

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: University of Liepāja

Study field: Management, Administration and Management of Real Property

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## Summary Assessment of the Study Field

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Liepāja University (LiepU) study field "Management, administration and real estate management" has clearly defined attainable goals, which well-suit the LiepU vision, mission, and long-term goals. LiepU is the regional university with old and good traditions and reputation.

At the moment LiepU study field "Management, administration and real estate management" implements 4 programmes: 3 professional bachelor's study programmes "Tourism and recreation management", "Business and organization management" and Culture management and 1 professional master's study programme "Management Sciences". For all four programmes the teaching language is Latvian.

LiepU has a quality assurance system in accordance with widely accepted practice and binding regulations. All most important documents and documented information is available. There is LiepU quality policy (<https://www.liepu.lv/lv/1258/liepu-kvalitates-politika>) and all main procedures according to regulations. However, the system does not ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness and does not support student centered learning. There are big gaps in good quality assurance as lots of topics are managed and solved exclusively by elected academic staff, not involving students, employers, unelected academic staff or other interested parties. Strategy and targets for LiepU in some points are the bare minimum possible and are set generally for the whole period, not in step-by-step actions so it is almost impossible to evaluate exact progress at the exact moment in time. In general, there are problems in LiepU with some quality assurance basic aspects as existing procedures are outdated for modern organizations quality assurance and basis for future improvements. Nevertheless, LiepU collects and analyses the information on study programmes of the study field on a regular basis and uses it to improve the study field.

The LiepU has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes, also research activities. The resources and provision provided for the successful implementation of the study field are adequate. There is a good infrastructure for lectures, technical equipment and IT support. All the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. Teaching staff use appropriate teaching methods (lecture, case study, group work, discussion). The teaching staff and lecturers are granted funding for participation in international scientific conferences and publishing of scientific papers, monographs and academic books.

LiepU established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students. Student support is taken into account in the implementation of the study process in LiepU.

LiepU has established strong cooperation with all stakeholders. All the stakeholders are involved in the management of the study field: students, alumni, personnel, employers, industry experts and organizations. Unfortunately, the involvement of the stakeholders in the review and improvement of study programmes is not so strong but it could contribute to the improvement of the educational process.

The information published on the website of LiepU about the relevant study programmes of the study field complies with the information available in the official registers. It provides important information for the candidates and the students and is published in Latvian and English. The LiepU website ([www.liepu.lv](http://www.liepu.lv)) offers a range of information for all level of studies. On the website with free access to anyone, there are regulatory documents, a list of lecturers, projects, publications, etc. documents.

The informative systems are used for the University study process provision: E-learning environment "Moodle"; the informative system of Latvia higher educational establishments – LAIS and the informative system of the library "Alise".

The importance of Scientific Research is emphasised by LiepU and partnerships have been established with other universities both within Latvia and abroad. Despite the fact that many

lecturers participate in various conferences and the progress is visible in recent years, the scientific indicators are not very high. Not all academic staff of the programmes are engaged in research at the national and international level, national research programme projects, cooperation projects with local governments, and businesses. Efforts should be made to increase the number of scientific publications by focusing on publications in high-citation journals, rather than just conference proceedings, as well as to participate in more research projects and involve new researchers there. In an ideal world, the research of academic staff in LiepU would be directly relevant to the programme(s) on which they teach. And the final year projects which students must complete would be influenced by the research work of their teachers. But details of research output were not impressive and research activity by teachers in areas related to their teaching is not evident. Action is required to ensure that all teachers have a research agenda which is related to their teaching duties. Involvement in international research projects should be enhanced.

LiepU cooperation with employers and municipalities is strong at Study Field level, but a more active role could be given to employers at programme level. The programmes seek to meet the needs of the region, but in some instances a more international view would be beneficial. The need to increase international cooperation is recognized. All programmes have good perspectives for further internationalization, but measures to tackle this challenge have not been very successful. Both students and teaching staff have a possibility to participate in Erasmus mobility. However, the possibilities for staff and student international exchange in programme-related areas currently are quite limited and should be widened.

The Self-assessment report (SAR) does not provide the holistic approach. For many sections, SAR does not provide analysis, it just put some selected facts. There are also mistakes which are illustrated after some tables' content. The number of factors as well as the illustrative analysis, tables, graphs are missing, and the reasons for the mentioned events are not explained. The sections do not make reference to the year, when exactly this or the other events took place. There is no analysis provided since the last date of accreditation, and there are many concepts in English language that are not explained, and therefore, it is quite difficult to follow the logic of its text when translation from Latvian language has different options of translation within the same chapter. The comments, therefore, operate with the names, concepts and titles how they are provided in the SAR. It is also not clear, why the SAR repeats the same information (for instance, the change in the composition of staff in 2017/2018), or refers to this explanation somewhere else, instead of just providing the reason in one or two sentences.

The most important strengths of LiepU study field "Management, administration and real estate management":

- LiepU is well-equipped in the study process and has a good resource base.
- Strong cooperation with stakeholders, industry companies, and experts in Latvia.
- Professional and supportive teaching staff.
- Student overall satisfaction with teaching and learning processes.

Weaknesses:

- Quality management assurance system doesn't ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness.
- Literature and other sources included in the study course descriptions need to be updated.

## **1. Management of the Study Field**

### **Analysis**

LiepU has nine Study fields and each has responsibility for a number of study programmes in that

field. The Study field which is being evaluated here is entitled Management, Administration and Real Estate Management and it has three Bachelor degree programmes and one Master's degree programme under its remit.

The Study Field has a coordinating function to ensure that all programmes meet the professional standards set by the Ministry of Education and Science and that the university maintains good relations with municipal authorities and other stakeholder including employers.

In LiepU there is a Study Field Board that includes academics, employers and students. This is in line with accepted best practice. There is also a Faculty Council that has responsibility for the approval of all programmes and modifications to programmes. These procedures work well.

LiepU lacks a Strategic Plan to guide its activities in the next 5 years. The self-assessment document starts with the Strategic Plan 2016-20 but that is about to finish its relevancy. There have been very significant changes to the provision of higher education throughout the world because of Coronavirus Covid-19 and these changes need to be addressed in the LiepU strategic plan for 2021-25. The new development strategy of LiepU for this period has not been developed anew, but the previous one has been extended. In the new extended development strategy, almost all deadlines are already obsolete. Only 4 targets have been set, which must be achieved by 2022. The targets for 2021 and 2023 have not been set at all. The development strategy should be reviewed and redesigned to reflect the current situation.

The Study Field has responsibility for many key activities including the Quality Assurance system, the resources including classrooms, laboratories and library, research activities, internationalisation and the implementation of the recommendations of previous assessment procedures. These issues are addressed below. There are some general issues for which the Study Field is responsible. For example, the relations between students and teachers are important as they create the environment in which everyone within LiepU works. The students and staff whom the Expert Group met all maintained that relations between students and staff at all levels (teachers, management, non-teaching staff) are excellent.

Liepu has established a system and has implemented procedures for the admission of students, the recognition of the study period, professional experience and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education, as well as for the evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students and these procedures are logical and efficient.

Liepu has set certain academic integrity principles and mechanisms, and it uses appropriate plagiarism detection tools which are effective and contribute to the development of the internal culture of the university, and the stakeholders are aware of such tools and mechanisms (LiepU Senate on 14.12.2020. approved the Code for academic integrity at Liepaja University ([https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/%C4%80SD/ERASMUS%20dokumenti/LiepU%20Akademiska%20godigu%20kodekss\\_eng.pdf](https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/%C4%80SD/ERASMUS%20dokumenti/LiepU%20Akademiska%20godigu%20kodekss_eng.pdf)))

Another area of importance is the interaction between LiepU and employers. The university is committed to having strong positive relations with employers. It implements this by having employers represented on the Study Direction Board. They have also resolved that all programmes will include work practice in industry as part of the programme. This creates a strong interdependence between the university and employers. The Expert Group met some employers who said they have frequent meetings with the university, some of them at least once a week. They think placements in industry should be longer but there were no clear indications this is needed.

Employers advocated more emphasis on foreign languages especially English and Russian and this view appears to be supported by the need to develop international partnerships and student exchanges. The need for Russian was particularly emphasised in relation to the Hotel industry.

The role of employers in advising LiepU is restricted to Study Field level and not to individual programme levels. As the study programmes are different from each other, a more detailed involvement of employers is needed.

Students are involved in the Study Direction Board but have no forum in relation to individual

programmes.

Graduates who met the Expert Group advocated the formation of an Alumni Association and promised they would support it. In view of the importance LiepU attaches to links with industry, it seems sensible to maintain contact with its own graduates via an Alumni Association.

The information published on the Liepu website regarding the relevant study programmes of the study field complies with the information available in the official registers. It provides important information for the candidates and the students and is published in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented.

Graduates were of the opinion that LiepU is not good at PR and that accordingly, its reputation is not as strong as it deserves. They advocated that the university management should pay more attention to PR.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

This Study Field, one of nine such fields in LiepU, is an appropriate unit of the university as it brings together three bachelor degrees and one Master's degree. It has good relations with employers and municipal authorities at Study Field level, but a more active role could be given to employers at programme level. The programmes seek to meet the needs of the region, but in some instances a more international view would be beneficial. Graduates are proud of their links with LiepU but suggest a formal mechanism such as a Graduates Association would strengthen the links.

### **Strengths:**

- LiepU has well working Study Direction Board that includes academics, employers and students, and Faculty Council that has responsibility for the approval of all programmes and modifications to programmes.
- Relations between students and staff at all levels (teachers, management, non-teaching staff) are excellent.
- The LiepU is committed to having strong positive relations with employers. It has employers represented on the Study Direction Board and all programmes include work practice in industry as part of the programme.

### **Weaknesses:**

- LiepU doesn't have a clear Strategic Plan to guide its activities in the next 5 years for 2021-2025.
- The teaching of foreign languages is weak and does not allow LiepU to develop international partnerships and student exchanges.
- The role of employers in advising LiepU is restricted to Study Field level and not to individual programme levels.
- Graduates indicated that the public relation function in the LiepU is weak.

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

### **Analysis**

LiepU has a quality assurance system in accordance with widely accepted practice and binding regulations, but this system doesn't cover all necessary areas for quality assurance. On the website there is published quality policy: <https://www.liepu.lv/lv/1258/liepu-kvalitates-politika>, but in almost all ESG Part 1 standard points there are missing important content to show full compliance with the standard. Examples: there is nothing mentioned about academic fraud or involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance in the LiepU quality policy (ESG 1.1); study programmes are not really designed by involving students and other stakeholders in the work otherwise there shouldn't be approved outdated study course content as they'd notice and correct that (ESG 1.2 and ESG 1.9);

there are only partially appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints (ESG 1.3); LiepU has to have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff, but procedures don't ensure that. (ESG 1.5), LiepU should not only collect and analyse relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities, but also use it for improvements (ESG 1.7). So, LiepU has documented, implemented and communicated quality assurance system, but with gaps. There should be a better understanding of what are the demands for quality assurance, ESG standard and how to implement them in LiepU.

The processes of development and review of study programmes corresponding to the study field, as well as the mechanisms for obtaining feedback (including for students, employers, graduates) does not covers all involved parties, for example, only elected academic staff are involved in improvements whilst there are no procedure how other lecturers can suggest any improvements and there are no procedures how they'd get any feedback about their suggestions. It is important to mention that suggestions for improvements from elected academic staff are collected only mutually in the meetings so there are very limited possibilities to follow up improvements starting from suggestions, review up to implementation and evaluation. There should be equal procedure for all sides, not only elected academic staff, and everything should be well documented for reviewing and analysing at any moment.

LiepU is not ready to take immediate action in case of problems with academic staff or with provided services for students. During the meeting with experts the Quality Management Systems Manager explained that in case of complaint from the students about academic staff actions are slow and moderate as there are other reviews analysed about other subjects from the same lecturer or from other years (both actually can be incomparable to the case of complaint) so there is no evidence of proactive quality assurance in the LiepU. Situation is more complicated because of internal regulation that there has to be 51% of votes to elect academic staff, but 2/3 of votes to fire elected staff and that in that case there would be additionally very strong resistance to that action from trade union side ("Nolikums par vēlēšanām akadēmiskajos amatos" and information from QMS Manager after asking about human resources management process in LiepU). There are almost no risks for elected academic staff to lose job (lose their lectures) in case of poor performance in lectures during a 6-year period and almost no chances for students, employers to improve quality of studies. Actually, that means there are almost no chance to improve anything for a whole period of the studies and that is not a student-centered learning. There should be a reviewed procedure how academic staff are elected and how they can lose their position (work with students) together with procedure for immediate actions in case of suggestions for improvements (including complaints). Now it seems impossible to change anything if the proposal does not come from elected academic staff with strong peer support.

Additionally, to the recent problem there is no definition of the evaluation of the lecturer when there should be some actions implemented for improvements. Lecturers actually can get very low marks and nothing will happen as there are no further actions decided (when and what kind of). According to information provided by QMS manager, receiving bad feedback about the lecturer doesn't mean any immediate action. There would be just some informal discussion about reasons for such feedback, it would be compared with feedback from other lectures (even from other, not comparable study courses) and only if there is lots of bad feedback for a longer period of time (in reality that means several years as next lectures often are only next year), LiepU will start to act.

There is a procedure "A-10-II Bibliotēkas fonda komplektēšana" about how the library purchases new books and materials. It's one more procedure that shows privileged status of the elected academic staff as staff that are not elected, employers or students are officially not involved in updating available literature and databases. It is not student-centered learning as there is no official way to suggest and change anything.

There are doubts about LiepU strategy and targets that are set. Typical implementation dates are the same final date for everything. "Study Field of "Management, administration and real estate

management" Development Plan 2018 - 2023" also has the most popular stage: "In process". That means LiepU does not have a clear understanding about the situation at the moment, there are only some imaginary future situations or daily activities declared. For example, there are Appendix II.1.3.A "Study Field of "Management, administration and real estate management" Development Plan 2018 - 2023" and 12th point "Research results of the academic staff" that target is met if there is one publication in Web of Science, SCOPUS from all study field each year and one scientific monograph developed and published from all study fields during all accreditation period. If targets are so low (bare minimum possible), there are doubts about how they've been set and are targets and strategy not just formal as they'll be implemented in any case. From quality point of view targets has to be real and realistic, but at the same time there should be some effort to reach them and there should be a way to analyse progress of implementation of the strategy, some step-by-step actions so it is possible to act, to review, to regroup available resources to reach the plans. At the moment, only information about status of the targets and strategy stays in the Council Spring meeting protocols.

The surveys of graduates dominate average and poor evaluation on lots of topics asked (SAR Annex III.2.6.D, "Profesionālā maģistra studiju programmas "Vadības zinības" studējošo apmierinātības aptaujas rezultāti grafiskā veidā"). Still LiepU academic staff shows confidence about the quality of the studies. There is no evidence on activities implemented to improve in the future. Graduates have not received results from the survey (feedback of feedback). There was no feedback to respondents in other surveys also and no direct actions for future improvements set. The conclusion is that survey results were not used for future improvements — survey results have no direct impact on academic staff work with students as explained above, low marks are taken for granted. There were no cases shown to experts when after receiving a bad review came some improvements just to avoid a similar situation in the future.

Employers are not involved in development of Study programmes, they have no information about Study courses in the Study programmes.

Review of Study course content is formal. Real review happens only in case of bigger changes of Study programme. Study course content is available in Moodle, but students didn't know where to find it and none of them knew content of Study course descriptions. There is only mutual information about the demands for the students, tests, homework etc. in the first lecture. In general, only Culture Management study programme have reviewed Study courses, their content was different from other programmes. For example, Master Study Programme "Management Sciences": there is a revision of study course "Integrated management systems" done in 17.01.2020. It is about ISO standard versions that are not valid for 2-5 years. All course literature included is more than 10 years old. It is impossible to learn anything about Integrated management systems if all provided information is outdated and can't be used anymore in real life as approach to these systems changes, new standards updates and comes in force almost each year. There is nothing about e-commerce, only about e-marketing. Not a word in materials so there is no evidence that students can learn anything about e-commerce in any of the study programmes, but there should be at least something if they are interested in e-marketing. A bad indicator is that already in the previous assessment there were recommendations to improve Study Course description updating (study programme "Tourism and Recreation Management", "Management Science"). At the same time there are written down Compliances of the study programmes with the Professional Standards which are defined necessary knowledge that can't be found in any course description, that's not mentioned in any LiepU document (Circular economy, business angels / seed capital etc.) so there is no evidence that these competences have been taught in any of the Study Courses.

The fact that there are still problems with overlapping of Study Courses is mentioned in Appendix II.1.3.B. with SWOT analysis which is not in favour of quality assurance as that indicates problems with improvement implementation and follow-up control to check if the implemented activities really solved the problem. In the meetings with students, graduates and with academic staff, the conclusion was that the problem with overlapping of study course content is solved in LiepU just

because of the small groups and almost individual work with students. If there are only up to 10 students in the auditorium, it is easy to adjust the content of the lecture to the needs of the students, but if there were 100 students that would be impossible. That means the root of the problem is not solved, it may be solved just in process with input from students. There is proof that this problem of overlapping is not taken seriously: there is defined one necessary quite specific knowledge (Defining, developing and implementing an effective business model, integrating innovative solutions into the business) that's connected with 11 Study Courses (Culture Management) in Professional Standard. It's not possible that so many Study Courses help to improve one and the same Professional Standard competence if there is no overlapping of the content. This connection should be updated in the SAR 7th Appendix to be more realistic and more specific regarding each Study Course defined content.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

LiepU has a quality assurance system in accordance with widely accepted practice and binding regulations. All most important documents and documented information is available. However, there are big gaps in good quality assurance as lots of topics are managed and solved exclusively within elected academic staff, not involving students, employers, guest lecturers or other interested parties. It seems impossible to make improvements within elected academic staff as it is in reality almost impossible to fire any elected lecturer, to remove fast enough from work with students in case of problems. Strategy and targets for LiepU in some points are bare minimum possible and are set generally for the whole period, not in step-by-step actions so it is almost impossible to evaluate exact progress at the exact moment in time. General conclusion — there are problems in LiepU with some quality assurance basic aspects as existing procedures are outdated for modern organizations quality assurance and basis for future improvements.

### **Strengths:**

- LiepU has implemented and maintained a quality assurance system and is strong in preparing documentation and following it.
- The university is committed to having strong positive relations with employers. It has employers represented on the Study Field Board and all programmes include work practice in industry as part of the programme.

### **Weaknesses:**

- There are almost no possibilities for improvements that are not coming from or not approved by elected academic staff.
- It is now almost impossible to improve in case of bad performance of LiepU elected academic staff as it is very protected and privileged in different procedures and from the trade union side.
- Strategy, targets are often low and even a formality.
- Not good feedback from graduates is not taken into account for future improvements, so these surveys seem to be a formality.

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

### **Analysis**

Based on the information provided in the Liepaja University (SAR p. 32), financial resources of the study direction "Management, administration and real estate management" are composed of the government subsidy and its own revenue. Each year, the LiepU Senate approves the distribution of LiepU consolidated budget revenues and expenditures and the LiepU budget. To promote the

increase of student numbers, LiepU offers discounts to fees and implements different promotions for students. The results of the economic activity are regularly reflected in the annual report and auditors' opinion. The financial indices of LiePU confirm a stable financial situation.

Science base development funding is allocated to the development of research of the study field by the Ministry of Education and Science. Research funding consists of funding for projects that is allocated for the implementation of specific scientific and research projects, remuneration for researchers and leading researchers within the projects, and the costs of performing specific project tasks. Funding for the development of research is acquired by the study field on the basis of the academic staff members' scientific performance and indicators for the preceding year. Funding for the scientific work support of the academic staff involved in the study field is allocated from the development budget of the LiepU Faculty of Management and Social Sciences and funding of LiepU Scientific Work Development Fund. Funding for the scientific work support of the academic staff involved in the study field for publications of scientific papers, participation in the conferences, publishing of scientific monographs and students' research support. Applications of the academic staff's scientific publications and conferences are considered and approved in the Faculty Council. Students can access the funding for scientific and creative work activity promotion according to the tender regulations of the Liepaja University Students' research projects (approved on 15.12.2014. in the LiepU Senate Meeting Minutes No 4). During the meeting with LiepU management, teaching staff and students the information provided in the SAR was confirmed.

Based on the information provided in the LiepU (SAR annex Management structure of the study field), the implementation of the study programmes is ensured and supported by the following structural units: LiepU administration, Council of Studies, Faculty of Education and Management, Study Direction Council, etc. LiepU implements 3 professional bachelor's study programmes and 1 professional master's study programme in this study field, therefore it can be concluded that the number of structural units and the number of their tasks is sufficient for the implementation of the study field. However, the role of students and employers in advising LiepU is restricted to Study Field level and not to individual programme levels. Students are involved in the Study Direction Board, but SER did not describe any procedure in relation to individual programmes. During the meetings with the Experts both students and employers' representatives mentioned that a more detailed involvement of students and employers is needed for particular study programmes. Additionally, LiepU SAR mentioned Strategic Plan for 2016-2020, but it is lack of the plan for the next 5 years.

The premises of the study process provision mainly are located in LiepU building in Liela street 14, where is the location of the Faculty of Management and Social Sciences and the place of work of the academic staff. Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block. LiepU existing material and technical base allows to fully ensure the necessary conditions for the implementation of the study programmes. Lectures take place in various premises of LiepU: auditoriums, computer classrooms, students have access to a modern library with a spacious reading room as well as specially equipped rooms for discussions. The auditoriums are equipped with high-quality visual equipment. Access to the wireless (Wi-Fi) Internet is provided to students, academic personnel and guests in all the LiepU facilities. Inspections of material and technical infrastructure carried out during the visit gave a positive impression of LiepU infrastructure quality.

The informative systems are used for the University study process provision: E-learning environment "Moodle"; the informative system of Latvia higher educational establishments - LAIS and the informative system of the library "Alise". The electronic catalogue of the LiepU Library (<http://alise.liepu.lv>) and the joint catalogue of the Higher Educational Establishments and Special Libraries (<http://alise.liepu.lv/Alise/lv/federatedsearch.aspx>) are available remotely - both on computers and mobile gadgets.

According to the information provided in the SAR annex 4\_1, the elected academic staff of the LiepU

and the academic staff of other Latvian higher education institutions or invited guest lecturers - practitioners participate in the implementation of the study programmes. The selection of the teaching staff in the programme implementation is carried out on the basis of the Criteria about the compliance of the academic staff's professional qualification with the courses to be taught (approved in the LiepU Study Council on 13.06.2005). (SAR p. 39). The requirements for the teaching staff- candidate are stated according to the LiepU Regulation "Regulations about the Elections in the Academic Posts". Application and selection rules and criteria for foreign academic personnel (according to "The academic personnel development plan", page 39) also are developed. The process of recruitment and evaluation of lecturers is transparent and effective. Open academic positions are filled on an open competitive basis. Academic personnel are hired on a full-time or part- time basis, depending on the individual academic workload, which is planned for each academic year. Salaries for academic personnel are determined in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministries regulation. The information about vacancies and/or employment process regulation is available online: <https://www.liepu.lv/lv/181/darba-iespejas>

In total, 60 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study process of the study field (SAR, annex 2019\_akredit\_II.3.6.A.pielikums\_iesaistitie\_pasniedzēji\_EN.pdf), 58% or 35 lecturers from these teaching staff at LiepU work in elected positions - 6 professors, 1 associate professors, 13 assist. professors, 15 lecturers, also 3 guest assist. professors and 12 guest lecturers. 10 lectures or 16% are not elected at LiepU. The information provided in the CV of the lecturers confirms that both the LiepU lecturers and the involved guest lecturers are sufficiently competent to implement the content of the program in a quality manner.

All of the lecturers involved in the study process have a doctor's or master's degree. In order to ensure the qualification and quality of work of the academic staff, a system has been established, which is described in the LiepU's self-evaluation report (SAR pp. 41-44). Further qualification is provided for by lecturers participating in conferences, publishing articles, monographs, sharing experiences, or teaching courses within Erasmus + (SAR p. 43). During the visit, both Management of LiepU, as well as teaching staff confirmed that lecturers are granted funding for participation in international scientific conferences and publishing of monographs. Teaching staff also have the possibility to improve the English level by participating in the qualification improvement project. The teaching staff members take part both in outgoing and incoming mobility, which brings added value to the implementation of the study process and the study quality. According to SAR (II. Description of the Study Direction - 3. Resources and Provision of the Study Direction - 2019\_akredit\_II.3.6.C.pielikums\_macibsp\_mobilitāte\_EN.pdf) up to 5 incoming and 2 to 4 outgoing mobilities last years. Dividing the existing numbers to the study programmes and years the number is low. Therefore, it is the experts' opinion the number of visiting lectures and outgoing staff mobility should be increased.

LiepU learning process is well-equipped with resources. Based on the information provided in the SAR (SAR p. 35) LiepU offers students and lecturers the use of the open-access library with electronic registration of the issuance and receipt of literature, books, and periodicals, as well as electronic databases and e-books. The administrative team is always ready to answer questions and support students. The library provides the study and scientific literature necessary for academic and scientific work in accordance with the study programmes in different languages, mostly Latvian, English and Russian. The procedure about how the library purchases new books and materials exist (SAR, "A-10-II Bibliotēkas fonda komplektēšana"). During the visit the experts found that a lot of scientific literature had an old publishing year. LiepU subscribes to the following online electronic databases (SAR p. 36): EBSCO, Letonika, ScienceDirect, SCOPUS, Web of Science, Cambridge Journals Online and Sage Knowledge etc., trial databases are also constantly used. The cooperation agreement has been signed with the Microsoft about the hire of MS Office and MS Windows software licences, which can be used by the teachers both in the study process implementation and study material development. LiepU also provides (SAR pp. 37-38) a library and electronic reading room

with 96 workplaces, 16 of them computerized. Each year, every faculty submits a list with necessary literature. The study councils discuss the acquisition of the required literature and draft a list which is forwarded to the Vice Rector for Studies and the Vice Rector for Science for approval. The list is further submitted to LiepU Budgetary Commission. The library is systematically increasing the share of e-resources and developing the opportunities of remote access to e-resources to promote user's remote use of the library resources. During the visit to the library, it was found that the number of books, magazines, and other resources is sufficient for the successful implementation of the study field programmes.

The students and teaching staff of LiepU use the learning information system Moodle. Moodle contains all documents related to the methodological support of the study programme. All involved groups - students, graduates, academic staff marked only positive about the Moodle, which is understandable, practical, and useful for everyone.

LiepU provides support for every student by the staff of the Faculty Dean's Office and the respective departments (Dean, Vice-Dean, Heads of Departments, study programme directors, and recording secretaries). Support available to students in the study process is very clear and described in the SAR (pp. 42-44). The Student council as well offers support for all students. Students of the study field make use of the opportunity to go abroad for exchange. Students have the opportunity to avail of Erasmus mobility for studies as well as internship placements.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The LiepU has developed a system to determine the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes, also research activities. It should be noted that the resources and provision provided for the successful implementation of the study field are adequate. There is a good infrastructure for lectures, technical equipment and IT support. All the students and the teaching staff have an access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. The process of recruitment and evaluation of the teaching staff is transparent and effective. Teaching staff use appropriate teaching methods (lecture, case study, group work, discussion). Teaching staff and lecturers are granted funding for participation in international scientific conferences and publishing of scientific papers, monographs and academic books. LiepU established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students. Both students and teaching staff have a possibility to participate in Erasmus mobility.

Strengths:

- LiepU has good infrastructure, technical equipment and IT support for the study process.
- LiepU has a well-equipped library available for all students' and teaching staff individual work.
- LiepU teaching staff are granted funding for participation in international scientific conferences, and publishing of monographs, which is good motivation.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of scientific literature in the last 5 years, especially in English and Latvian languages.
- Small number of foreign lecturers participating in the study process.

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

### **Analysis**

SAR of LiepU provides a description of scientific research and artistic creation in the study field "Management, Administration and Management of Real Estate" for 2015-2020 years according to the development aims mainly based on research, necessary for Kurzeme Region, and Latvia.

However, the future key directions of scientific research and artistic creation (2021-2025) with the identified targets, KPIs and goals are not yet in place. As it was mentioned during the site visit, the Ministry of Education and Science of Republic of Latvia is expected to publish its future strategy of development for 2021-2025, and the Universities will adjust their strategies accordingly using their top-down approach.

The provided summary of seven strategic goals/directions during 2015-2020 – from research, interdisciplinary research, and up to internationally cited journals and promotion of science, has a lack of details in its provided description. For instance, which/how many/when (date)/topics of research projects have been ordered by municipalities (which particular), regional entrepreneurs (who/which topics)/dates of implementation), etc.

The positive sign is that the LiepU “Scientific Work Strategy for 2016-2020”, listed its topics in research priorities and actions to reach their goals based on the prepared SWOT analysis of 2013-2015 illustrating their weaknesses in lacking various resources, setting their priorities in research, a limited motivation in research etc., versus strong characteristics in having the various structural units, increasing support of the state for research, public research programmes and municipal funding, and the previous traditions of involvement of students in research, and many other. Thus, in their strategy for 2016-2020, the LiepU's scientific activity has focus on research-based study programme through attracting funds for research and innovation projects based on the annual research plans (however, these plans are not provided). The defined values of LiepU in (a) human being and (b) growth, need to be clarified in order to proceed with them and to be converted into the research topics.

The strong basis for the scientific research is the published results of the annual international conference “Society and Culture”, organized every year (according to SAR). The double check with the website of LiepU confirms that the teaching staff is involved in research outcomes of “Society and Culture” conference (Source: <https://society-culture.liepu.lv/en/general/0/44/search>)

Scientific research and artistic creation related to the values of LiepU are not mentioned, but there is a need to clarify them for the international research public. What are the values of LiepU in human beings (which particular?) and growth (in what types of growth) – are not clearly explained in the SAR. Therefore, as soon as they are defined and explained for the internal and external public groups, the research linked to values (especially cultural values) might be expanded for both internal and external stakeholders and will add more values. The same issue could be relevant not only to the mission of University in teaching and research, but to the so-called “third mission”. Besides the mission of any University in teaching and research, many Universities formulate their additional “third missions” – in their social, environmental, and other missions in order to be relevant in society. There is an excellent opportunity to include their “third mission” which will explore for instance, the Agenda 2030 (their relevant Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), - the typical trend in the EU universities).

The SAR provides the example of structural change in research units (the merger of the Institute of Education Sciences with the Sociological Research Center), but it remains unclear whether this change has been useful and effective for LiepU? There is no specific analysis, and the main results, and consequences of these structural organizational changes are not provided in the SAR. Were the motivated researchers invited to work for merged unit, how many people are employed there, or it is a reduced staff of researchers which is now more effective (with more publications, projects, etc.) – these points would add a great value to SAR.

The SAR identifies there are at least 6 listed research directions in “the Scientific Work Strategy”, which could be the relevant directions as well as the interdisciplinary areas for: 1.2. Humanitarian science; 1.3 Art science; 1.4 Education science; 1.5 Social sciences. With some sub-directions: 1.1.2. Development of e-resources and information technologies and use for economic development; 1.2.4. Linguistic didactics and language learning: Latvian, English, German, French, Russian, problems of language learning in a multicultural environment.

From the course description, it can be seen that the research links are not provided, as well as the related modern literature for the last few years is missing. Adding the additional source of interview with the representative of the LiepU library, the problem looks more complex. The LiepU has not reached its full potential and the goals have not been fully implemented in the following directions:

1.2.4. Linguistic didactics and language learning in English, German, French and Russian and history and problems of language learning in a multicultural environment.

The results of expert meetings with various groups showed that:

- there is a lack of language learning in the University environment (English, Russian);
- no modern professional textbooks/literature/research materials provided in the sources of information for study courses (despite some modern books in English are available, but probably not for all courses);
- Russian-language digital subscription has not been activated for these recent years (online meeting with the Library's representative).

Due to the demand for English and Russian languages in the business environment of LiepU, - especially for business purposes, the digital resources should be a priority (with remote access from home) for the research, course description, reading and a basis for its own development of research cases.

The web-site provides some useful links about the research results of European Social Fund projects carried out by LiepU (No. 8.2.2.0/18/I/003 "The perfection of the academic staff in the areas of strategic specialization" (Source: <https://www.liepu.lv/en/news/128/professor-from-helsinki-university-concludes-work-at-liepu-project-but-does-not-say-goodbye-to-the-university>).

The SAR refers to the publication of research outcomes which are characterized in a very general way: outcomes "at the international level is slow but increasing". The relation between scientific research and artistic creation could be ideally implemented through the directions of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and STEAM (+ Art). This direction is not specifically explained, but has a full potential to be implemented in LiepU, especially in the light of the European Commission, which is calling for measures to promote and STEAM education in Europe, because the LiepU has all these required directions with the ideal combination of different areas.

One of the possible motivations could be an introduction of the individual Google scholar profile (for free), with its automatically calculated h-index, citations which could serve as the measurable indicator of the individual scientific research publications.

At the level of study field, there is still a limited amount of information provided for research and artistic creation (for instance, the statistics for 2017 year is provided, for its Management sciences programme (and other programmes are not listed).

The importance of Scientific Research is emphasised by LiepU and partnerships have been established with other universities both within Latvia and abroad. The good examples for cooperation are provided in the SAR, and almost all of them are in the areas of the regional development. There is a lack of information with the structured approach for each study programme with illustrative examples, graphs and analysis.

The future plan for the development of cooperation in scientific research refers to the letter of intent signed between LiepU and Lithuanian Business University of Applied Sciences (for 2021 year only). The development of the strategic document on research is recommended for 2021-2025. Description and assessment of the international cooperation within the specified study programmes lacks the structured approach and statistics with the composition by each group.

Based on the SAR (II.4.4.A.pielikums Anonīmi recenzētas un starptautiski pieejamās datubāzēs iekļautas zinātniskas publikācijas) there are 271 Scientific research publications in total: the recommended articles (Web of Science, Scopus) constitute 51(18.8%); and there is also a lack of methodological research (only 1-0.4%), there are only 11 (4%) monographs (as a rule, linked to the PhD thesis). The publications from the International conferences generate only 38 (14%) which

means that only one out of seven teachers participate in the conferences. The majority of articles are the main and typical publication (54.2%) - in the national and international journals, but they are not specified (levels of journals/what is the share of international vs. national publications). The more detailed analysis would be desirable.

The same information is expected to be provided for all study programmes to assess the level of all study programmes under this study field.

The additional comment is that the double checking of these publications show that these publications do not include the publications for the recent two years: 2019 and 2020.

The list of provided publications in 25 directions (Source: <https://www.liepu.lv/lv/publik%C4%81cijas>) shows that 9 out of 25 (36%) publications are in English. Summary of quantitative data, the analysis at the general institutional level of University is missing.

The examples of students' involvement into the research are provided. The examples of good practices for LiepU Science and Creativity days (March), Business fairs, Language acquisition: Problems and prospective, etc. - are all provided.

There are useful examples of involvement of the students in scientific research and/or artistic creation activities, and the examples of fruitful cooperation between the teaching staff and students which have been promoted in the internationally cited journals and databases. It remains unclear why the majority of references (by Bachelor and MA students) somehow do not include the dates of their publications. The examples of involvement of students into innovations are provided, and the examples of joint activities with companies are listed.

The research of the academic staff in LiepU should be relevant to the programme(s) on which they teach, ideally directly. And the final year projects which students must complete would be influenced by the research work of their teachers. But details of research output were not impressive and research activity by teachers in areas related to their teaching is not evident. Action is required to ensure that all teachers have a research agenda which is related to their teaching duties.

Students and teachers are participating in the scientific conferences organized by LiepU. Students are invited to participate with their research at student conferences, which usually is closely connected with the study process. However, LiepU have to set sufficient targets for promoting excellence in research such as highly ranked SCOPUS and WoS journals (i.e., those with high impact factor) as well as publishing in top field journals.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

Key directions of scientific research and artistic creation comply with the development aims of the LiepU. However, the data for the 2021-2025 is not provided. Scientific research is not obvious in LiepU in the Study Field Management, Administration and Management of Real Estate. There is a cooperation between different foreign institutions and it is visible with particular results and agreements. Nevertheless, there is a need for greater involvement in international cooperation. The teaching staff is aware of the necessity of scientific research, but only few of them are involved in scientific projects. Involvement in international research projects should be improved. LiepU should start by getting every teacher to have a research or innovation agenda.

Strengths:

- The number of publications increasing in recent years.
- LiepU makes funding available to teachers to enable them to attend conferences.
- Research projects are quite strong under the existing regional Baltics cooperation.
- "LiepU goes to school" activity is a very good basis for schools' involvement to research and development of children's motivation in research.

- LiepU website provides “updated information” linked to some strategic research.
- LiepU annual international conference "Society and Culture" – is a good basis for the expansion in scientific research and artistic creation with three working languages: Latvian, English, Russian.

#### Weaknesses:

- Teachers have a very heavy workload of up to 900 teaching hours. This does not leave much room for research.
- A low number of scientific publications and international conference attendance.
- Not sufficiently effective International cooperation (Staff exchange, students mobility in all programs)
- Not sufficiently generated Lecturers’ participation in scientific projects.
- Students undertaking their final year project were not building upon research activity of staff.
- The development of the strategic document on research is not available for 2021-2025.

## 5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

### Analysis

The LiepU has established strong cooperation with different stakeholders in Latvia and with different educational establishments abroad. SAR refers to 18 International agreements signed between LiepU’ study field “Management, Administration and Real Estate Management” and other HEIs. The analysis of agreements shows that the majority of international agreements are made with German HEIs (33.3%); Lithuanian ones (16.7%) and with Greek institutions (11%). The other 38.9% agreements are signed with the single HEIs from countries ranging from the Netherlands and Denmark and Slovakia and Turkey. The educational institutions and universities with whom to cooperate, are selected according to the study field provided and it largely depends on the willingness to cooperate from the other party. The contacts are established from mutual events and meetings, as well as ensuring the student and teaching staff exchange.

There is a clear lack of mechanism for attraction of both the teaching staff and students from abroad. Liepaja University Development Plan of Academic Staff (2018 - 2022) in 3.4. - Employment of Foreign Academic Staff at LiepU Attraction – refers to one foreigner who is planning to be hired in the academic year 2018/2019, but it is not clear whether he/she was hired or not.

Much more internationalization and cooperation mechanisms are required to adjust to the global changes and bring the internationalization in all areas of study, teaching, learning and curriculum. LiepU explains situation due to the lack of mechanisms and tools, and the problems with the mobility are explained by 3 key reasons:

- a lack of coordinated efforts to attract foreign academic staff,
- a lack of appropriate payment’s level,
- a lack of the knowledge of languages.

SAR provides statistics on incoming foreign teaching staff (Appendix II. 3.6.C). Based on this statistic, it has been the increasing number of Teaching staff - from 1 teacher (in 2015) to 5 teachers (in 2019-2020). This number of international teaching staff corresponds to almost the same amount of incoming foreign students to LiepU, who are expected to study in English.

Study mobility’s criteria and procedures through Erasmus+ programme are introduced in LiepU at the end of 2014 which lasts between 3-12 months. In terms of students, there are about 5-7 students per year coming to LiepU. Since 2015 till 2019 (Appendix 5.1), there is a steady number of students for outgoing mobility, it is around 5-6 students per year, which is not a high number.

Regarding Cooperation, LiepU provides the list of 36 cooperation agreements (SAR Appendix 2) signed with municipalities, with companies (including 5 - on internships), with Universities and business schools where 11 are made with Municipalities. There are 7 Agreements that have been signed at the beginning of 2020, before submission of SAR. The majority of agreements are

dedicated to the area of studies and research purposes: it has been outlined in 19 agreements. The other area of cooperation is the international cooperation which takes place with other Baltics and CEE regional universities – like Klaipeda University (Klaipeda), and with Varna University of Economics (Bulgaria).

There is no specific information in SAR, why agreements are signed with all municipalities, however some needs are explained for some selected municipalities in SAR (ex.: Rucava municipality), and during the interview process with the representative of municipality.

As far the cooperation with the SMEs, enterprises and businesses, because the regions are small, this feature has its own advantage, when employers can contact directly the top-management of LiepU (directly to the levels of Rector). At the same time, it is more efficient if there is a formal unit set up in the University that provides a connecting link between the Employers, on the one hand, and the students, on the other hand.

The experts identified that LiepU has cooperation agreements that ensure internship places for students (mostly for Tourism and recreation management and Culture management study programmes), the involvement of employers and professionals in-state examination commissions procedures.

Up to now there is no formal unit (career office), or person who keeps these connections, and provide access to jobs for students. Interviews show that students are searching for employment themselves. This office may cover few functions:

- dealing with graduates to employ them based on the provided applications of employers;
- it may stop the drop-out (because many of students are working anyway), and may decrease the migration to other regions or capital (Riga);
- finding internships;
- dealing with graduates and Alumni Club;
- involving all graduates into attraction of the life-long learning programmes, surveys, fund raising.

No agreements have been reached neither with its neighbouring institution in Lithuania, nor with the other partner. The SAR mentions that negotiations took place, but it does not explain the reasons why negotiation with Lithuanian and other foreign institution did not reach any consensus. The Self-Assessment Report recognizes - “cooperation is developing slowly”. There have been some attempts to introduce the Master’s «International Cultural Tourism», but no obvious results have been achieved. The plan for the Joint study programme refers to “the nearest future”. There are no assessment of the plans of the higher education institution/ college for the creation of such study programmes within the study field. The procedures for the development and implementation of joint programme would be useful.

Regarding the local employment, there is some cooperation with the local SMEs, enterprises and businesses, but it exists without any formal structure. The interviews show that majority of students are searching for employment themselves, and there is no formal unit to deal with employers, providing access to jobs for students as well as to keep connections with alumni. There is a lack of mechanism for attraction of the teaching staff and students.

There is an increasing incoming mobility of teaching staff from foreign partner institutions during the last few years (SAR Appendix 5.2, in Latvian) of the study field “Management, Administration and Real Estate Management” during the period from the study year 2014/2015 till 2019/2020. Teaching of selected courses in English can be introduced for each curriculum with pre-training on a digital platform (didactics) to improve internationalization.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

Overall the LiepU has established cooperation network with all stakeholders and has developed a system for involvement of partners in the implementation of the study directions. The local cooperation partners are selected to meet the specific features of this study field and four listed

study programmes. Both internationalization and cooperation lead to the improvement of both study field and programmes. However, the procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study direction which are efficient and contribute to the improvement of the study process haven't been established. The unified system for the organization and ensuring of the internships in the LiepU also not established. But such system could motivate both the employers and interns to take active part and focus on their field of study.

Much more internationalization and cooperation mechanisms are required to adjust to the global changes and bring the internationalization in all areas of study, teaching, learning and curriculum.

There is no joint study programme, and no agreement have been reached so far. It is not clear whether the procedures for the joint study programmes have been defined.

#### Strengths:

- There is an introductory brochure in LiepU which provide the key information for foreign students, available on-line.
- The cooperation agreements of various nature are provided (from municipalities, enterprises, on internship and Universities and business schools) to accommodate the interests of various groups of students.
- The system of the Internal Cooperation agreements is in place (much broader by content, purposes, and structure for employment, commitment for study, research, technological, sport and culture).
- Various sets of traineeships practices for skills and competencies for students are provided, and developed within the study field.
- There is an increasing incoming mobility of teaching staff from foreign partner institutions during the last few years.

#### Weaknesses:

- No specific Plan/Strategy/targets for internationalization from 2021.
- Trend in mobility students is decreasing.
- There is no future specific indicators for teaching staff planned for the future.
- Absence of formal structure (a career office) which could provide the bridge between university and employer.
- All stakeholders mention the lack of English and Russian languages, the key languages for business.

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

### **Analysis**

The previous accreditation of the study process took place in 2012. During an onsite visit, the expert group got evidence about the implementation of some recommendations described in the SAR pp.60-61. and SAR Appendix 3. Following changes were introduced: "...study programmes "Business and Organizations Management" and "Culture Management," whereas in the study year 2017/2018 essential changes were developed and accredited in the study programme "Tourism and Recreation Management" and "Management Sciences." Due to that, several study programmes implemented in the study direction were closed down, e.g. "Specialist of Public Relations" and "Office Administration," but the study programme "Communication Management" was integrated in the study programme "Business and Organizations Management".

Several recommendations from the previous accreditation visit have only been formally implemented, for example: descriptions of study courses are reviewed and improved every year, but it is a formal activity and does not provide the desired result. Nevertheless, according to experts

point of view, the implementation of the recommendations received during the previous evaluation procedures could be assessed as follows:

1. "There should be more co-operation with employers.
2. More employers and graduates should take part in the decision-making process". Situation is improving at the program field level involving employers in Bachelors and Master Thesis defence committees and collaborating on internship providing, nevertheless still employers have a very limited role at Study field level, but not at programmes level.
3. "Scientific research work of the academic staff sometimes is not closely related to the study courses they teach. The institution should consider better correlation between teaching process and scientific research". Information provided in Teaching staff CVs' (SAR CV\_ENG.pdf) shows that there was very little evidence of scientific work related to the programmes evaluated.
4. "The staff qualification is sufficient to ensure studies, but more PhD professors for Master's degree programme are desirable". In total, 15 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study process of the professional study programme and the 8 of them have doctoral degree, but the only 2 of them are elected (SAR, annex 2019\_akredit\_II.3.6.A.pielikums\_iesaitite\_pasniedzeji\_EN.pdf).
5. "Low English knowledge of teachers should be improved. It is necessary for international co-operation, higher research and teaching ability." Currently, only a small number of modules are taught through English.
6. "There is no Alumni organisation. Graduates expressed their willingness to take part in such a club". There is still no Alumni organisation. Graduates who met the panel said they would welcome such an organisation.
7. "Despite increased co-operation with partners abroad, the scale of it demonstrates only the initial stage. The efforts should be strengthened". There was active collaboration with Breda some years ago, but no strong examples were presented this time.
8. "More encouragement for teachers to develop joint international projects is recommended". According to SAR no evidence of such encouragement at present time.
9. "More joint study courses with foreign institutions in English should take place". Although many joint degrees have been developed in Europe recently, none in LiepU.
10. "English language skills of some academic staff are not sufficient for preparation and implementation of study programmes in the corresponding language". Whilst many staff have very good English, many could not teach programmes in English. Training should be given to staff to improve their English. And consideration given to developing Russian skills also.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

In 2012, the study field and its programmes were evaluated and the report of the expert group included recommendations were created. Despite the fact that LiepU put a lot of effort into implementing the recommendations and a lot of positive changes took place, all recommendation according to the experts point of view have not yet been fully implemented and there is still a lot to recommend for improvement in the coming period.

### **Strengths:**

- Several study programmes implemented in the study field were closed down, e.g. "Specialist of Public Relations" and "Office Administration".
- The study programme "Communication Management" was integrated in the study programme "Business and Organizations Management".
- The higher education institution has appropriate admission requirements.
- The admission requirements and advantages are reviewed and specified once in a study year.
- The higher education institution has good communication with entrepreneurs between both sides.

- The higher education institution has documentary evidence that co-operation has been established with several companies, providing students with internships there.

#### Weaknesses:

- Insufficient collaboration with employers and their involvement in the decision-making process.
- Lack of encouragement for teachers to develop joint study programmes and international projects.
- Descriptions of study courses are reviewed and improved every year, but it is a formal activity and does not provide the desired result.

## 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There is quality assurance system in LiepU, but the system doesn't ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness. As it works only partially (in general involving only elected academic staff), improvements and effectiveness are only partial. There are only partially appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints (ESG 1.3); LiepU has to have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff, but procedures don't ensure that. (ESG 1.5), they should not only collect and analyse relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities, but also use it for improvements (ESG 1.7), and that's not done at the moment.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There is LiepU quality policy (<https://www.liepu.lv/lv/1258/liepu-kvalitates-politika>) and all main procedures according to regulations. But quality policy is missing important content according to ESG standard, for example there is nothing mentioned about academic fraud or involvement of external stakeholders in quality assurance in the LiepU quality policy (ESG 1.1). LiepU should recheck what should be in the content of quality policy according to ESG standard.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There are principles for study program development, approval, control and revision, but they are not followed in real life — weakest points are control and revision that are mainly formal and depends more on involved staff inputs and interest in improvements. Approval, control and revision are done formally because students and other stakeholders were not involved in all steps and that resulted in approving outdated study course contents and skipped some necessary knowledge according to professions standards.

- 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:** Study course descriptions contains clear information on demands and evaluation of the knowledge.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There are procedures, but some of them are just a formality, there is a lack of control and elected academic staff are in privileged positions when talking about the quality of their work. LiepU has to have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff (ESG 1.5), but procedures don't ensure that as in case of bad performance it is very complicated to suspend from work elected academic staff as "Nolikums par vēlēšanām akadēmiskajos amatos" and trade union protects them, complaints from students according QMS manager are taken seriously into account only if they are from various years, for a longer period of time or even from different study course. There is no direct action intended after bad evaluation and not set lowest level when some actions for improvements has to be taken.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There are surveys, but the results are not communicated with involved parties, with respondents (not the students, nor graduates or employers have received results of the surveys even if they were respondents) and there are no follow-up activities for future improvements. There are only statistical facts collected on LiepU. Annex III.2.6.D, "Profesionālā maģistra studiju programmas "Vadības zinības" studējošo apmierinātības aptaujas rezultāti grafiskā veidā" shows that average and low satisfaction dominates in this survey, but results from LiepU side were taken as granted and no improvements were proposed.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There is quality assurance system in LiepU, but the system doesn't ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness. As it works only partially (in general involved only elected academic staff), improvements and effectiveness are only partial. As quality assurance system is not fully compliant with ESG standard and examples are mentioned earlier in this section, it can't ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There are both national and international contacts and contracts that support reaching study directions targets. (Appendix No. 2 "Sadarbības līgumu saraksts"). However, the procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study direction which are efficient and contribute to the improvement of the study process haven't been established. The unified system for the organization and ensurement of the internships in the LiepU also not established.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There are evidence of scientific activities despite of low set targets within Appendix II.1.3.A "Study Field of "Management, administration and real estate management" Development Plan 2018 - 2023". There is a need for greater involvement in international cooperation. The teaching staff is aware of the necessity of scientific research, but only few of them are involved in scientific projects. Involvement in international research projects should be improved.

- 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:** There are several very important recommendations that remain also for next period and are not eliminated. For example, there should be more cooperation with private business and more employers and graduates should take part in decision-making processes that were not implemented and now resulted in LiepU bad performance in various aspects that are mentioned earlier about involvement.

## 8. Recommendations for the Study Field

### Short-term recommendations

Implement a procedure to provide feedback of survey results to all respondents and other interested parties — end of the year 2021

Implement procedure for collecting, revising, implementing and reviewing results of suggestions from all sides — end of the year 2021.

Implement procedure how to immediately remove elected academic staff from his/her duties in case of poor performance, not reached KPI's, violation of internal rules etc. as it is not possible at the moment — end of the 2021 study year

Define stages of corresponding activities in case of poor evaluation of the academic staff from the student side — beginning of the 2021 study year.

Update procedure "A-10-II Bibliotēkas fonda komplektēšana" with other parties besides elected academic staff also — beginning of the 2021. study year.

Review LiepU strategy and targets to make them measurable with step-by-step actions and real, not only formal bare minimum — beginning of the 2021. study year.

Create the clear Strategic plan for cooperation and internationalization (from 2021) with measured targets for every year.

### Long-term recommendations

Solve the problem with overlapping study course contents as not always it can be done during lectures in communication with small groups of students. — 2 years.

Programme Development Committees for each programme should be established with employers and teachers.

LiepU should adopt a policy that requires all teachers of years 3 and 4 of degree programmes to have research activity linked to their teaching.

English classes for staff should be provided. And for some appointments, fluent English should be a requirement.

Establish an Alumni Association and give it a role on some university committees. Let it advise on programme changes.

Identify partners for exchanges and other collaboration. LiepU is seeking partner for new Master's degree in Cultural Tourism.

The strategy of LiepU should include more joint international projects.

All teaching staff should be given training in the use of digital platforms for teaching.

Every year, each teacher should be required to devise his/her research and/or artistic creation activities for the coming year to be discussed and agreed with the relevant head of department/school.

All newly appointed lecturers and professors should be required to complete a training programme in teaching methods, assessment and online delivery of courses.

Set up the career office to provide the bridge for communication between University and Employers for improvement in cooperation, including jobs for its graduates/alumni.

Higher targets should be placed for promoting excellence in research such as highly ranked SCOPUS and WoS journals (i.e., those with high impact factor) as well as publishing in top field journals.

## **II. "Business and organization management" ASSESSMENT**

### **II. "Business and organization management" ASSESSMENT**

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

##### **Analysis**

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Business and organization management" (Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification 42345) meets the requirements of the 6th level of Latvian Qualification Framework and the 5th level of the professional qualification. The length of full-time studies is at least 4 years, i.e., at least 160 Latvian credit points (240 ECTS). and Part-time studies is 4 years and 4 months (160 Latvian credit points (240 ECTS). Programme is implemented in Latvian language. Degree to be obtained: Professional Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration. Professional qualification according to the selected sub-direction: Business Manager; Staff Manager, Manager of public relations; Manager of foreign affairs (SAR p.88).

Programme ensures the acquisition of relevant professional competences in a particular field, and develops abilities to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field. Study Course descriptions for this programme should be updated and some study courses changed / added. There are weak compliance with Company Managers Professional Standard and in one aspect with Human Resources Manager:

Professional Standard of Company Manager — 4.1.5. Evaluate opportunities for starting and developing extensive and sophisticated business, based on venture capital, business angels investment, co-financing, business incubator, seed capital, etc., applying business models to them — There are no corresponding study course / study course content.

Professional Standard of Company Manager — 4.2.3. Define long-term and short- term business goals and directions for development in accordance with the interests of owners, other stakeholders and the public Social responsibility guidelines — wrongly connected with "Communication ethics and social responsibility" when it according Study Course content more looks like connected with "Change management and enterprise management systems I, II"

Professional Standard of Company Manager — 4.2.4. Evaluate the organization's development opportunities and risks Risk assessment methods — There are no corresponding study course / study course content. As example, there should be knowledge of several risk assessment methods and some of the most popular takes at least a full lecture to explain, understand and try. Part II "Risks and main problems in business 4 / 2 2 lectures / 1 lecture" Topic is so large so it's reasonable to have a separate study course for all kind of risks and risk management (work safety, environment, product risks, process, financial (if needed) risks etc. with corresponding methods).

Professional Standard of Human Resources Manager — 3.1.3. Develop an organizational and management structure for the organization. The economic performance of the organization — wrongly connected with “Remuneration system and payroll” and “Management accounting” when it according Study Course content more looks like connected with “Change management and enterprise management systems I, II”

That means there should be updated Study Course content to provide full compliance with necessary knowledge.

There is evidence (mentioned in Part I. Assessment of the Study Direction, 2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System) of overlapping study courses as unbelievably many study courses are connected with each demanded knowledge — content of courses are not and should not be so universal. Compliance with professions standard should be updated to make it clear.

According to the latest Professional Standard it is impossible to recommend accreditation of Professional Standard Public Relations manager qualification as it's not Functional Manager anymore, but the Art and creative industries sector with completely different Professional Standard that has too many gaps with the planned Study Course content. There are several alternatives to what to do with these students, for example, provide the possibility to change the Study Programme or offer to continue studies in another accredited university.

The same situation is with the qualification Manager of foreign affairs. The latest standard is Functional manager with the sub qualification International Relations Manager ([https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/prof\\_kval\\_pamatprasibas/2017/PKP-066.pdf](https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/prof_kval_pamatprasibas/2017/PKP-066.pdf)).

There is no evidence of full compliance with the Functional Manager Profession Standard regarding qualification “International Relations Manager”. Consequently, in this study programme should be more precise compliance with Professional qualification International relations manager. LiepU may continue to award this qualification only on the condition that the study programme, curriculum, study course organization (mapping) and descriptions of the study courses are revised.

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

Professional bachelor study programme “Business and organization management” meets the requirements of the 6th level of Latvian Qualification Framework and the 5th level of the professional qualification, but has several weak points starting with one no more valid qualification “Public Relations manager” and qualification “International relations manager”. Consequently, in this study programme should be more precise compliance with Company Manager and Functional Manager Professional Standards. Study Course descriptions for this programme should be updated and some study courses changed / added according to the particular qualification.

Strengths:

- The aim of the study programme and the outcomes to be achieved are understandable and related to the title of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

- There is no evidence of full compliance with the Company Managers Profession Standard.
- It is not possible to accept accreditation for Public Relations manager qualification as Profession Standard has been changed and it's not compatible with provided Study Course content.
- There is no evidence of full compliance with the Functional Manager Profession Standard regarding qualification “International Relations Manager”.
- Outdated Study Course descriptions / content, missing important topics in studies for these qualifications.

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

## Analysis

LiepU has offered programmes in Business Management since 1999 and these programmes have gone through many changes as new specialisations have been added.

The current programme involves four sub-directions: “Business Process Management” (corresponds to Professional Standard Business Manager), Human Resources Management (requirement of Professional Standard Functional Manager: Human Resources Manager); Public Relations Manager (requirement of Professional Standard Functional Manager: Public Relations Manager); and Public Affairs Manager (requirement of Professional Standard Functional Manager: International Relations Manager).

Currently students must choose the sub-direction of the Study Programme at the beginning of studies with the possibility to change it within the first year of studies. It was difficult for young students to make an informed choice at the beginning of the programme. They would be better placed to do so at the end of first year or even better at the end of second year. Liepu should adopt the principle that the later this choice can be made by students, the better it would be. Since there are many subjects which are common to all three sub-directions, it should not be difficult to re-structure the programme to allow for each student making their choice at the end of year 1 or year 2.

LiepU should consider how the programme in first and second year could be re-structured to allow the students to make their choice of specialisation at the end of first or second year.

The programme requires each final-year student to complete a thesis. The evaluation of the programme was done remotely because of Covid-19 so it was not possible for all members of the panel to see copies of theses; however, the chairperson did see some copies and was satisfied with their standard.

The content of the programme is relevant to the award made and it complies with the aims of the study programme. It ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes and meets the needs of industry and the scientific trends of the sub-sectors it serves. For example, the Human Resource Management specialisation deals with European Union as well as Latvian law.

The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account. Students who spoke to the panel strongly supported this view.

The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. There was some criticism from employers of the speed with which recommendations were acted upon (they would like faster implementation). One action which might assist speedier action would be the inclusion of employer representatives on Programme Development Committees which is recommended in this report.

Students can avail of outgoing mobility opportunities to study abroad for a semester or year. But very few students do so. The European Union target is 20% of all graduates to have studied abroad. LiepU students of this programme do not achieve this. One reason given by students is their standard of English. A second issue in regard to student mobility is the need for LiepU to provide all students going abroad with a Learning Agreement which sets out the modules they must complete abroad. On successful completion of the modules, the students should be credited with the relevant ECTS credits. Some graduates who had been abroad had difficulty getting recognition for their achievements when they returned to LiepU, but this deficiency has been addressed by LiepU management.

It's not clear what will be in the study course “The Role of Radio in modern society and business” which is compulsory for students taking the sub-direction Foreign Affairs Management. For other students, it is an optional course. Students supplement their knowledge by collecting information, developing and writing releases/public news in the field of public speech/performance. Students

learn to prepare a plan for communication with business partners of cooperation.

Part-time students attend classes for two days every second week. Thus, they attend for one fifth of the time full-time students attend. It seems out of proportion to claim that part-time students can gain credit points at almost five times the rate of full-time students. There may be some circumstances where a candidate has gained extensive experience in Business management and is currently working at a senior level and for whom it would be appropriate to allow accelerated progress. But LiepU should set out clearly and fairly its policy on advanced entry or accelerated progress. The description of the study programme for part-time studies does not address the amount of work part-time students would have to do independently to justify a degree award in 4 years and 4 months.

In experts mind it is not wise to have a full-time programme that takes 4 years and a part-time programme that takes 4 years and 4 months with very little attendance at classes. The description of the part-time programme does not indicate the amount of self-study that a part-time student would have to undertake to justify a degree award in 4 years and 4 months. Accordingly, LiepU should re-consider the duration of part-time completion of the programme.

Employers who met the Expert Group were generally pleased with the programme but some recommended longer placements in industry while others wanted more emphasis on foreign languages. These issues should be discussed between LiepU and employers. While there are some employers on the Study Direction Board they can scarcely represent the different industries and the different programmes that LiepU offers, LiepU should establish Programme Development Committees (one for each programme) so that teachers and relevant employers can discuss possible changes and arrangements for placements in industry.

Graduates of the programme commented favourably on the guest lectures they enjoyed. They indicated that it would be a good idea to have more such lectures from industry personnel in Latvia and from international experts. LiepU should seek to maximise the benefit from guest lecturers and the panel understands that LiepU has taken steps to ensure all students can participate in guest lectures. Both students and graduates who spoke to the panel appreciated the differing viewpoints of guest lecturers, both from within Latvia and from abroad. They felt the programme would benefit from more.

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

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Business and organization management" offers students the opportunity to specialise in one of four areas: Business manager, Human Resources, Public Relations or International Affairs. Students are asked to choose their specialisation when they start the programme; it would be better if that decision could be postponed until at least the end of Year 1 or even better Year 2.

The regulations that allow part-time students to finish in 4 years and 4 months should be re-considered. Employers should be invited to serve on a Programme Development Committee.

### **Strengths:**

- The programme is long-established and covers three important areas of business life, namely Human Resources, Public Relations and International Affairs.
- Employers are supportive and facilitate students for practice placements.

### **Weaknesses:**

- Currently students are asked to choose their sub-direction when they enter the programme. It would be better if they could make that decision at the end of year 1 or year 2.
- The part-time version of the programme has almost the same duration as the full-time version even though student attendance is an average of one day per week.

- The role of employers in advising LiepU is restricted to Study Field level and not to individual programme levels. A more detailed involvement of employers is needed.

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

#### **Analysis**

Financial resources of the professional bachelor study programme "Business and organization management" are composed of the government-funded study places that represent a government funding transfer for ensuring the educational process that is distributed within the LiepU in a centralised way, covering reimbursement for teaching and support personnel and other costs. The funds of the study programme make up 43% of the total budget of the study field (SAR Appendix II.3.1.A. Fig.2.).

The premises of the study process provision mainly are located in LiepU building in Liela street 14. Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block (SAR p. 35). The existing material and technical base allows to fully ensure the necessary conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Lectures take place in spacious conference halls, auditoriums, computer classrooms. The auditoriums are equipped with high-quality visual equipment. Students and academic staff have access to a modern library and access to many electronic databases and e-books, as well as information networks (Internet, LiepU net, Moodle). The library stock for this study programme is sufficient. Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, during a visit to the library, experts found that many paper books have the old year of publication and there are not many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages. However, many e-books and many databases are available both for teachers and students. Inspections of material and technical infrastructure carried out during the visit gave a positive impression of LiepU infrastructure quality.

Students of the study programme use computerized applications and software (MS Office, data visualization online tools and software, online media) that are needed for the acquisition of all the study courses in the study programme; these as well as an opportunity of research work of various stages ensure a flexible and student- oriented environment.

Overall, the study foundation, information base (including library), materials and technical base and financial foundation correspond to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions, creating preconditions for the achievements of study outcomes.

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

The resources and provision provided for the successful implementation of the professional bachelor study programme "Business and organization management" are adequate. There is a good infrastructure for lectures, technical equipment and IT support. All the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. LiepU established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students. In general, the study foundation, information base (including libraries), material and technical base and financial foundation corresponds to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions and create preconditions for the achievement of study outcomes, thus, demonstrating the ability to ensure the delivery of a high-quality study process.

#### **Strengths:**

- Sufficient material and technical resource base.
- A well-equipped library available for all students' and teaching staff individual work.

Weaknesses:

- Many paper books have an old year of publication.

#### 4. Teaching Staff

##### Analysis

In the reporting period, the composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly. This study programme is quite successful compared to all other programmes in terms of attraction of foreign professionals – 4 foreign academic staff have been attracted (for subjects: Introduction to logistics, QM, Research Methods, QM, Administrative science, Physical education), Fulbright holder and additional 3 members of teaching staff (from the Varna University of Economics, Bulgaria, and two HEIs of Lithuania).

The composition of teaching staff includes academic teachers, sectoral professionals and foreign professionals (Self-Assessment Report, annex2019\_akredit\_II.3.6...A.pielikums\_iesaistitie\_pasniedzēji\_EN.pdf).

There is a practice-oriented study with the attraction of the sectoral professionals (Kurzeme Business Incubator, municipal representatives). During the interview process, the graduates shared their best opinions about the selected foreign teachers' lectures.

Qualification of the teaching staff and learning outcomes/aims is relevant to the study courses. Regarding the compliance of qualifications, LiepU provides only the data related to 29 lecturers, where 19 are elected, including 9 - with doctoral degrees (SAR p. 81).

Mutual collaboration between the teaching staff shown through four publications (2015, 2016, 2017, 2018) in the Latvian Journal "Problems of Management in the 21st Century".

The SAR does not provide enough information about publications produced for 2019-2020 as well as how it is used in the study process. The additional request was made, and the list of publications was provided for 2019, with additional publications related to business (minimum – 2). The examples of involvement into the scientific research are provided with the references to 4 papers (where 3 papers address the challenges of the Latvian sectors), where one paper address both Latvian and European issues. At the same time, these examples are referred to 2015-2018 years, and miss the latest information from 2019-2020.

There is a mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place, - listed in the joint project in cooperation with Ventspils High Technology Park and Ventspils Institution, and Kurzeme Business Incubator – with innovation grants for students (KinGS), research development which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/ modules and their correlation.

The University Strategy Liepājas Universitātes attīstības stratēģija 2016–2020 also revealed the planned target indicators in a "target-oriented manner" (p.56):. gadam –performance indicators, but they have not been used in the Self-Assessment report and not explained as well. The analysis of this document shows that:

- It has not been updated and analysed during 2017-2020 from the point of view whether the targets have been met - planned in 2016 and implemented by 2020;
- One of these indicators is used as the planned indicator for 2016-2020, and deals with the LiepU academic staff papers in foreign conferences and congresses - which should be 40% of overall amount of presented papers. Because the University Strategy is provided in Latvian, and the staff refers to one publication per year, it should be double checked how these indicators are reconciled between each other.

LiepU informed experts that a handbook for the use and acquisition of the e-environment is available on Moodle system and starting with January 2021, lecturer trainings regularly take place for the acquisition and development of the Moodle system. However, the quality of online teaching is in place not only according to the Moodle using, but through the provision of the professional online training with all interactive practices to be embedded. During the visit, experts recognized that the

teaching staff needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support due to the QA and feedback loop.

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

In the reporting period, the composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly. The composition of teaching staff includes academic teachers, sectoral professionals and foreign professionals. It should be mentioned that this study programme is quite successful in terms of attraction of foreign professionals. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments and contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes. However, the teaching staff certainly needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support and additional opportunities due to the QA and feedback loop.

Despite the fact that some members of the academic staff involved in the delivery of the programme are involved in scientific research at the international and national levels, and their research mostly relates to the goal and objectives of the programme, more effort is needed in this area. Increased cooperation and knowledge exchange could be useful in delivering the programme and achievement of learning outcomes. International activities need to be improved to ensure greater international influence for staff and students.

#### **Strengths:**

- Involvement of Fulbright member and foreign guest lectures makes this programme international compared to the other ones.
- Students-to-teacher ratio is an excellent one.
- Implemented SAM (Kurzeme Innovation grants, networking events, conferences).
- Practice-oriented study with the attraction of the sectoral professionals (Kurzeme Business Incubator, municipal representatives).
- The graduates of this study programme are invited for teaching.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- With the pandemic situation and an abrupt move to online teaching, no organised training provided to the teaching staff on how to teach online with the required digital skills and didactics for teachers.
- Target oriented measures that have been planned in the report 2016-2020 are not used or analysed – whether these indicators have been met or not, the reasons.
- Examples of publications – almost all publications listed in the SAR are provided from the same source – internet journal „Problems of Management in the 21st Century”.

### **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Business and organization management"**

#### **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:** Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme (Annex Paraugi\_dipl\_dipl\_pielik\_BOV\_LV.pdf ) was added to the SAR and complies with the regulations No.202 of the Cabinet of Ministers, "The process of issuing state-recognised higher education documents".

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/256157-kartiba-kada-izsniedz-valsts-atzitus-augstako-izglitiba-apliecinosud-okumentus>

- 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:** Cooperation agreement with the Ventspils Augstskola included in the SAR (2019\_akredit\_2.pielikums\_Sadarbibas\_ligumu\_saraksts\_ENG.pdf)

- 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:** The higher education institution has an attestation, which confirms that students of the professional bachelor study programme "Culture Management" are guaranteed indemnity, if due to LiepU action the study programme is not accredited or the study licence is taken away and students are not willing to continue studies in another programme in accordance with Study agreement (Clause 2.1.5. of the Section 2.1. LiepU duties).

- 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:** The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in Latvian (Other mandatory attachments: Attestation regarding knowledge of official language (1).pdf)

- 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:** Study agreements comply with regulatory enactments (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 70 " Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi").

- 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 course descriptions included as SAR Annex (AKREDITACIJA\_Studiju\_kursu\_apraksti\_BOV\_2020\_ENG\_02042020.pdf) overall are compliant with the requirements outlined in the Law on Higher Education Institutions. All materials are in Latvian and Latvian is the only language of study program requirements outlined in the Law on Higher Education Institutions. All materials are in Latvian and Latvian is the only language of study program.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According to latest Professional Standard it is impossible to recommend accreditation of Professional Standard Public Relations manager qualification as it's not Functional Manager anymore, but Art and creative industries sector with completely different Professional Standard that has too many gaps with planned Study Course content. There is no evidence of full compliance with the Functional Manager Profession Standard regarding qualification "International Relations Manager". Consequently, in this study programme should be more precise compliance with Professional qualification International relations manager. All two other qualifications are in line with the standard requirements.

- 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:** 2019\_akredit\_6.pielikums\_BOV\_atbilstiba\_valsts\_izgl\_stand.pdf shows compliance with regulations for professional higher education standard.

- 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:** CV's of the academic staff included in the Description of the Study field Annex (CV\_ENG.pdf) outline that academic staff fulfils the criteria outlined in the Law on Higher Education institutions and 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 a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme).

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According latest Professional Standard it is impossible to recommend accreditation of Professional Standard Public Relations Manager qualification as it's not Functional Manager anymore, but Art and creative industries sector with completely different Professional Standard that has too many gaps with planned Study Course content. All other qualifications are in line with the standard 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:** Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block. LiepU is financially self-sustainable, thus admitting the planned number of students to the study program it shall be able to carry out all the responsibilities. The university has a library where materials for the implementation of the study program are available. The materials are regularly updated, taking into account course descriptions and other recommendations. Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, many paper books have the old year of publication and there are not many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages. However, many e-books and many databases are available both for teachers and students

- 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 has the necessary academic staff for its implementation.

- 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 Study Programme "Business and organization management" has one no more valid qualification. And situation regarding qualification "manager of foreign affairs" or "international relations manager" is unclear. That should be fixed. Second conclusion is that the programme should have more precise compliance with Company Managers Professional Standard.

Strengths:

- The aim of the study programme and the outcomes to be achieved are understandable and related to the title of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

- There is no evidence of full compliance with the Company Managers Professional Standard.
- It is not possible to accept accreditation for Public Relations Manager qualification as Professional Standard has been changed and it's not compatible with provided Study Course content.
- Outdated Study Course descriptions / content, missing important topics in studies for these qualifications.

## Evaluation of the study programme "Business and organization management"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

## 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Business and organization management"

### Short-term recommendations

In the study agreement, indicate the student's declared address of residence.

Provide an analysis of your target indicators according to your strategy 2021-2025 with the check by each year.

Review the Professional Public Relations Manager qualification compliance with the latest professional standard and make the decision to exclude this programme from the study field or to make corrections.

The regulations that allow part-time students to finish in 4 years and 4 months should be re-considered.

Review and develop study courses descriptions / content to be in line for the professional qualification.

Overlook programmes compliance with Professional standard "International relations manager" and title of qualification to be issued

### Long-term recommendations

The plan of teaching staff, their development plans, etc. should be prepared with the targets/KPIs/indicated measures.

Organise the online training with the didactic skills and digital teaching with the specifics and additional opportunities provided by Moodle platform for teaching staff.

Provide the training for the research methodology as well as the specifics in qualitative and quantitative technique for the members of young academic staff (involvement of graduates in teaching); and those who need it as the way to improve the research skills and qualifications.

Develop additional motivation for the involvement of academic staff into research and publication activities.

Review the possibility for students to make decision to choose the specialisation until at least the end of Year 1 or even better Year 2.

Create a system of more detailed involvement of employers in development of study programme.

## II. "Culture management" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Culture management" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Culture management" (Code of the study programme

in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification 42345) meets the requirements of the 6th level of Latvian Qualification Framework and the 5th level of the professional qualification. The length of full-time studies is at least 4 years, i.e., at least 160 Latvian credit points (240 ECTS). and Part-time studies is 4 years and 4 months (160 Latvian credit points (240 ECTS). Programme is implemented in Latvian language. Degree to be obtained: Professional Bachelor's Degree in Culture Management, qualification: Business Manager.

The content of the program is elaborated according to the relevant state education standard and relevant occupational standard. The programme ensures the acquisition of relevant professional competences in a particular field and develops abilities to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field. Study Course descriptions for this programme look fine, but some study courses should be changed / added to eliminate weak compliance with Company Managers Professional Standard:

Professional Standard of Company Manager — 4.1.5. Evaluate opportunities for starting and developing extensive and sophisticated business, based on venture capital, business angels investment, co-financing, business incubator, seed capital, etc., applying business models to them — There are no corresponding study course / study course content.

Professional Standard of Company Manager — 4.2.3. Define long-term and short-term business goals and directions for development in accordance with the interests of owners, other stakeholders and the public Social responsibility, Cultural Studies and Cultural Identity", "Cultural and Social Anthropology Communication ethics and social responsibility" when it according Study Course content more looks like connected with "Change management and enterprise management systems I, II"

That means there should be updated study course content to provide full compliance with necessary knowledge for the Company Manager position.

There is evidence (mentioned in Part I. Assessment of the Study Direction, 2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System) of overlapping study courses as unbelievably many study courses are connected with each required knowledge — content of courses are not and should not be so universal.

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

Study Programme "Culture management" is implemented with strong connections with employers and with opportunities for students and graduates in nearby areas.

Strengths:

- The aim of the study programme and the outcomes to be achieved are understandable and related to the title of the study programme.

Weaknesses:

- There is no evidence of full compliance with the Company Managers Professional Standard.

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

### **Analysis**

The programme requires students to complete a thesis in year 4. As the evaluation of the programme was done remotely, it was not possible for all panel members to see examples of the final theses. But the chairperson did see samples and expressed herself satisfied with the standard. The content of the programme is relevant to the award made and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes and meets the need of the relevant industry. While the programme has met the relevant standards to date, there is currently a

working group looking at defining the professional standards for Culture Management. It will be important for LiepU to participate in the working group and then to ensure that any new standards are met by the programme.

The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account. Students who spoke to the panel were appreciative of the efforts of teachers to accommodate them in this respect but one exception was the request from part-time students for guest lectures to be scheduled at a time when they can attend.

The outcomes of surveys conducted among students, employers and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. This was the experience reported to the panel. But perhaps the system could be improved by having employers represented on a Programme Development Committee and by establishing a Graduates Association as recommended in this report.

Part-time students attend classes for two days every second week. Thus, they attend for one fifth of the time full-time students attend. It seems out of proportion to claim that part-time students can gain credit points at almost five times the rate of full-time students. There may be some circumstances where a candidate has gained extensive experience in Business management and is currently working at a senior level and for whom it would be appropriate to allow accelerated progress. But LiepU should set out clearly and fairly its policy on advanced entry or accelerated progress.

In experts mind it is not wise to have a full-time programme that takes 4 years and a part-time programme that takes 4 years and 4 months with very little attendance at classes. The description of the part-time programme does not indicate the amount of self-study that a part-time student would have to undertake to justify a degree award in 4 years and 4 months. Accordingly, LiepU should re-consider the duration of part-time completion of the programme.

Employers who met the Expert Group were generally pleased with the programme but some recommended longer placements in industry while others wanted more emphasis on foreign languages. These issues should be discussed between LiepU and employers. While there are some employers on the Study Direction Board they can scarcely represent the different industries and the different programmes that LiepU offers, So, LiepU should establish Programme Development Committees in which representatives of employers and teachers of the relevant programme sit down together to discuss possible changes to programmes and arrangements for industry placements.

Graduates of the programme commented favourably on the guest lectures they enjoyed. They indicated that it would be a good idea to have more such lectures from industry personnel in Latvia and from international experts. Graduates of the Cultural Management programme mentioned particularly the series of guest lectures on Saturday mornings and they urged that these be maintained.

A survey of part-time students indicated that they were unhappy about their exclusion from special events. The timing of guest lectures could be arranged to facilitate attendance by part-time students. In this way, LiepU should seek to maximise the benefit from guest lecturers.

Students can avail of outgoing mobility opportunities to study abroad and the uptake on this programme was higher than on the other programmes evaluated in LiepU. Students from this programme participated in Erasmus mobilities to Portugal, Lithuania and Denmark. But the system whereby students are interviewed when they return to LiepU to decide what credits they should be given is not in line with best practice. Each student should have a Learning Agreement before travelling and if he/she completes what was in the agreement those credits should be added to the student's record.

One approach to increasing international exchanges is to increase the number of classes in English. Students were asked about this and they were happy to have more English classes. And more

classes in English would facilitate more students from outside Latvia going to Latvia on exchange programmes. Employers who spoke to the panel also favoured more time allocated to foreign languages, especially English. No graduates mentioned that their careers would have benefitted from a greater ability in English.

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

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Culture management". The regulations that allow part-time students to finish in 4 years and 4 months should be re-considered. Employers should be invited to serve on a Programme Development Committee. Guest lectures play an important role in this programme and should be timed to suit all. Erasmus exchanges should be encouraged and this involves more attention to languages.

#### **Strengths:**

- Employers are supportive of the programme.
- Guest lectures on Saturdays were particularly commended by students and graduates.
- Good possibilities for internships and well-established contacts with employers.
- Good possibilities for students to get even international experience while studying Cultural management in LiepU.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- The part-time version of the programme has almost the same duration as the full-time version even though student attendance is an average of one day per week.
- Employers are represented at Study Field level and not at programme level. LiepU should consider introducing Programme Development Committees (one for each programme) with teachers and employers as members.
- The current arrangements for awarding students credits for study abroad do not follow best practice. LiepU should insist that all students who go abroad have a Learning Agreement as specified in Erasmus programme.
- The emphasis on English is not sufficient to facilitate students who want to pursue an international role and should be increased.
- Outdated Study Course descriptions / contents.

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

### **Analysis**

Financial resources of the professional bachelor study programme "Culture management" are composed of the government-funded study places that represent a government funding transfer for ensuring the educational process that is distributed within LiepU in a centralised way, covering reimbursement for teaching and support personnel and other costs. The funds of the study programme make up 17% of the total budget of the study field (SAR Appendix II.3.1.A. Fig.2.).

The premises of the study process provision mainly are located in LiepU building in Liela street 14. Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block (SAR p. 35). The existing material and technical base allows to fully ensure the necessary conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Lectures take place in spacious conference halls, auditoriums, computer classrooms. The auditoriums are equipped with high-quality visual equipment. Students and academic staff have access to a modern library and access to many electronic databases and e-books, as well as information networks (Internet, LiepU net, Moodle). Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, during a visit to the library, experts found that many paper books have an old year of publication and there are not

many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages about the culture management. However, many e-books and many databases are available for both teachers and students. Inspections of material and technical infrastructure carried out during the visit gave a positive impression of LiepU infrastructure quality.

Students of the study programme use computerized applications and software (MS Office, data visualization online tools and software, online media) that are needed for the acquisition of all the study courses in the study programme; these as well as an opportunity of research work of various stages ensure a flexible and student-oriented environment.

Overall, the study foundation, information base (including library), materials and technical base and financial foundation correspond to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions, creating preconditions for the achievements of study outcomes.

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

The resources and provision provided for the successful implementation of the professional bachelor study programme "Culture management" are adequate. There is a good infrastructure for lectures, technical equipment and IT support. All the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. LiepU established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students.

In general, the study foundation, information base (including libraries), material and technical base and financial foundation correspond to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions and create preconditions for the achievement of study outcomes, thus, demonstrating the ability to ensure the delivery of a high-quality study process.

Strengths:

- Sufficient material and technical resource base.
- A well-equipped library available for all students' and teaching staff individual work.

Weaknesses:

- Lack of literature published within the last 5 years, especially in English and Latvian languages.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

The academic staff includes 34 educators from different sectors - professionals and foreign guest teachers (within the SAM project)

(SAR, annex 2019\_akredit\_II.3.6.A.pielikums\_iesaistitie\_pasniedzēji\_EN.pdf). In the reporting period, the composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly. The composition of the current sectoral professionals includes Music, Media, Project management, Economics, Language and other staff:

- Harmony, Music, Music in events, Project development and management, Sound for new media, Cultural project management, Audio culture, Economic in the Context of Culture, Creative self-expression;
- Languages, genres, rhetoric;
- Other (for this categories CVs are missing).

61% of teaching staff are elected (out of 34 teaching staff) with the ratio is 1.6 students/per teacher – at the approximately the same rate as in other programmes.

In terms of collaboration and cooperation, this is the speciality which should be naturally connected with cooperation. However, this is the shortest chapter for Culture Management - out of all four of the Teaching staff. The check with 4.4. on culture, language and music identifies the highest number

of publications (at least 9); and therefore, scientific research and artistic creations (the highest number compared to other study programmes) in the requested list of publications for 2019. However, the report makes reference to only 2 names in the association with one personal exhibition and monograph and without any listed dates, which makes this chapter on Culture Management not only the shortest, but very scarce. It is not clear which dates are meant for this period of 7-8 years since the last accreditation.

During the visit, experts recognized that the teaching staff needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support and additional opportunities and operations provided by Moodle due to the QA and feedback loop.

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

In the reporting period, the composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly. The report refers to sectoral professionals and guest lectures, but in a very limited manner. The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments and contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes. The study programme has high number of teachers with doctoral degrees and qualification (11 from 34). However, the teaching staff certainly needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support and additional opportunities and operations provided by Moodle due to the QA and feedback loop.

Despite the fact that some members of academic staff involved in the delivery of the programme are involved in scientific research at the international and national levels, and their research mostly relates to the goal and objectives of the programme more effort is needed in this area. Increased cooperation and knowledge exchange could be useful in delivering the programme and achievement of learning outcomes. International activities need to be improved to ensure greater international influence for staff and students.

#### **Strengths:**

- The ratio of students/per teacher - 1.6 students/per teacher is excellent one.
- The highest number of PhDs – 11 teachers with doctoral degrees and qualification.
- The revealed high number of publications for 2019 for this particular study programme, the highest one.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- With the pandemic situation and an abrupt move to online teaching, no organised training provided to the teaching staff on how to teach online with the required digital skills and didactics for teachers, , and there is a separate question related to the distance lecturing with music.
- The SAR makes reference to only 2 names in the association with one personal exhibition and monograph and without any listed dates, which makes this chapter on Culture Management not only the shortest, but very scarce.
- The anonymous Questionnaire for evaluation of teaching staff is provided, but the survey results do not provide the analysis of the questions related to Culture Management literature, topics, teaching methods used.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Culture management"**

### **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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme (Annex Paraugi\_dipl\_dipl\_pielik\_KultVad\_ENG.pdf) was added to the SAR and complies with the regulations No.202 of the Cabinet of Ministers, "The process of issuing state-recognised higher education documents".

- 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:** The higher education institution has a cooperation agreement with the EKA university of applied sciences, which confirms that the higher education institution will provide the students with the options to continue the acquisition of education at another higher education institution, in case the implementation of the study programme is discontinued. Cooperation agreement is included in the SAR (2019\_akredit\_2.pielikums\_Sadarbibas\_ligumu\_saraksts\_ENG.pdf)

- 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:** The higher education institution has an attestation, which confirms that students of the professional bachelor study programme "Culture Management" are guaranteed indemnity, if due to LiepU action the study programme is not accredited or the study licence is taken away and students are not willing to continue studies in another programme in accordance with Study agreement (Clause 2.1.5. of the Section 2.1. LiepU duties).

- 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:** All teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme have a high level of knowledge of the state language. The state language is the mother tongue of almost all teaching staff members. For others, it is at C2 level (Other mandatory attachments: Attestation regarding knowledge of official language (1).pdf).

- 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:** N/A

- 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:** Study agreements comply with regulatory enactments (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi").

- 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. The teaching staff have access to a sample, after which descriptions of study courses must be compiled. After the meeting with the directors and lecturers of the study programs, it was concluded that the procedure for preparation and approval of the study course descriptions needs to be improved, because it is of a formal nature. The description of the study course defines the requirements for starting the study course, determines the study course implementation goals and planned study results, outlines the content of the study course required to achieve the study results, includes the study course calendar, compulsory literature and additional literature, indicates other sources of information tasks, determine the evaluation criteria of study results.

- 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:** The study program corresponds to the valid professional standard. Study courses cover the tasks specified in the professional standard. Several tasks defined in the professional standard are considered in several study courses, which could provide a multifaceted vision, but at the same time care must be taken not to overlap the information.

- 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 study program complies with the state professional higher education standard. Minimum requirements have been met, requirements such as professional specialization courses and internships in the field have been met even to a slightly greater extent than the minimum specified in the standard.

- 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:** CV's of the academic staff included in the Description of the Study field Annex (CV\_ENG.pdf) outline that academic staff fulfils the criteria outlined in the Law on Higher Education institutions and 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 a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme).

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** In general, the bachelor's study program "Culture Management" is very well developed. A couple of shortcomings have been identified that are not particularly significant, i.e. mistakes study agreement should be corrected.

## 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:** Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block. LiepU is financially self-sustainable, thus admitting the planned number of students to the study program it shall be able to carry out all the responsibilities. The university has a library where materials for the implementation of the study program are available. The materials are regularly updated, taking into account course descriptions and other recommendations. Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, many paper books have an old year of publication and there are not many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages about the culture management.

However, many e-books and many databases are available for both teachers and students.

- 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 has the necessary academic staff for its implementation.

- 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 name of the professional bachelor study programme "Culture management" goes in line with the admission and legislative requirements and ends with the award of a professional bachelor's degree in business administration and a fifth level professional qualification and the award of the professional qualification of Company Manager.

Descriptions of study courses correspond to the requirements settled in the regulatory enactments. The content of the courses covers a range of related issues, and that corresponds to the goals of the study programme, ensures the achievement of study results, and meet the needs and scientific trends of the industry concerned. Course descriptions are appropriate, content does not overlap. Teachers communicate with each other and are familiar with the content of lectures in other courses. Suggestion to have a template for course descriptions, to separate compulsory and additional literature in the course descriptions. Literature must be in Latvian and English language. There could be a recommendation for bibliographies, including the year of publication and other relevant information related to literature identification. Review all course descriptions and standardize them, include fresh literature where needed.

Methods used, including evaluation methods, promote learning of study courses and the achievement of study results.

The programme has a very good resource base, including financial, material, technical, study, and information provision, including libraries, as well as scientific support, which indicates the possibility to ensure a high-quality study process and achieve learning outcomes.

International activities need to be improved to ensure greater international influence on staff and students.

Study resources and provision comply with the requirements for the implementation of the Bachelor study programme, create the prerequisites for the achievement of learning and research outcomes, can ensure a high-quality study process.

Strengths:

- The mapping of study courses is detailed, understandable and well thought out.
- Foreign lecturers are invited to teach study courses.
- Professional specialization courses and internships in the field have more credit points than the minimum required by the national standard.

Weaknesses:

- The procedure for approving study courses is of a formal nature.
- There is a possibility to overlap the course content with other courses.

## **Evaluation of the study programme "Culture management"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

## **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Culture management"**

### **Short-term recommendations**

In the study agreement, indicate the student's declared address of residence.

In the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme remove entry "family name(s)".

There should be updated study course content to provide full compliance with necessary knowledge for Company Manager position — 2021. study year.

### **Long-term recommendations**

To improve the procedure for approving study course descriptions, determining how it is checked what is written in them, whether the content does not overlap with other courses.

Fix overlapping study course content — 2 years

The plan of teaching staff, their development plans, etc. should be prepared with the targets/KPIs/indicated measures.

The analysis of the Questionnaire on a regular basis related to the issues of literature, topics, teaching methods used needs to be provided.

Organise the online training with the didactic skills and digital teaching with the specifics and additional opportunities provided by Moodle platform and distance lecturing with music for teaching staff.

## **II. "Tourism and recreation management" ASSESSMENT**

### **II. "Tourism and recreation management" ASSESSMENT**

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

##### **Analysis**

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Tourism and Recreation Management" (Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification 42345) meets the requirements of the 6th level of Latvian Qualification Framework and the 5th level of the professional qualification. The length of full-time studies is at least 4 years, i.e., at least 160 Latvian credit points (240 ECTS). and Part-time studies is 4 years and 4 months (160 Latvian credit points (240 ECTS). Programme is implemented in Latvian language. Degree to be obtained: Professional Bachelor's Degree in Business Management or Professional Bachelor's Degree in Business Management in Recreation, qualification: Business Manager.

The name of the study programme, the degree and the professional qualification are appropriate. The name of the study programme complies with both the obtainable degree in the tourism and recreation fields and the profile of the study field "Management, Administration and Real Estate Management." The goal of the study programme and set tasks are related to the obtainable qualification "Business Manager," the study outcomes are compliant with the business implementation in tourism and recreation.

The content of the program is elaborated according to the relevant state education standard and, relevant occupational standard. Programme ensures the acquisition of relevant professional competences in a particular field, and develops abilities to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field. Study Course descriptions for this programme looks fine, but some study courses should be changed added to eliminate weak compliance with Company Managers Professional Standard:

Professional Standard of Business Manager (Company Manager) — 4.1.5. To evaluate the opportunities for starting a multifaceted and modern commercial activity based on risk capital, investments of business 'angels', co-financing, business incubator, the 'seed' capital, etc., by applying to them a business model Problems in economics and business Change management — There are no corresponding study course / study course content.

Professional Standard of Business Manager (Company Manager) — 4.2.3. Define long-term and short- term business goals and development directions in accordance with the interests of owners, other stakeholders and the public — There are no corresponding study course / study course content  
Professional Standard of Business Manager (Company Manager) — 4.3.6. Organize and manage

sales and sales-related processes — There are no corresponding study course / study course content That means there should be updated study course content to provide full compliance with necessary knowledge for the Business Manager (Company Manager) position.

There is evidence (mentioned in Part I. Assessment of the Study Direction, 2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System) of overlapping study courses as unbelievably many study courses are connected with each demanded knowledge — content of courses are not and should not be so universal. Compliance with professions standard should be updated to make it clear.

When the panel met Bachelor degree graduates, they stated that Russian is very important for the tourism industry and all the Tourism and recreation study programme students favoured more Russian. During the meetings with employers, they said there should be more emphasis on languages (English and Russian). Suggestion from all external interested parties is to improve foreign language teaching as languages are an important part for future graduates of this programme. As there are lots of Russian speaking tourists, that is one of the languages to focus on.

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

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Tourism and Recreation Management" meets the requirements of the professional qualification. Study Programme is implemented with strong connections with employers and with opportunities for students and graduates in nearby areas.

Strengths:

- The aim of the study programme and the outcomes to be achieved are understandable and related to the title of the study programme.
- The parameters characterizing the study program have been developed in accordance with each other.

Weaknesses:

- There is no evidence of full compliance with the Company Managers Profession Standard.
- Lack of emphasis on foreign languages.

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

### **Analysis**

LiepU has offered study programmes related to the Tourism and Hotel industry for more than 20 years. In 2017, it was decided to align the programme with the Professional Standard for Business Manager.

The programme has two sub-directions, in Tourism and Recreation Management.

The duration of the programme is a minimum of 4 years for full-time study and 4 years and 4 months for part-time study.

The fact that the programme is aligned with the professional Standard for Business Manager ensures that students are developed in all the skills and competences needed for business management including Economics, Financial Management, Accounting, Marketing, Human Resource Management, Information Technology, Strategic Management and languages (English, German and Russian). In addition, there are some industry specific modules in Tourism Business Processes, Tourism Product Development, International Tourism and Recreational Tourism Management. The modules in LiepU do not cover some of the modules that are typically covered in Hotel/Tourism Management programmes including Food Hygiene, Food Service and Food Production, Bar Service, Housekeeping and Hotel Reception. It seems to be assumed that the knowledge and skills associated with these activities will be learned during industry practice.

The programme does includes Practice in industry which should account for 20 CP out of a total of

160 PC. Much of this practice is undertaken in tourism industry businesses, especially hotels. The Expert Group met hotel employers who expressed themselves happy to facilitate students though the employers would like to see longer sessions in work practice. Since the current arrangements involve industry sessions in each of the 4 years of the programme, the Expert Group does not see that longer sessions are required. There is, however, a concern about the variety and sequence of experiences that students get.

There is a need for LiepU to document the learning that should be gained in industry. This will require discussion and agreement with employers. As well as documenting what should be learnt, LiepU should set out the sequence in which the various roles in industry should be undertaken. For example, it might be agreed that students should start with food or bar service, then undertake food production and then move to hotel reception. It may well be necessary to support the practice sessions with some theory lectures; for example, food hygiene lectures before students start serving customers.

It should be useful for LiepU to initiate discussions with employers in the tourism/recreation industry to agree the sequence and content of practice sessions in industry.

The current arrangements in LiepU are that the full-time programme can be completed in a minimum of 4 years and the part-time version in 4 years and 4 months. The part-time and full-time versions lead to the same award.

Part-time students attend classes for two days every second week. Thus, they attend for one fifth of the time full-time students attend. It seems out of proportion to claim that part-time students can gain credit points at almost five times the rate of full-time students. There may be some circumstances where a candidate has gained extensive experience in the Tourism and Recreation industry and is currently working at a senior level and for whom it would be appropriate to allow accelerated progress. But LiepU should set out clearly and fairly its policy on advanced entry or accelerated progress.

In experts mind it is not wise to have a full-time programme that takes 4 years and a part-time programme that takes 4 years and 4 months with very little attendance at classes. The description of the part-time programme does not indicate the amount of self-study that a part-time student would have to undertake to justify a degree award in 4 years and 4 months. Accordingly, LiepU should re-consider the duration of part-time completion of the programme.

Students are required to write a final thesis. Unfortunately, as the evaluation of the programme was conducted remotely because of Covid-19, it was not possible for all members of the panel to see examples of the final theses. But the chairperson of the panel did see samples and was happy that the theses were of high quality.

The content of the programme is relevant and it complies with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning programme and meets the needs of the Tourism industry and the scientific trends. In particular, the recent development of e-commerce and the use of computers in the Tourism industry are addressed. While Business subjects are very well covered, it is not clear that technical tourism subjects such as Food Hygiene are covered at all. It's hard to plan proper logistics (that's the content of the programme) without knowledge of food hygiene basics. Especially internal logistics within premises.

The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account. This view was supported by the students and graduates of the programme who spoke to the panel.

The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies.

Some students avail of the incoming and outgoing mobility opportunities but the number who do so should be increased. The European target for students going abroad for part of their programme is 20% of all graduates; the number going abroad in this programme fall far short of this target. And

the system used to recognise learning outcomes achieved and credits earned during such mobility needs to be improved. Briefly, all students going to study abroad should have a signed learning agreement before travelling and on successful completion of the mobility should be given the credits earned.

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

The professional bachelor Study Programme "Tourism and recreation management" was designed and developed in accordance with the vision set by the LiepU Development Strategy. Employers should be invited to serve on a Programme Development Committee. Guest lectures play an important role in this programme and should be timed to suit all. Erasmus exchanges should be encouraged and this involves more attention to languages.

Strengths:

- Good study programme; Tourism and recreation management is important for the country and the region.
- Good possibilities for internships and well-established contacts with employers.
- Employers are supportive of the programme.

Weaknesses:

- The part-time version of the programme has almost the same duration as the full-time version even though student attendance is an average of one day per week.
- Employers are represented at Study Field level and not at programme level. LiepU should consider introducing Programme Development Committees (one for each programme) with teachers and employers as members.
- The current arrangements for awarding students credits for study abroad do not follow best practice. LiepU should insist that all students who go abroad have a Learning Agreement as specified in Erasmus programme and that on successful completion of the learning Agreement, they get the credits specified in it..
- The emphasis on English is not sufficient to facilitate students who want to pursue an international role and should be increased.

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

### **Analysis**

Financial resources of the professional bachelor study programme "Tourism and recreation management" are composed of the government-funded study places that represent a government funding transfer for ensuring the educational process that is distributed within the LiepU in a centralised way, covering reimbursement for teaching and support personnel and other costs. The funds of the study programme make up 18% of the total budget of the study field (SAR Appendix II.3.1.A. Fig.2.).

The premises of the study process provision mainly are located in LiepU building in Liela street 14. Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block (SAR p. 35). The existing material and technical base allows to fully ensure the necessary conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Lectures take place in spacious conference halls, auditoriums, computer classrooms. The auditoriums are equipped with high-quality visual equipment. Students and academic staff have access to a modern library and access to many electronic databases and e-books, as well as information networks (Internet, LiepU net, Moodle). The library stock for this study programme is sufficient. Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, during a visit to the library, experts found that many paper books

have the old year of publication and there are not many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages. However, many e-books and many databases are available, which reduces this gap, taking into account the generally small number of books in Latvian and the cost of books in English, as well as the rapid exchange of information in the tourism and recreation sector. Inspections of material and technical infrastructure carried out during the visit gave a positive impression of LiepU infrastructure quality.

Students of the study programme use computerized applications and software (MS Office, data visualization online tools and software, online media) that are needed for the acquisition of all the study courses in the study programme; these as well as an opportunity of research work of various stages ensure a flexible and student-oriented environment.

Overall, the study foundation, information base (including library), materials and technical base and financial foundation correspond to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions, creating preconditions for the achievements of study outcomes.

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

The resources and provision provided for the successful implementation of the professional bachelor study programme "Tourism and recreation management" are adequate. There is a good infrastructure for lectures, technical equipment and IT support. All the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. LiepU established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students.

In general, the study foundation, information base (including libraries), material and technical base and financial foundation corresponds to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions and create preconditions for the achievement of study outcomes, thus, demonstrating the ability to ensure the delivery of a high-quality study process.

Strengths:

- Sufficient material and technical resource base.
- A well-equipped library available for all students' and teaching staff individual work.

Weaknesses:

- Many paper books have an old year of publication.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

The composition of the teaching staff consists of the teaching staff delivering the lectures on Tourism, sectoral professionals and involvement of foreign teaching staff. There are 34 educators (2019) and 33 educators (2020) who are involved in the implementation of the study programme. In the reporting period, the composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly.

The core Teaching staff delivers the lectures on Tourism and recreation Management, and the composition is provided through the diversity of skills, subjects and sectoral preferences:

- Head of company, from 2014 – June 2019, including 278 training courses
- Math and Computer Science teacher, from 2018 Present Board member
- Travel and tourism vocational teacher, Chairman of the Management Board Sectoral professionals are invited for teaching
- Lecturer of "Recreation Management", "Creative Tourism Product Development", "International Tourism and Globalization"

Foreign teaching staff:

- Klaipeda University of Applied Sciences; Director Deputy for Strategic Development with the

Doctoral thesis related to Business models in tourism business and the publications on Baltics:

- Guest lecturers (SAM projects) - from Holland, who Lecturers specific solutions at the universities of Bucharest (RO), Sofia (BG), Paris (F), Barcelona (ES), Nanjing (China), Liepaja (LV), Riga (LV), Rotterdam (NL), Delft (N L) and Breda (NL)

The knowledge of the Latvian language is the prerequisite to take an elected position in HEIs of Latvia. on the attestation about the compliance of the official language knowledge regarding teaching staff involved in the study direction. The impact provided for the foreign teaching staff: not positive one for the internationalization of the teaching staff.

Regarding the compliance of qualifications, LiepU provides only the data related to 33 lecturers, where 20 are elected including 10 with doctoral degrees (according to SAR, p. 81).

The student/teacher ratio is high (26 students per 28 teachers), used as a proxy for class size. Another issue is about how the academic staff is involved in scientific research and/or artistic creation (in the fields related to the content of the study programme) both at national and international level, and how this information is used in the study process (4.4). There are only few lecturers from the academic staff involved in the scientific research, few graduates are engaged in the study course teaching, and 2 more graduates are activated in the work of the State Examination Commission. SAR does not provide enough information about publications produced for 2019-2020 as well as how it is used in the study process. The additional request was made, and the list of publications was provided for 2019 with additional 3 identified publications for Tourism and recreation management (not reflected in the SAR).

During the meeting, the representative of IT department mentioned that Department helps all staff members, when it is necessary, but it is a standard procedure dealing with the technical issues and problems remotely. At the same time, under the abrupt move to the Moodle platform and online teaching during the past 9 months (from March to December), the teachers had been teaching in the way they could, learning from their own mistakes and tackling things on their own. Referring to quality measures, on the one hand, and about the obvious need for professional training on the online didactics, digital skills and specifics of teaching online for academic staff, on the other hand, and no training opportunities provided during this long time, it is an alarming signal.

During the visit, experts recognized that the teaching staff needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support and additional opportunities and operations provided by Moodle due to the QA and feedback loop.

Referring to the required assessment of „measures in a target-oriented manner to avoid the negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme“ (4.1), as well as the qualification in the implementation of study programme (4.2) it raises the related questions to management. The other planned indicators in a “target-oriented manner” (p.56): Liepājas Universitātes attīstības stratēģija 2016.-2020. gadam - on University Strategy can illustrate that there are some performance indicators, but they have not been used or analysed whether they have been reached or not by 2020 in the Self-Assessment report.

The one sentence about the assessment of cooperation between the teaching staff dated 2017 provided for 4.6 criteria is quite limited. The additional request about the recent publications and the answer that it cannot be provided till April, 2021 - also brought some anxious signals. In the initial Self-Assessment Report, no or limited information is provided about the latest research and involvement of academic staff in the research and artistic creation. The additional request was helpful in terms of getting the number of publications, for 2019, but there is still important information missing for the year of 2020 publications., which could be easily submitted by the academic staff members.

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

The practice-oriented study programme attracts those who are working in tourism. In the reporting

period, the composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly. The stability and permanence of teaching personnel have a positive effect on the quality of studies, as the build-up knowledge, teaching experience, and skills of teaching personnel ensure continuous enhancement and updating of the content of courses in line with the current situation in industries and science. The qualifications of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments and contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes. However, the teaching staff certainly needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support and additional opportunities and operations provided by Moodle due to the QA and feedback loop.

Despite the fact that a part of the academic staff involved in the delivery of the programme are involved in scientific research at the international and national levels, and their research mostly relates to the goal and objectives of the programme, more effort is needed in this area. Increased cooperation and knowledge exchange could be useful in delivering the programme and achievement of learning outcomes. International activities need to be improved to ensure greater international influence for staff and students.

#### Strengths:

- Practice-oriented study with the attraction of the Sectoral professionals. The help from the teachers- practitioners provides the balanced way of teaching combined with academic and practical methods.
- Involvement of graduates in teaching in study programme.
- Students-to-teacher ratio is an excellent one.

#### Weaknesses:

- With the pandemic situation and an abrupt move to online teaching, no organised training provided to the teaching staff on how to teach online with the required digital skills and didactics for teachers.
- Target oriented measures that have been planned in the report 2016-2020 are not used or analysed.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Tourism and recreation management"

### 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:** Sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme (Annex Paraugi\_dipl\_dipl\_pielik\_TurVad\_ENG.pdf) was added to the SAR and complies with the regulations No.202 of the Cabinet of Ministers, "The process of issuing state-recognised higher education documents".

<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/256157-kartiba-kada-izsniedz-valsts-atzitus-augstako-izglitiba-apliecinosud-okumentus>

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:** Cooperation agreement with the Turība University included in the SAR (2019\_akredit\_2.pielikums\_Sadarbibas\_ligumu\_saraksts\_ENG.pdf, 2019\_akredit\_Turiba\_LiepU\_Sadarbiba\_2020.pdf)

- 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:** The higher education institution has an attestation, which confirms that students of the professional bachelor study programme "Tourism and recreation management" are guaranteed indemnity, if due to LiepU action the study programme is not accredited or the study licence is withdrawn and students are not willing to continue studies in another programme in accordance with Study agreement (Clause 2.1.5. of the Section 2.1. LiepU duties).

- 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:** The teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme are proficient in Latvian (Other mandatory attachments: Attestation regarding knowledge of official language (1).pdf)

- 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:** Study agreements comply with regulatory enactments (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 70 " Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi").

- 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 Latvian. The teaching staff have access to a sample, after which descriptions of study courses must be compiled.

The description of the study course defines the requirements for starting the study course, determines the study course implementation goals and planned study results, outlines the content of the study course required to achieve the study results, includes the study course calendar, compulsory literature and additional literature, indicates other sources of information tasks, determine the evaluation criteria of study results. After the meeting with the directors and teaching staff of the study programme, it was concluded that the procedure for preparation and approval of the study course descriptions needs to be improved, because it is of a formal nature.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The study programme mostly corresponds to the valid professional standard and study courses mostly cover the tasks specified in the professional standard. Several tasks defined in the professional standard are considered in several study courses, which could provide a multifaceted vision, but at the same time care must be taken not to overlap the information. However, some study courses should be changed/added to eliminate weak compliance with Company Managers Professional Standard.

- 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 study program complies with the state professional higher education standard. Minimum requirements have been met, requirements such as professional specialization courses and internships in the field have been met even to a slightly greater extent than the minimum specified in the standard.

- 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:** CV's of the academic staff included in the Description of the Study field Annex (CV\_ENG.pdf) outline that academic staff fulfils the criteria outlined in the Law on Higher Education institutions and 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 a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme).

## 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** In general, the bachelor's study program "Tourism and Recreation Management" is well developed. A shortcoming have been identified that are not particularly significant, i.e. mistakes in the study agreement should be corrected and full compliance with the professional standard should be ensured.

## 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:** Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block. LiepU is financially self-sustainable, thus admitting the planned number of students to the study programme it shall be able to carry out all the responsibilities. The university has a library where materials for the implementation of the study programme are available. The materials are regularly updated, taking into account course descriptions and other recommendations.

Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, many paper books have the old year of publication and there are not many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages. However, many e-books and many databases are available, which reduces this gap, taking into account the generally small number of books in Latvian and the cost of books in English, as well as the rapid exchange of information in the tourism and recreation sector.

- 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 has the necessary academic staff its implementation.

- 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 professional bachelor Study Programme "Tourism Management and Recreation" meets the requirements of the professional qualification. The programme is well designed and meets the State Education and Professional Standards.

The programme is delivered in close cooperation with industry and practice placements in industry is an important feature of the programme. The periods in industry are not well documented and should be structured in a sequence for optimum effect. Foreign languages should be strengthened and Erasmus exchanges should be developed. The arrangements for part-time version in 4 years and 4 months warrants further consideration.

Strengths:

- The programme has been running successfully for more than 20 years and attracts a reasonable number of students.
- The programme meets the State Education Standard and the Professional Standard for "Company

Manager”.

- Graduates of the programme are happy to provide practice placements for students, to give guest lectures and to employ graduates.

Weaknesses:

- While Business subjects are very well covered, it is not clear that technical tourism subjects such as Food Hygiene are covered at all.

- The practice sessions in industry are an important part of the programme but are not well documented or sequenced.

- The number of Erasmus or other exchanges is very low and needs to be addressed.

- The part-time version of the programme has almost the same duration as the full-time version even though student attendance is an average of one day per week.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Tourism and recreation management"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Tourism and recreation management"**

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

There is weak compliance with Company Managers Professional Standard that has to be fixed — beginning of the 2021. study year.

LiepU should re-consider the duration of part-time completion of the programme.

Plan on Internationalisation from 2021 and forward should be drafted.

Provide the required analysis of trends in internationalization and cooperation linked to the short-term and long term basis.

In the study agreement, indicate the student's declared address of residence.

Provide an analysis of your target indicators according to your strategy 2021-2025 with the check by each year.

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

Fix overlapping study course content — 2 years.

There is a place for additional focus on foreign languages (Russian etc.) as languages are very important for future graduates of this program — 2 years.

LiepU should initiate discussions with employers in the tourism/ recreation industry to agree the sequence and content of practice sessions in industry.

LiepU should to develop a system of student exchanges for the programme Tourism and Recreation Management.

The plan of teaching staff, their development plans, etc. should be prepared with the targets/KPIs/indicated measures.

Organise the online training with the didactic skills and digital teaching with the specifics and additional opportunities provided by Moodle platform for teaching staff.

The teaching of selected courses in English could be introduced for every study programme, with the preliminary training on digital platform (how to teach in digital platform, courses of didactics).

Develop additional motivation for the involvement of academic staff into research and publication activities.

Provide the training for the research methodology as well as the specifics in qualitative and quantitative technique for the members of young academic staff (involvement of graduates in teaching); and those who need it as the way to improve the research skills and qualifications.

## **II. "Management Sciences" ASSESSMENT**

### **II. "Management Sciences" ASSESSMENT**

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

##### **Analysis**

The professional Master Study Programme "Management Sciences" (Code of the study programme in accordance with the Latvian Education Classification 47345) meets the requirements of the 7th level of Latvian Qualification Framework and the 5th level of the professional qualification. The length of full-time studies is 1 or 2 years, i.e., 40 or 80 Latvian credit points (60 or 120 ECTS). Programme is implemented in Latvian language. Degree to be obtained: Professional Master's Degree according to the selected sub-direction: Management Sciences in Business Management, in Management Sciences in Society's Management, in Management Sciences in Education Management. Professional Qualification: Organizational Manager (in LiepU SAR mentioned Manager of an Organization). The programme is organised on the basis that common modules (those taken by all students) are in Part A while the specialisations for the sub-directions in Business Management, Public Management and Educational Management take place in Part B where differences in course content occur and / or when orientation towards a particular sub-direction takes place.

Programme ensures the acquisition of relevant professional competences in a particular field and develops abilities to plan and perform research and scientific work in the field. Study Course descriptions for this programme should be updated and some study courses changed / added. There is weak compliance with Professional Standard:

Risk management — There is no corresponding study course / study course content.

Sources of internal and external environmental risks — There are no corresponding study course / study course content

Basic principles of circular economy — There is no corresponding study course / study course content

These missing topics are very important for the future Manager of an Organization.

There is big doubt about possibility to allow a student to graduate Master Study Programme "Management Sciences" in only one year as in that case there are many more missing points, 7 of them are crucial:

- 1) Innovation technologies
- 2) Organizational culture, its elements
- 3) Theories and principles of professional ethics and social responsibility
- 4) Organizational theory
- 5) Project management

- 6) Quality Management
- 7) Intercultural communication
- 8) Information technology opportunities and potential risks
- 9) Security of electronic information
- 10) Critical thinking
- 11) Innovation management
- 12) Change and crisis management approaches
- 13) Crisis communication
- 14) Habits of effective managers
- 15) Project management methods
- 16) Requirements of applicable laws and regulations
- 17) Time planning
- 18) Information technology for data processing, analysis and management

In total there are 1/5 from Professional Standard not implemented. There is no evidence that these topics are covered in other Study Courses while Appendix No.7 approved the doubts. There should be other procedures to approve qualification in a 1 year long studies case, when so many Study Courses are skipped. LiepU explained that in the programme with duration of 1 (one) year the qualification HAS NOT BEEN awarded, only the degree has been awarded. Therefore, conformity with Professional Standard for a one year programme is not applicable. Experts can't find the information that there are any differences between the programmes in LiepU submitted documents. SAR talks only about degree and qualification in both lengths and there are no differences indicated in Parameters part: "Study programme forms". In this case LiepU should revise the admissions requirements for 1 year long programme underlining previous professional qualification.

There is evidence (mentioned in Part I. Assessment of the Study Direction, 2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System) of overlapping study courses as unbelievably many study courses are connected with each demanded knowledge — content of courses are not and should not be so universal.

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

The professional Master Study Programme "Management Sciences" meets the requirements of the professional qualification. However, the programme several weak points starting with 1 year-long studies that can't assure good enough coverage of demanded professional knowledge and in this programme should be more precise compliance with Manager of an Organization Professional Standard. There should be other procedures to approve qualification in a 1 year long studies case, when many missing topics or to revise the admissions requirements underlining previous professional qualification. The programme is organised on the basis that common modules (those taken by all students) are in Part A while the specialisations for the sub-directions in Business Management, Public Management and Educational Management take place in Part B and in the study placement and during the writing of the Master's thesis, where differences in course content occur and / or when orientation towards a particular sub-direction (Business Management, Society's Management or Education Management) takes place.

Weaknesses:

- There is no evidence of full compliance with the Manager of an Organization.
- It is necessary to revise the admissions requirements underlining previous professional qualification for 1 year- long studies as there is no evidence or no procedure to approve qualification, when so many Study Courses are skipped.
- Outdated important Study Course descriptions / content, missing important topics in studies.

## 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

### Analysis

LiepU has offered a Master's degree for 13 years. The programme was offered originally with a duration of 2.6 years for students who had completed an academic 3-year degree programme but could be completed in 1.6 years by those who had successfully completed a Professional Higher second Level Education and it has been successful (if correctly understood from its SAR). Recently the duration of the Master's degree was reduced to 2 years for those who had an academic 3-year degree and 1 year for those with a Professional Higher Second Level Education (Appendix 9.2.). The proposed 1 year programme has been approved by the State Education as has the 2-year Master's degree programme. The programme has also been considered compliant with the Professional Standard "Manager of an Organisation". Moreover, the results of survey showed that 2.6 year programme is assessed by students as "Good" and the content of information is assessed as "Very good", whereas 1.6 year programme is assessed as "Average" (SAR; p.135), and in terms of its content is even lower (Notes: the numbers are provided in the absolute terms, not in the percentage term, and the answer "bad" is also available in survey). The possibility of a 1-year Master's degree is allowed under the Latvian Framework of Qualifications; it is also allowed within the European Qualifications Framework. The EQF requires a minimum of 60 ECTS and that can be earned in one academic year. Most European universities have 2-year Master's programmes (120 ECTS credits). A one-year Master's degree would be considered inferior to other Masters. Thus, there is an evidence to think that the reduced 1.6 year's programme to 1 year will be reflected even in the lower quality's projections. In addition, there is a higher number of drop-outs - 18% in 2019 (all paid for their studies).

SAR, (p. 128) refers to the other numbers of ECTS credits: 160 credit points (240 ECTS) (p.128). At the same time, it is not clear why admission requirements are the same for the study programme with 40 CP (for 1-year duration) and with 80 CP (for 2 years' duration) (p.126). According to Latvian system, it means that by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by a factor of 1.5 it would be 60 ECTS and 120 ECTS. Thus, there are various calculations for ECTS here (for 1 year and 2 years), on the one hand, but the programme duration is still 1.6 and 2.6 years' study programme till December 2020) – and it should be analysed.

The justification (during online interviews) for the reduction of 1.6 year to 1-year programme and 2.6 to 2 years is based on the exclusion of 3 subjects as a result of the negative students' evaluation.

In Ireland and UK there are often universities that allow 1 year and 3 months to complete a Master's (90 ECTS credits) in 1 year and 3 months; this is one academic year and 3 months in the summer. The summer period is used to complete the Master's thesis.

One of the reasons that LiepU gave to the Expert group was it wanted to stay in step with some other Latvian HEIs who had moved to a 1-year programme. LiepU should give some further consideration to the duration of the Master's programme to avoid it being categorised as a low-level Master's.

Faced with a declining population in Latvia, LiepU is planning to create more Master's degrees including a joint programme in Culture and Tourism. It has stated that it is seeking a European partner that offers such a joint programme. It might consider the University of Padova (Italy), Berlin Business School (Germany) or Napier University (Scotland) as all three offer such a programme. Of course, the language of tuition may not suit LiepU.

Each student is required to complete a thesis as part of the Master's degree programme. As the evaluation of the programme was completely remotely because of Covid-19, it was not possible for all panel members to see examples of theses. However, the chairperson of the panel did see copies of theses and was satisfied with their standard.

The content of the programme is relevant and complementary and it complied with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of

industry and the scientific trends.

The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account. During the meetings students and graduates confirmed their satisfaction with the teaching methods.

Out of 3 sub-directions - business management, society's management, and education management, there is a recommendation provided specifically for education management in terms of the graduates' future employment. The recommended typical job provided in SAR is a state or municipal institution and government structures (vaguely explained in SAR: "do business on different levels of governance", p. 129). Therefore, it is expected, that other recommendations are to be added for the typical jobs related to other sub-programmes: society management and Business management.

Education only partly compiles with students' job responsibilities (50%) and do not comply with them at all (20%). According to the survey, 80% think that the programme does not comply with the newest development trends (only 40% partly agree, and 40% partly disagree"

Some contradictions are noticed in the SAR, in terms of subjects to be delivered. There is a wide range of subjects delivered: Economics, management subjects: "Macroeconomics: analysis and policies", "Modern management theories", "Public relations inter-cultural communication", "Process efficiency methods", "Public management", "Education management theory and practice". At the same time, the goal of this study programme (written in the SAR) makes emphasis not only on Economics and Management (listed here as "economic, management, communication science cognitions"), but also on the social and organizational psychology, Information technologies; Pedagogy, and Sociology, which are missing here. It has been mentioned, that this study programme promotes "acquisition of innovative knowledge and skills", especially in "knowledge management, which is important precondition for the company's competitiveness increase in labour market" (SAR; p. 128). Therefore, it is recommended to include "Knowledge management" course within this master programme, because the LiepU outlined goal is "acquisition of innovative knowledge and skills in management sciences, especially in knowledge management" (p.128, SAR). LiepU also outlines that "during the studies a multidisciplinary approach to management studies is provided on the basis of social and organizational psychology, pedagogy, sociology, ...". Therefore, the subjects of Sociology, Pedagogy and "Organisational Psychology" should also be included in the regular curricula. In addition, the requirements towards pedagogy have been increased in the light of digital teaching and didactics, and the European trends. The programme will greatly benefit from acquiring these subjects from these perspectives.

Some courses are outdated in their content and literature, but they are still approved at the Council meeting of the Faculty of Management and Social sciences, minutes No 04, 17.01.2020.

One of the examples is the course "Staff Record-Keeping and Work Organization". It is not clear, what is the rationale behind this particular course, especially now, when the courses are updated every year. Analysis of this course (p. 49. of so-called "Program structure of the study course" show that (a) it has no modern source of foreign literature; (b) the literature in Latvian language is 22 years old and has not been updated for the last 10 years:

1. LR 29.10.1998. „Informācijas atklātības likums”
2. LR 09.12.1999. „Valsts valodas likums” LR 01.01.2011. „Arhīvu likums”
3. LR 20.06.2001. „Darba likums”
4. LR 31.10.2002. „Elektronisko dokumentu likums”
5. LR 01.01.2008. „Iesniegumu likums”

Another paradox, that the course: "Information technologies in organisation management" does not include any sources of modern literature, the source how to work with Excel is also outdated, the Latvian literature is limited (1 main source only), and it does not provide any date of publication (year).

According to surveys' results, current work placements are linked to "pédagogique" and "teacher" (20%), (SAR, p. 136) and 30% to internal auditing and economics functions (30%). There are not enough subjects with data science and analytical models (the additional subjects like Sociology, Pedagogy, Knowledge Management and Organisational Psychology will compensate these gaps). Therefore, the subjects of Sociology, Pedagogy and "Organisational Psychology" should be included in the regular curricula. In addition, the requirements towards pedagogy have been increased in the light of digital teaching and didactics, and the European trends. The programme will greatly benefit from acquiring these subjects from these perspectives.

The results of survey and interviews (9-10 December, 2020), show that 80% of students are studying and working simultaneously. The results showed that students need to have much more practically oriented courses, "practical knowledge" and more cooperation with companies, students' request for "provision of more practical knowledge", as well as the skills and competences according to "modern labour market conditions" (where 40% of students disagree with this statement, and 20% - only partly agree).

The outcomes of the surveys conducted among the students, employers and graduates are used to improve the quality of studies. Current students who spoke to the panel confirmed that they had recently been surveyed on suggested improvements.

The students have been made aware of mobility opportunities though very few avail of the opportunity. Of the 13 students or graduates of the programme who spoke to the panel, only one went on a mobility programme (to Finland). Reasons given for not going included family commitments and jobs they held in Latvia which would not allow them to travel. The one person who did travel had no difficulty in getting recognition for the credits earned abroad.

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

It is good to have a Master's degree to allow Bachelor degree holders to upgrade their qualification. For some graduates it was a step to promotion. SAR, (p. 128) refers to the other numbers of ECTS credits: 160 credit points (240 ECTS) (p.128). At the same time, it is not clear why admission requirements are the same for the study programme with 40 CP (for 1 year duration) and with 80 CP (for 2 years' duration) (p.126). According to Latvian system, it means that by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by a factor of 1.5 it would be 60 ECTS and 120 ECTS. Thus, there are various calculations for ECTS here (for 1 year and 2 years), on the one hand, but the programme duration is still 1.6 and 2.6 years' study programme till December 2020) - and it should be analysed. The reduction in the duration of the programme to 1 year was controversial. It is permissible under Latvian Framework of Qualifications and EQF but it is at the minimum level. Consideration should be given to increasing the duration to one academic year plus the summer months.

#### **Strengths:**

- The availability of a Master's degree offer graduates from the Bachelor degrees an opportunity to gain a Master's degree which they may need for promotion.

#### **Weaknesses:**

- The decision to reduce the duration of the programme to 1 year puts the programme at the lowest level among European Master's degrees; it should be re-considered.
- LiePU finds it difficult to participate in international joint programmes because it does not have sufficient modules taught through English or other international language.

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

#### **Analysis**

Financial resources of the professional master study programme "Management Sciences" are composed of the government-funded study places that represent a government funding transfer for ensuring the educational process that is distributed within the LiepU in a centralised way, covering reimbursement for teaching and support personnel and other costs. The funds of the study programme make up 21% of the total budget of the study field (SAR Appendix II.3.1.A. Fig.2.).

The premises of the study process provision mainly are located in LiepU building in Liela street 14. Study infrastructure is appropriate and available for every native and foreign student, staff member, guest-lecturer, administrative block (SAR p. 35). The existing material and technical base allows to fully ensure the necessary conditions for the implementation of the study programme. Lectures take place in spacious conference halls, auditoriums, computer classrooms. The auditoriums are equipped with high-quality visual equipment. Students and academic staff have access to a modern library and access to many electronic databases and e-books, as well as information networks (Internet, LiepU net, Moodle). The library stock for this study programme is sufficient. Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, during a visit to the library, experts found that many paper books have the old year of publication and there are not many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages. However, many e-books and many databases are available for both teachers and students. Inspections of material and technical infrastructure carried out during the visit gave a positive impression of LiepU infrastructure quality.

Students of the study programme use computerized applications and software (MS Office, SPSS, data visualization online tools and software, online media) that are needed for the acquisition of all the study courses in the study programme; these as well as an opportunity of research work of various stages ensure a flexible and student-oriented environment.

Overall, the study foundation, information base (including library), materials and technical base and financial foundation correspond to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions, creating preconditions for the achievement of study outcomes.

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

The resources and provision provided for the successful implementation of the professional master study programme "Management Sciences" are adequate. There is a good infrastructure for lectures, technical equipment and IT support. All the students and the teaching staff have access to the necessary resources to ensure the quality of teaching and learning process. LiepU established a well-functioning support system, based on the needs of the students.

In general, the study foundation, information base (including libraries), material and technical base and financial foundation corresponds to the specifics of both the study programme and implementation conditions and create preconditions for the achievement of study outcomes, thus, demonstrating the ability to ensure the delivery of a high-quality study process.

Strengths:

- Sufficient material and technical resource base.
- A well-equipped library available for all students' and teaching staff individual work.

Weaknesses:

- Many paper books have the old year of publication.

## **4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

There are 15 educators involved in the implementation of the study programme (SAR, annex 2019\_akredit\_II.3.6.A.pielikums\_iesaistitie\_pasniedzēji\_EN.pdf). In the reporting period, the

composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly. There is a specific here (due to Master programme), that in the composition of staff, for the first time, there are also researchers of other research groups/institutes involved in teaching. Thus, the teaching staff's composition includes (1) academic selected staff, in addition to (2) researchers of scientific institutes who teach in this programme, (3) internationally invited/ guest lectures (within SAM project /Erasmus+). According to the list provided in the SAR for 15 members of teaching staff, and all CV are provided. There are 57% (8 of them) with the doctoral degrees (PhD, DBA, etc....), therefore, from the formal requirements' points of view, there should be quite good impact on the study quality.

From the description of this particular study programme, it is becoming quite evident that the local staff of LiepU is not gender-balanced: there is a predominant number of female-teachers, and it seems that there is a lack of men-teachers.

The examples of the involvement are limited to few examples and more than 3 years old. The content of the information in the study process (course description) show that there is no links between the modern research linked to the practices and theories. The ratio of students per teacher in this study programme is 3.4 students per teacher here, a good one.

There is a contradiction in numbers: the information provided by the request of experts, in addition to this Report - was provided with the mistakes in numbers for this study programme. The SAR also does not provide the number of full-time teachers, but only the elected one (p. 139). Moreover, it provides it by name, degree and the subject they teach.

Master programme of Management Sciences is especially expected to have the level of publications higher than other study programmes. The list of additionally requested and submitted publications for 2019, identifies the limited number of papers 1- or 2 which might be related to this Master programme. The list of the publications of the academic staff (SAR annex II. Description of the Study Direction - 4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation: 2019\_akredit\_macibspeku\_publikacijas\_II.4.4.A.pielikums.pdf and updated information sent by the LiepU by the request) outline that academic staff fulfils the criteria, however four lecturers didn't have any publication at all and also many of lecturers have the only 1 or 2 publications in local proceedings. LiepU informed experts, that starting with study year 2020/2021, in the framework of study direction the number of publications and participation in conferences are as compulsory requirements in the work agreement.

Diversity should be very important priority for the LiepU - in languages, in mobility, and in internationalisation, and international conferences.

Delivering lectures in English/ Russian languages are becoming the scientific and business needs, and therefore, the preferences should be given those who operate these languages.

During the visit experts recognized that the teaching staff needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support and additional opportunities and operations provided by Moodle due to the QA and feedback loop.

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

In the reporting period, the composition of teaching personnel did not change significantly. The composition of teaching staff includes academic teachers and sectoral professionals. More than half (57%) of teaching staff is with the doctoral degree (PhD, DBA etc.). The qualification of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements of the study programme and the requirements of regulatory enactments and contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes. More effort is needed in the area of involving of teaching staff in the scientific research at the international and national levels. Increased cooperation and knowledge exchange could be useful in delivering the programme and achievement of learning outcomes. International activities need to be improved to ensure greater international influence for staff and students.

LiepU informed experts that a handbook for the use and acquisition of the e-environment is available on Moodle system and starting with January 2021, lecturer trainings regularly take place for the acquisition and development of the Moodle system. However, the quality of online teaching is in place not only according to the Moodle using, but through the provision of the professional online training with all interactive practices to be embedded. During the visit, experts recognized that the teaching staff needs the training for online digital and didactic skills, training and technological support due to the QA and feedback loop.

**Strengths:**

- Good Ratio of students per teacher.
- International cooperation is present.

**Weaknesses:**

- With the pandemic situation and an abrupt move to online teaching, no organised training provided to the teaching staff on how to teach online with the required digital skills and didactics for teachers.
- Lack of publications and scientific work at the international and national levels.

## **5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Management Sciences"**

### **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:** Complies with the regulations No.202 of the Cabinet of Ministers, "The process of issuing state-recognized higher education documents". The diploma sample is provided (Annex section of the Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments: Paraugi\_dipl\_dipl\_pielik\_VadZin\_ENG.pdf).

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:** The cooperation agreement with the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (Annex section of the Description of the Study Direction - Other mandatory attachments: Sadarbibas\_ligums\_LiepU\_VentspilsA.pdf . Document is only in Latvian).

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:** The Statement that LiepU guarantees compensation for damages caused to the student if, due to LiepU conduct (act or omission), the study direction "Management, administration and real estate management" is not accredited or the licenses of the study programmes belonging to the study direction are withdrawn, or the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme (Annex section of the Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments: ATTESTATION - Management Science (1).pdf).

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:** Lecturers involved in the implementation of the study program are proficient in the official language (Annex Description of the Study Programme - Other mandatory attachments: Attestation regarding knowledge of official language (1).pdf).

- 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:** Study agreements comply with regulatory enactments (Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 70 "Studiju līgumā obligāti ietveramie noteikumi").

- 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:** Study courses and study materials have been prepared in Latvian and English and they comply with requirements (Annex III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof:

AKREDITACIJA\_Studiju\_kursu\_apraksti\_VADZ\_2020\_EN.pdf).

- 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:** The programme with duration of 2 (two) years complies with the competencies and skills defined in the professional standard

<https://visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-114.pdf>

According to the information provided by LiepU the programme with duration of 1 (one) year the qualification HAS NOT BEEN awarded, only the degree has been awarded. Conformity with Professional Standard for a one year programme is not applicable.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** LiepU professional Master's study programme "Management Sciences" has been elaborated in accordance with the Cabinet Regulations No512 of August 26, 2014 "Regulations on the national standard of the second level professional higher education"

<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=268761>. The 2 years long programme comply also with Manager of an Organization Professional Standard. According to the information provided by LiepU the programme with duration of 1 (one) year the qualification HAS NOT BEEN awarded. Therefore, conformity with Professional Standard for a one year programme is not applicable. In this case LiepU should revise the admissions requirements underlining previous relevant professional qualification for 1 year long study programme.

- 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:** The list of the publications of the academic staff (SAR annex II. Description of the Study Direction - 4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation:

2019\_akredit\_macibspeku\_publicikijas\_II.4.4.A.pielikums.pdf and updated information sent by the LiepU by the request) outline that academic staff fulfils the criteria, however four lecturers didn't have any publication at all and also many of lecturers have the only 1 or 2 publications in local proceedings.

- 15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Not all of the criterias are being met. The LiepU has confirmed that there is a technical error in the report SAR, (p. 128), and the credit points to be obtained in this program are 60 ETC for a one-year program and 120 ETC for a 2-year program, which is correct when converting Latvian system credit points to ETC. According to Latvian system, it means that by multiplying the number of Latvian credit points by a factor of 1.5 it would be 60 ECTS and 120 ECTS. Thus, there are various calculations for ECTS here (for 1 year and 2 years), on the one hand, but the programme duration is still 1.6 and 2.6 years' study programme till December 2020) – and it should be analysed. There is no certainty that all the necessary skills can be acquired during the year. Some skills are not taught at all in the course, such as risk management. LiepU should revise the admissions requirements underlining previous relevant professional qualification for 1 year long 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:** Resources and provisions (study base, science base, information base (including library), material and technical base and financial base) of the study programme fully complies with the conditions for its implementation. Despite the fact that library is well-equipped, many paper books have the old year of publication and there are not many new books, especially in English and Latvian languages. However, many e-books and many databases are available for both teachers and students.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The qualification of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme not fully complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions concerning the study programme implementation in a university type higher education institution.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Courses content is planned and implemented according to the standards. The content of the program consists of study courses, which not fully ensure the advanced acquisition of the latest achievements in the theory and practice of the field. The Master's thesis itself contains an empirical study of the actual situation in the economy, realizing the management science settings for the development of the organization and the corresponding rights that ensure it.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The professional Master Study Programme "Management Sciences" meets the requirements of the professional qualification. The content of the programme is relevant and complementary and it complied with the aims of the study programme, ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes, and meets the needs of industry and the scientific trends. The study implementation methods, including the evaluation methods, contribute to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study courses and the study programme. Student-centred learning and teaching principles are taken into account. One of the reasons that LiepU gave to the Expert group was it wanted to stay in step with some other Latvian HEIs who had moved to a 1-year programme. A one-year Master's degree would be considered inferior to other Masters. Thus, there is an evidence to think that the reduced 1.6 year's programme to 1 year will be reflected even in the lower quality's projections. LiepU should give some further consideration to the duration of the Master's programme to avoid it being categorised as a low-level Master's.

### Strengths:

- The program is important for the development of the country and the region and has good cooperation with employers and municipalities.

### Weaknesses:

- LiepU should revise the admissions requirements underlining previous relevant professional qualification for 1 year long study programme to meet all necessary requirements.
- Technical issues in self-assessment report documents mostly connected with the translation from Latvian to English and typewriting mistakes.
- A small choice of subjects in English.
- Lack of guest lectures from Latvia and abroad.

- Descriptions of study courses in the curriculum are sometimes very different.
- In some documents, the translation of the study programme in the English language differs.
- Inclusion of “Knowledge management” course within this master programme. Manager’s Professional and Psychological Competence in a Modern Organization partly replaces “Organisational Psychology” (and not social one), but the subjects of Pedagogy and Sociology required in the defined goal are still missing.

## **Evaluation of the study programme "Management Sciences"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

## **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Management Sciences"**

### **Short-term recommendations**

There should be updated study course content to provide full compliance with necessary knowledge for Manager of the Organization position — beginning of 2021. study year

Solve situation for 1 year Master studies programme as at the moment it's content don't covers professional qualifications demands — 1 month

Improve the descriptions of study courses.

Indicate the student's declared address of residence in the study agreement,

Develop the target indicators in the number of conferences, articles, publications and internationalisation for this particular programme for the future period of 2021-2025.

### **Long-term recommendations**

Fix overlapping study course content — 2 years

Create a system to collect employers survey regularly.

Create a strategy and plan to invite more guest lectures from Latvia and abroad.

Organise the online training with the didactic skills and digital teaching with the specifics and additional opportunities provided by Moodle platform for teaching staff.

Provide the training for the research methodology as well as the specifics in qualitative and quantitative technique to raise the number of scientifically-published articles in the professional journals.

Develop additional motivation for the involvement of academic staff into research and publication activities.

## **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:	Partially compliant	There is quality assurance system in LiepU, but the system doesn't ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness. As it works only partially (in general involving only elected academic staff), improvements and effectiveness are only partial. There are only partially appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints (ESG 1.3); LiepU has to have primary responsibility for the quality of their staff, but procedures don't ensure that. (ESG 1.5), they should not only collect and analyse relevant information for the effective management of their programmes and other activities, but also use it for improvements (ESG 1.7), and that's not done at the moment.
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.	Partially compliant	There are both national and international contacts and contracts that support reaching study directions targets. (Appendix No. 2 "Sadarbības līgumu saraksts"). However, the procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study direction which are efficient and contribute to the improvement of the study process haven't been established. The unified system for the organization and ensurement of the internships in the LiepU also not established.
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).	Partially compliant	There are evidence of scientific activities despite of low set targets within Appendix II.1.3.A "Study Field of "Management, administration and real estate management" Development Plan 2018 - 2023". There is a need for greater involvement in international cooperation. The teaching staff is aware of the necessity of scientific research, but only few of them are involved in scientific projects. Involvement in international research projects should be improved.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
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	There are several very important recommendations that remain also for next period and are not eliminated. For example, there should be more cooperation with private business and more employers and graduates should take part in decision-making processes that were not implemented and now resulted in LiepU bad performance in various aspects that are mentioned earlier about involvement.

### 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	Business and organization management (42345)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Average
2	Culture management (42345)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good
3	Tourism and recreation management (42345)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Fully compliant	Not relevant	Good
4	Management Sciences (47345)	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Average

### The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

There were no cases of experts' disagreement during the evaluation of the study direction "Management, administration and real estate management".