strong orientation towards practical skills of students and involvement of practitioners in the teaching process.
2. Well established QA system for improving the content of the study programme.
3. Master thesis aim to resolve practical issues.

#### **Weaknesses**

1. Low mobility of students.
2. Pedagogical methodology used is not diverse, with few methods focused on building practical skills, for instance, solving cases, moot courts, as well as simulations are not used as a method.
3. Low usage of online international resources and online guest lecturing.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

BAT does not allocate resources separately to each of its law study programmes. Therefore the analysis set forth in Section I, part 3 of this report applies here. Overall, BAT has a strong financial position and there is not a question of its short and long term financial viability. During the recent Covid 19 pandemic BAT was even able to make special allowances for law students having difficulties making tuition payments. There were several specific issues raised during the site visit about certain information resources being made available to students in the Master's programme. A review of certain master's theses revealed very few citations to any scientific legal articles or books, raising the question of whether or not the students were trained on how to access the materials from available legal databases provided by BAT. Also, there were examples where the library did not contain new books concerning new changes in Latvian law, particularly labor law. Finally, there were some limitations in students being able to obtain copies of articles or texts from the library staff.

Overall, of course, BAT maintains a rather high level of library resources, but especially for the Master's programme in law it is essential that students have access to the latest updates in the law, especially where they intend to be practicing attorneys. As noted earlier, there were some discrepancies in the quality of library resources as between the Riga campus and the branch campuses.

Scientific resources in the form of a strong teaching faculty are present. Because the Master's programme requires more theoretical knowledge, and is the stepping stone for students entering a professional career (often as a licensed attorney) or a gateway to further studies, further improvements in the faculty's publication record should be made.

Resources for student support are likewise generally sufficient. Job placement is a particular strong point. Both local and even more high profile private sector employers have a good working relationship with BAT and Master's students have a good record of being placed in legal jobs. Public sector employment is somewhat overemphasized, however, especially at the branch campuses. BAT needs to do better in balancing the career opportunities offered to its Master's students between the public and private sectors. One area where Master's student support services are lacking, however, is in the area of psychological support. No psychological support services are provided, and this must be changed.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

BAT does not allocate resources separately to each of its law study programmes. Therefore the analysis set forth in Section I, part 3 of this report applies here. Overall, as with the rest of the law programmes, the level of resources provided is quite strong. Some gaps exist with providing materials with the latest updates to the law at the library, and possibly training on all the available legal databases. This is particularly important for master's students who intend to go on to practice law as a licensed attorney.

#### **Strengths:**

1. Generally good physical infrastructure, library and career support services.
2. An appropriate emphasis on training the Master's students in practical legal skills; the teachers are mostly legal practitioners who do an excellent job of conveying their knowledge and the internship and placement programs for Master's students give them a head start in beginning or developing their legal careers.

#### **Weaknesses:**

1. The latest legal texts are sometimes not present, and students need better training on how to use the available legal databases.
2. The physical infrastructure and library resources found at the branch campuses are lacking.
3. An overemphasis on placing Master's students in public sector jobs.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

4.1. According to SER p.100 programm's academic staff take part in conferences, presentation of papers at conferences, preparation and publication of publications. As well as there are examples, where lecturers improve the qualifications by starting the study process at a doctoral study

programme.

Academic staff in BAT is recruited on a regular basis in accordance with Regulations on election of academic personnel of BAT. There are the procedure of electing the associated professors and professors at the BAT that is determined by the regulations of the Council of Professors of Social Sciences at BAT and the Regulations of the Joint Professors' Council of Riga Stradins University, Daugavpils University, BAT and the respective professors' councils regulations of other higher education institutions.

According to information provided by a SER p.99-100 the procedure for the selection of scientific research assistants, researchers and leading researchers at the Turiba Institute of Business Technology is determined by the by-laws of the Institute of Business Technologies. SER p.99 -100 states that vacant positions of academic staff in BAT departments are appointed by the Rector on the proposal of the Dean of the Faculty, the Director of the study program or the head of the department. Competition is open.

BAT offers academic staff opportunities to improve the knowledge by learning a foreign language, using new technologies, etc, as well as courses within the framework of the project "8.2.2.0.0 / 18 / A / 007" of the European Social Fund project "Improvement of Management at Turiba University". And there are several lecturers involved in ESF project training "Academic Integrity" in 2019.

The staff involved in Professional master's study program in Law science mentioned in SER p.101. Part of them are practicing lawyers, sworn advocates, judges, prosecutors, etc. There are lecturers of the study program who transfer their knowledge and experience to the students and participate in international scientific conferences with papers, write articles and books on topical issues of law. ("Insurance Law", "Recording administrative offences in road traffic violations", "Quality Management Systems for Increasing the Competitiveness of Small and Medium Enterprises". "Copyright", "Administrative Law" Fourth revised edition. All articles are included in course descriptions and useful for the students.

BAT undertakes appropriate measures to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme. In general the programme complies with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments

4.2. According to SER p.102 the qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the study program implementation conditions and the requirements of regulatory enactments. Academic staff, as well as guest lecturers from other Latvian universities participate in the implementation of the study process. SER demonstrates that the study program is provided by 21 lecturers who are involved in the professional master's study program Law Science. Among the lecturers involved in the implementation of the program there are 8 lecturers in the university who have the following positions: 3 professors, 2 associate professors, 1 docent, 3 lecturers. There are 13 visiting lecturers: 1 visiting professor, 4 visiting docent, 8 visiting lecturers. Permanent academic staff is strengthened with invited visiting lecturers with a high reputation in the law field. In general, a SER shows that qualification of academic staff is raised during different seminars and by involving them in international projects.

4.3. Nevertheless, it shall be noted that BAT provided information (lists of scientific publications) shows that there are just 2 persons, who have publications listed in Web of Science/Scopus, and 5 persons who have publications listed in EBSCO, ProQuest etc in particular period. It shows that the common scientific activity of academic staff is not on a high level yet. In general, the qualification of teaching staff complies with necessary criteria. BAT teaching staff are involved in developing new course descriptions, methodological seminars etc. During the on-site visits BAT academic staff confirmed that they are involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme.

BAT gives the possibility and support to every teaching staff to publish monographs or collective monographs, or participate in conferences. But, nevertheless according to the BAT provided annex List of publications, comes that there are several active lecturers who use the opportunity given by



the BAT.

4.4. The academic staff is involved in scientific research in the fields related to the content of the study programme, it shows the list of scientific topics provided by BAT SER p.105. And the particular scientific information is used in the study process.

4.5. Regarding the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses, the following should be noted. As SER p.107

illustrates cooperation among lecturers is promoted in various seminars organized by the higher education institution for the improvement of lecturers' qualification, as well as within the ESF project Nr. 8.2.0 / 18 / A019. As a result, lecturers have the opportunity to participate in masterclasses, such as the use of state of-the-art IT and digital solutions in business etc. There are annual strategic seminars organized, where lecturers work in groups to find solutions for different situations.

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Composition of academic staff is strong and professional, that gives the possibility to provide good knowledge to the students as well as to achieve the aim to ensure teaching quality and compliances with the national regulations. Scientific activities of the several academic staff are excellent, but, in general academic staff shall be proactive to make better contributions to the study process.

Strengths:

1. In general, high qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD.
2. Good support for research.

Weaknesses

1. Weak cooperation between Administrative staff, lecturers from branches and central office in research field (publications, international projects)
2. Low academic staff activity in the research field, especially on guest lecturer level.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law Science"**

### **Requirements**

1. 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. BAT provided Diploma shows that 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 Diploma provided in the Appendix 7.

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with Rēzekne university has been signed. This agreement ensures that the students will be able to keep studying institutions mentioned before (Appendix 8).

- 3 3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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 failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to BAT letter from 20.01.2020. For compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the licence is revoked. Appendix 12.

- 4 4. The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BAT Testimonial (06/11/2019) On knowledge of State Language (Appendix 13).CV of the teaching staff indicates the proficiency of the official language. Annex 4. Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae)

- 5 5. 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, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 6 6. 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. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance. Contract on acquisition of education. (Appendix 12.)

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented. Provided information comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. Appendix 6. Professional Master's study programme "Law Science" study course

- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** From the BAT provided information (Appendix 3. Compliance of the professional master's study program "Law Science" with the state education standards) the programme compliance with the new Lawyer's professional standard: Agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on April 8, 2020, protocol no. 3.

- 11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** It meets the standards and criteria as shown in Appendix 2. Compliance of the professional master's study programme "Law science" with the education standard. The program complies with the state standards for second level professional higher education as defined in the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 512 dated 26 August 2014 "Regulations on State Standards for the Second Level Professional Higher Education". Accessible at: <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=268761>

- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 14 14. Each member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, including international editions (if they have worked for a shorter period of time, the number of publications shall be in proportion to the work period), or artistic creation achievements (for instance, exhibitions, films, theatre performances, and concert activity), or a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the provided annexes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. There are several active lecturers who have publications in International reviewed and indexed scientific journals and whose publications correspond to lecturer specialization and provided study courses.

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The study programme complies with legal requirements.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

- 1 R6 - The compliance of the study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The programme has a good resource base, the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. In common, provided information complies with the requirements.

- 2 R7 - The compliance of the qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Program is provided by 21 lecturers who are involved in the professional master's study program Law Science. Among the lecturers involved in the implementation of the program there are 8 lecturers in the university who have the following positions: 3 professors, 2 associate professors, 1 docent, 3 lecturers. There are 13 visiting lecturers: 1 visiting professor, 4 visiting docent, 8 visiting lecturers.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, by BAT provided information complies with the requirements. The curriculums of the courses are relevant and include the latest developments in particular level.

### Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

In general, professional Masters study program "Law Science" name, the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, and admission requirements are interrelated and can be regarded as programme strengths. Programme design and content of the study courses correspond to the legal field requirements. Strong material and technical resource base. Good library in central office, good reading room, which is available for students' individual work. Professional and enthusiastic programme director and high qualification of the teaching staff, engaged in scientific research of the programme. Good cooperation with stakeholders, state institutions on the programme's content level.

#### Strengths:

1. Programme is well positioned.
2. In general, high qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD.
3. Good support for research.
4. Orientation towards practical skills of students and involvement of practitioners in the teaching process.
5. Well structured QA system for improving the content of the study programme.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Limited possibilities for student international mobility related to the programme specifics.
2. Weak cooperation between Administrative staff, lecturers from branches and central office in research field (publications, international projects).
3. Low academic staff activity in the research field, especially on guest lecturer level.
4. Master's students not well informed about the possibility use relevant legal databases; a review of master's theses showed a lack of citations to any scholarly articles.
5. Low usage of online international resources and online guest lecturing.

## Evaluation of the study programme "Law Science"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

## 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law Science"

### Short-term recommendations

It is recommended to work on the system how do Master's students can receive updated training on the relevant legal databases; a review of master's theses showed a lack of citations to any scholarly articles

### Long-term recommendations

BAT should find mechanisms to encourage students to use opportunities for mobility and in that way improve internalization. If ERASMUS + Programme is not the best fit for achieving this goal, maybe some other mobility mechanisms could be used as well, which are more acceptable for BAT students and staff regarding their personal life.

It is suggested to BAT to make diversification of pedagogical methods focused on practical skills

Raise awareness among students on using possibilities of international resources (online webinars) and provide broader opportunities to follow online international conferences, webinars and online guest lecturers.

## II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Law Science" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Academic Doctoral Study Programme „Law Science” (51380). It is implemented in full-time three-year form. Programme is equivalent to 120 credit points (180 ECTS). Language of study is Latvian and English.

Graduates at the successful completion of all requirements and successful defence of doctoral thesis are awarded Doctor in Law (Ph.D.) degree. In Latvian - Zinātnes doktors (Ph.D.) Tiesību zinātnes nozarē (Appendix 8). According to the Cabinet regulation No. 1001 the correct name in english can be provided as Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Law. It is necessary to improve the name of the degree. The main objective is to ensure high-level studies and active doctoral research activities, so that the student obtains a doctoral degree for an independently developed and publicly defended doctoral thesis under the guidance of an experienced scientist containing original research results and providing new insights into the relevant scientific discipline. Important aspect is the possibility to provide new insights into the field of Law under guidance of experienced staff. Expected learning outcome is ability to demonstrate extensive research knowledge and skills and ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the latest scientific theories and insights, research methodology and modern research methods. In conclusion the programme complies with the general way how doctoral studies in the field of Law is being conducted elsewhere in Latvia and as doctoral program it is by definition in this institution tailor made for each doctoral student with strong emphasis on principles of student centered learning.

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

Aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements of the programme are well interrelated. In general, the name of the study programme, the degree as well as the overall structure have been established in a coherent manner. Nevertheless several changes should be made.

Strengths:

1. Doctoral study programme is well prepared in accordance with current regulations and trends.
2. The content of the study course is rich and based on scientific novelty.

Weaknesses:

1. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version.

## **2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof**

### **Analysis**

2.1. According to BAT provided information (Annex 6. Syllabus Doctoral study program Law Science), there are several general courses (Civil Law, Criminal Law etc.). The course descriptions are structured well, study methods, purpose, tasks, learning outcomes are logical. It should be noted that the content of the course description could be more detailed. There is a lack of scientific novelty from the content of the course description (Annex 6. Syllabus Doctoral study program Law Science). As well there are weak literature and source parts in the study course descriptions. In general new literary resources are not used at all. There are not used latest editions of books, latest scientific articles. There are resources dated by 2017, 2016, 2015, 2014 etc. The program is important for the development of the country and the region, because in its preparation the strategic goal was set - to provide the students with the theoretical knowledge and research skills of law. BAT focuses their programs on serving the business environment. The Doctoral Program is pursued in line with the mission of BAT: we push the world of business thinking, earning ourselves and teaching others to make money. As a result, this program is quite different from other doctoral programs in the Baltic States. The dissertation itself contains an empirical study of the actual situation in the national economy in the exercise of rights. Thus, the actual situation is investigated by evaluating both positive and less positive achievements and proposing solutions of either theoretical or practical nature. Practical solutions are accompanied by proposals to improve the regulatory framework. Proposals of a theoretical nature involve refining the conceptual approach. The difference in the doctoral program is in the research orientation, allowing doctoral students to acquire academic knowledge and develop the competencies of law professionals internationally. The doctoral programme covers research in five sub-disciplines of Law Science: Civil Law, Criminal Law, National Law, International and European Union Law, and Law Theory and History. The results of these lines of research ensure the study of issues of importance to the Latvian state, economy and society as a fundamental prerequisite for the functioning of a democratic state system. The aim of the doctoral program is to prepare qualified legal professionals capable of independently carrying out, in the fields of public and private law, national, European Union and international law activities relating to the application of substantive and procedural law, case law and doctrine. Doctoral study program "Law" is implemented in both Latvian and English, it promotes cooperation of higher education institutions, develops joint scientific research, as the program involves academic staff from several foreign higher education institutions. The program focuses not only on lecturers and scientists, but also on the specialization of international education in the global world. Scope of the study program CP: 120CP, Duration of the study program: three years, The compulsory Part A Study Courses 28 CP,

Doctoral Thesis - 72 CP Professional optional Study Courses - 20; Acquisition of theoretical part of doctoral study program and elaboration of doctoral thesis Selected part B study course, elaboration and defence of parts of the doctoral thesis twice in the study year at the Doctoral Council, presentation at the conference, publications on the topic of the doctoral thesis preparation of study courses and participation in implementation of bachelor or master study program, preparation of publications elaboration of doctoral thesis on topical issues in law science, to carry out original research independently, which is also important for national economy; The graduates of the Master's study program who, in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No.5 of 26 August 2014, 512 "Regulations on national standards for second level professional higher education" have mastered the requirements of the Environmental Protection law and the Civil Protection and Disaster Management law are enrolled for the study program; A doctoral degree is awarded; The basic principles and procedure for the assessment of the acquisition of the study program according to the requirements of the education standard are specified in the internal regulatory enactments: „Examination regulations" and „State examination regulations". It is also compatible with the similar study programmes in the EU.

2.2. In accordance with the provisions of Article 6 (4) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the teaching staff is entitled to choose teaching methods. Students involved in this program are full time students. Each lecturer involved in the implementation of the doctoral study program knows the current issues of his / her subject. They are especially discussed within the study course and discussed with doctoral students. Doctoral students are invited to propose possible solutions to the current issue, which are presented and given an appropriate evaluation by the lecturer. A solution can be a presentation, an essay, a test, but it is certainly a completed evaluation and analysis of possible solutions.

Study course topics are presented in an interactive way, asking questions to students and encouraging discussion, as well as PowerPoint presentations. During the lectures, students are involved in practical work both individually and in a group, indicating the students' individuality, and the underlining and development of social characteristics.

2.3. BAT regularly conducts student surveys. During the reporting period, an electronic student survey was conducted to determine the level of student satisfaction, which resulted in the following main conclusions: The averages are close to the maximum grade, so it can be concluded that the students are satisfied with all the processes in the university, including the study program and its organization. Overall, the students gave a positive response, with an average rating of 4.4 for all indicators which have been measured. The average assessment for sufficiency and accessibility of information in these processes was 4. The material and technical facilities at the university (classrooms, copying, library offer) are also highly appreciated, which students have rated on average

2.4. Information on mobility is made available to students. Under the mobility rules, doctoral students have the opportunity to take advantage of the Erasmus + mobility program offer. However, this option is little used. This can be explained by the fact that it is practically difficult for students who are already working permanently to combine work with studies abroad. In most cases, doctoral students usually already have families and children, which also prevents them from staying abroad for long periods. Student mobility is regulated by Erasmus+ mobility program regulations. From the data provided it could be seen that only two students used this opportunity (school years: 2014/15 and 2015/2016)

### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, the descriptions of the study courses, the final thesis and the programme content are relevant and comply with the aims of the study programme. Study methods in this programme are like in other Doctoral programmes "custom made", depending on the candidate and his/her thesis.

Doctoral program "Law Science" provides research orientation, allowing doctoral students to acquire academic knowledge and develop the competencies of Law professionals internationally. Research could serve as a basis for the development of new scientific theories and for an in-depth study of the topic. BAT conducts regular surveys and collects data on student's, alumins' and employers opinions and satisfactions. There are in place mechanisms for mobility of students but they are not used. From 2014 till 2020 only 2 outgoing mobilities took place.

Strengths:

1. Focus on Student Centered Learning.
2. Thesis of doctoral students address existing problems in legal practice.
3. There are strong introduction to research, doctoral thesis writing.

Weaknesses:

1. Low level of internationalisation which could be improved by development of joint programmes.
2. Even though higher, compared to mobility in other study programmes, the level of mobility of doctoral students and staff is still low.
3. Low level of doctoral students involvement in the educational process.
4. The lack of latest literature in course descriptions.
5. The lack of novelty according to provided study course content. The study course contents are general.

### **3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme**

#### **Analysis**

BAT does not allocate resources separately to each of its law study programmes. Therefore the analysis set forth in Section I, part 3 of this report applies here. The PhD programme has some additional potential to be financially sustainable and even a revenue enhancer for BAT, as it could attract foreign students to study in English. Unlike the degrees offered by other law programmes, the PhD degree is quite desirable for foreign students and may be of value for other careers outside of practicing law in Latvia. The administration of BAT recognizes this and has taken steps to market and further develop its PhD programme. That being said, it is critical for a PhD program to have the latest legal materials available at the library and on legal databases. As noted earlier, there were examples of some deficiencies in the availability of certain books at the library, and a greater variety of English language law books should be provided. As well as it shall be noted, that the doctoral students' support system is based on the needs of the students and is functioning well, there are necessary support mechanisms, financial support, technical support etc. It should be noted as well, that the literature mentioned in the study course descriptions not always can be founded in the BAT library. For doctoral study it is important to study the topicality identify the novelty of subject. The literature shall be literature accessible and up-to-date.

#### **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

BAT does not allocate resources separately to each of its law study programmes. Therefore the conclusions set forth in Section I, part 3 of this report apply here. The doctoral programme is well provisioned, and has special potential to be financially sustainable due to the possibility of attracting foreign doctoral students. However, extra effort should be made to ensure that the latest legal texts are available at the library and on databases, and that adequate foreign language materials are also available (especially in English).

Strengths:



1. In common good physical infrastructure, library.
2. Good doctoral students's support system which based on the needs of the doctoral programme students.
3. Uniquely, the PhD programme has the capacity to attract large numbers of foreign students, and therefore may be insulated from potential financial problems caused by the demographic situation in Latvia.
4. A good base of international collaboration exists, which helps the scientific development of PhD students in the programme.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Need to ensure sufficient foreign language legal materials at the library and via databases, and that updated legal texts are ordered (English, German, French etc.).
2. The availability of certain legal books in the library. It can be recommended to increase the range of scientific literature in English, especially in the specific topics (which correspond to the priorities of the university) studied by doctoral programme students.
3. Not all the literature indicated in the study course descriptions can be founded in the BAT library.

## 4. Teaching Staff

### Analysis

4.1. According to the BAT provided information BAT undertakes measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme and the compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, as a result of the changes in the composition of the teaching staff. There are regular face-to-face and online meetings between lecturers at doctoral study programme level. There is an active exchange of information between lecturers about topicalities of study courses, changes.

4.2. According to BAT provided documentation the qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the doctoral study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. According to the BAT Quality policy (Appendix 19) competent personnel are employed in accordance with clearly defined, transparent and fair recruitment procedures. The documents states that the study process is provided for by highly qualified Latvian and foreign educators, who are characterized by academic professionalism and integrity, as well as intolerance to academic fraud. Besides, BAT provides information about the teaching staff members involved in doctoral study programme (Appendix 4. Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae)). According to the information provided by BAT, there is no doubt that a strong teaching staff with experience in practical and academic work is involved in the realization of the doctoral study programme. There are 5 professors elected at the BAT are involved in the implementation of the study programme. The last three of the above mentioned have the status of scientific experts. Leading researcher of the Institute of Business Technologies elected at BAT also participates in the implementation of the program. Six visiting professors participate in the programme. In general, the qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program complies with the study program implementation requirements and the requirements of the regulatory enactments, namely, the provisions of Article 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Higher Education Law. There are 26 lecturers involved in doctoral study programme. Among the lecturers involved in the implementation of the program: 1) 8 lecturers in the university have the following positions: 6 professors, 1 associate professor, 2 docents. 2) 18 visiting lecturers: 15 visiting professors, 3 visiting docents. Seven professors or

associate professors elected in full-time academic positions at the BAT participate in the compulsory and compulsory elective part of the program. Besides, academic staff in BAT is recruited on a regular basis in accordance with Regulations on election of academic personnel of BAT. There are the procedure of electing the associated professors and professors at the BAT that is determined by the regulations of the Council of Professors of Social Sciences at BAT and the Regulations of the Joint Professors' Council of Riga Stradins University, Daugavpils University, BAT and the respective professors' councils regulations of other higher education institutions. According to information provided by SER p.186 the procedure for the selection of scientific research assistants, researchers and leading researchers at the BAT Institute of Business Technology is determined by the by-laws of the Institute of Business Technologies. SER p. 187-188 states that vacant positions of academic staff in BAT departments are appointed by the Rector on the proposal of the Dean of the Faculty, the Director of the study program or the head of the department. Competition is open. SER p. 187 demonstrates that academic staff qualification activities financially supported by BAT, tuition fees are paid and if necessary subsistence costs are covered as well. According to SER p. 188 given information BAT offers lecturers opportunities for further development (learning a foreign language, using new technologies, etc.).

4.3. According to SER p.186-187 doctoral programme's academic staff take part in conferences, presentation of papers at conferences, preparation and publication of publications. There are a good number of scientific publications of the BAT academic staff in total. But, there is a small number of publications from the academic staff who is involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme. (Appendix 7 and additional annex "Publications in Scopus and Web of Science data bases from 2014 - 2020). It should be noted that only a few lecturers have active scientific activity, the publication of which is also included in such databases as Scopus, Web of Science.

4.4. According to SER p. 192 BAT doctoral study programme academic staff involved in the implementation of several research projects (ESF project "Improvement of Management in BAT". Project Number: 8.2.3.0/18/A/007., Lectures and discussions on the topic "Academic Honesty" as part of the project.) BAT has three permanent doctoral defence boards, one of which is in Law Science. SER shows that 12 doctoral theses were defended during the report period. Regarding the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study courses, the following should be noted. As SER p.195 illustrates cooperation among lecturers is promoted in various seminars organized by the higher education institution for the improvement of lecturers' qualification, as well as within the ESF project Nr. 8.2.0/18/A019. As a result, lecturers have the opportunity to participate in masterclasses, such as the use of state- of-the-art IT and digital solutions in business etc.

4.5. There are annual strategic seminars organized, where lecturers work in groups to find solutions for different situations. There is a lack of information about the cooperation between doctoral students, lecturers and stakeholders. The cooperation can be useful to improve research activities in BAT Doctoral level and to identify topical research issues from the novelty point of view. According to BAT provided information there are mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place, which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/ modules and their correlation. The provisions are set out in the BAT Quality policy as well. Taking into account the information obtained during the BAT visit, the lecturers actively communicate with each other (Zoom, online meetings).

## **Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses**

In general, composition of academic staff is strong and professional, that gives the possibility to provide good knowledge to the doctoral students as well as to achieve the aim to ensure teaching quality. Scientific activities of the several academic staff are excellent, but, in general academic staff shall be proactive to make better contributions to the study process on doctoral programme level.

#### Strengths:

1. High qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD and Latvian Council of Science experts.
2. Good support for research and participation in the research projects.

#### Weaknesses

1. Low number of defended doctoral theses in the last few years.
2. A small number of the scientific publications (Web of Science, Scopus) of the lecturers involved in the realization of the doctoral study program.
3. The cooperation between doctoral students, lecturers and stakeholders in the research field.
4. International scientific publications and cross border projects should be more focus point of further development of the doctoral study programmes specific focus.
5. The outgoing mobility of the teaching staff is insufficient, there is no clear plan for its improvement.

### 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Law Science"

#### Requirements

1. 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers no. 202 all criteria are fulfilled. BAT provided Diploma shows that 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. Diploma provided in the (Appendix 7, Sample of the diploma). Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version (Appendix 8).

2. Documents confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** An agreement with Riga Stradiņš university has been signed. This agreement ensures that the students will be able to keep studying institutions mentioned before (Agreement 2010, Appendix 8).

3. Document confirming that the higher education institution/ college 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 failure to act) and the student does not wish to continue the studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** According to BAT letter from 20.01.2020. For compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the license is revoked ( Appendix 1).

4. The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in the official language in accordance with the regulations on the level of the official language knowledge and the procedures for testing official language proficiency for performing professional duties and office duties.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** BAT Testimonial (06/11/2019) On knowledge of State Language (Appendix 13).CV of the teaching staff indicates the proficiency of the official language. (Appendix 4. Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae)).

- 5 5. 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, if the study programme or any part thereof is to be implemented in a foreign language.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Testimonial (19.11.2019.) "Testimonial on doctors of science and experts in the doctoral programme".

- 6 6. 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. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Testimonial (13.11.2019.) Testimonial on doctors of science and experts in the doctoral programme.

- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Testimonial. (14.11.2019.) "Testimonial on compliance of the academic staff with the requirements of the third paragraph of Section 55, Paragraph one of the Law on Higher Education Institutions".

- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory requirements. Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance. Contract on acquisition of education (Appendix 12).

- 9 9. The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented, and they comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The descriptions of the study courses and the study materials have been prepared in all languages in which the study programme is implemented. Provided information comply with the requirements set forth in Section 56.1, Paragraph two and Section 56.2, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education. (Appendix 6. Doctoral study program "Law Science")

- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 11 11. Academic study programmes provided for less than 250 full-time students may be implemented and less than five professors and associated professors of the higher education institution may be involved in the implementation of the mandatory and limited elective part of these study programmes provided that the relevant opinion of the Council for Higher Education has been received in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** The opinion of the Council for Higher Education (05.12.2019.) was provided by institution.

- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 13 13. The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 551, Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

**Justification:**

- 14 14. Each member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, including international editions (if they have worked for a shorter period of time, the number of publications shall be in proportion to the work period), or artistic creation achievements (for instance, exhibitions, films, theatre performances, and concert activity), or a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According to the BAT provided Appendixes and CV, the requirements are fulfilled partially. But, it shall be noted, that the scientific activity of the teachers (as well as visiting lecturers) can be higher. There are several active lecturers who have publications in International reviewed and indexed scientific journals and whose publications correspond to lecturer specialization and provided study courses.

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** It is necessary to increase the scientific capacity among the lecturers who are involved in the doctoral study programme realization. Besides, it is necessary to improve the study course descriptions, paying more detailed attention to the novelty of the study course content, as well as literature sources.

## Requirements (R6-R8)

- 1 R6 - The compliance of the study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of the learning outcomes.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, the programme has a good resource base, the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. In common, provided information complies with the requirements.

- 2 R7 - The compliance of the qualification of the academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** 26 lecturers are involved in Doctoral study program Law Science. Among the lecturers involved in the implementation of the program: 1) 8 lecturers in the university have the following positions: 6 professors, 1 associate professor, 2 docents. 2) 18 visiting lecturers: 15 visiting professors, 3 visiting docents.

- 3 R8 - The study programme leading to the master or doctoral degree is based on the advances and findings in the relevant field of science or artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** In general, by BAT provided information complies with the requirements.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

Doctoral study programme's name, the degree etc. are acquired, the aims, objectives, and admission requirements are interrelated and can be regarded as programme strengths. Programme design and content of the study courses correspond to the legal field requirements. Strong material and technical resource base. Good library in the central office, good reading room, which is available for students' individual work. Good scientific base for research activities, international scientific journal where doctoral students can participate with the researches, as well as high qualification of the teaching staff, engaged in scientific research of the programme. In common, the programme complies with requirements established by Latvian law, but falls somewhat short of the Bologna and Salzburg declarations.

**Strengths:**

1. Programme is well positioned and structured.
2. In general, high qualification of the teaching staff, high percentage of PhD.
3. Good support from BAT for research at doctoral study programme level.
4. The focus on Student Centered Learning at doctoral level, individual approach.
5. The content of the Doctoral study courses is well prepared in accordance with current national as well as international regulations and trends. Doctoral students get the theoretical knowledge and research skills, achieving the learning outcomes defined in the study programme.

**Weaknesses:**

1. On doctoral study programme level one lecturer is responsible for several study courses.
2. The cooperation between doctoral students, academic staff and stakeholders in the research field is not established well.
3. Doctoral study programme students do not involved into the cross border projects enough.
4. The legal materials for the research made by doctoral students need to ensure sufficient foreign language (German, French etc.) as well.

## **Evaluation of the study programme "Law Science"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

## **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Law Science"**

### **Short-term recommendations**

Technical clarification is needed that does not directly affect compliance - the translation of degree (ENG version) is different from Latvian version

Ensure that the library (and electronic databases) has the latest, up to date legal materials (reflecting new changes in the law) and also sufficient foreign language legal materials (particularly in English).

### **Long-term recommendations**

It can be suggested to focus more on the scientific publications and cross border projects of BAT and the doctoral study programme as a whole further development.

To involve doctoral study programme students in to the BAT projects, lecturing (teaching process) for instance at BAT branches etc.

To consider the possibility to provide doctoral study programme students a framework of regular opportunities to share their research progress with other doctoral/masters/bachelors students/supervisors etc.

To increase international cooperation with doctoral programmes of partnering universities to organise joint conferences, webinars, joint research, guest lecturing.

To modify placement services offered to PhD students to satisfy their specific career goals, particularly in the field of academics and international institutions.

To ensure that the program continues to be marketed to foreign students, as this programme is not necessarily focused on Latvian law and becoming a Latvian legal professional. This should help make the programme be more sustainable in the longer term.

### III. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

#### III. Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes

##### Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:	Fully compliant		BAT ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems. All necessary criteria established by the Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, have been met, some of them partly. However, experts have identified some areas for further improvement. For instance, whether the programmes covers the research of the specific area. To work with academic staff motivation to write more programme-related scientific articles.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
R2 - The cooperation with different organisations from Latvia and abroad implemented within the study direction ensures the achievement of the aims of the study direction.	Fully compliant		There are cooperation agreements concluded with the several governmental institutions, private institutions as well as NGOs etc. But the number of cooperation agreements and practical cooperation (in research field, educational field etc. can be more productive and practical
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).		Partially compliant	There is a good research strategy. BAT has its own scientific journal, BAT provides support for academic staff in the research area. But, considering all these advantages higher results can be achieved. Passive research from the academic staff side shall be noted.
R4 - Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations.		Partially compliant	Elimination of the shortcomings and deficiencies identified during the previous assessment of the study direction, if it has been conducted, or the implementation of the provided recommendations has been realised. In common, BAT implemented the recommendations, but there are still some improvements needed. Only 6 out of 17 recommendations are fully implemented.

#### Assessment of the Requirements for the Relevant Study Programmes of the Study Field

No.	Study programme	R5	R6	R7	R8	Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)
1	Law Science (41380)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good



<b>No.</b>	<b>Study programme</b>	<b>R5</b>	<b>R6</b>	<b>R7</b>	<b>R8</b>	<b>Evaluation of the study programme (excellent, good, average, poor)</b>
2	Law Science (43380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good
3	Law Science (47380)	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good
4	Law Science (51380)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Good

### **The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts**

No