

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: Baltic International Academy

Study field: Psychology

Experts:

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## Summary Assessment of the Study Field

### Summary Assessment of the Study Field

The study field “Psychology” at the Baltic International Academy (hereinafter – BSA) has defined clear, attainable goals and has appropriate institutional support to attain them, as they match the strategic goals of BSA. This includes appropriate administrative support and an all-involved decision-making process that includes all internal parties. The institution has clear, publicly available regulatory documentation regarding all administrative and study process procedures like admissions, recognition of previous studies and experiences, evaluation of study outcomes. The efficiency of the internal quality assurance system for BSA is average. A policy exists and regulates the development of new study programmes and the review of their objectives, they collect statistical data regarding student enrolment, graduation, etc, have a procedure for handling complaints, develop various policies and strategies to reflect the objectives of BSA. Regarding the resources available to the study field, they are limited. Understandably, the main source of finances is tuition fees, and BSA provides a variety of discounts that are very attractive to students. Regarding material resources, it is well that all premises of BSA are their property that is also rented to other institutions for extra income; the properties are well developed and spacious, and the Daugavpils branch also shows modern and appropriate learning environments, however the same cannot be said for Liepaja branch. Regarding human resources, the academic staff is very experienced and qualified in the field and has a long working relationship with BSA, that proves to be good for institutional loyalty.

Unfortunately, the current situation does not reflect well-developed and functioning quality assurance mechanisms, as the system does not seem to ensure continuous improvement and development of the study field and the study programmes, and has several drawbacks in compliance with European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). The teaching methods in BSA branches are not up to modern standards and are not appropriate for in-person learning, and there was no assurance that BSA is technically able to provide branches with appropriate teaching methods; and it is unclear what basis there is for having a programme in English in branches, as the branches note there will be no demand for it. The staff also has poor foreign language skills, the state language is also insufficiently developed throughout the institution, while the younger generation of staff is poorly involved in the management processes, which can indicate future difficulties in sustaining BSA and providing quality study process. There is also insufficient support for academic staff research endeavours – publications, conferences, etc. Overall, BSA lacks a sustainable financial model and unified systems for material and methodological resource base improvement and provision, and, considering that 3/9 previous recommendations also touched on insufficient funding and planning, experts suggest conducting an in-depth analysis of the available resources and identification of opportunities for the future. BSA needs to ensure that its financial management structures are clear and unambiguous, that responsibility for them is assigned, and they are coherent with other decision-making processes. Methodological resources at the library are many, however, the library contains largely literature in Russian, as well as lacking specialised literature in work psychology, that would be required for the new masters’ programme; the provision of new materials is demand-based, not planned. The academic integrity and plagiarism systems, despite having enough documentation, are not clear and transparent, and experts believe there is not sufficient evidence that BSA uses programs for detecting plagiarism or other inappropriate practices. The importance and need to increase international cooperation has also been recognized by BSA but measures to tackle this challenge have not been very successful due to their historical precedent of cooperation with mostly Russian-speaking countries and institutions, which is now more difficult due to changes in language legislation. Students and staff also note that the publicly available information about mobility opportunities (Erasmus+ and others) is outdated and it is difficult to attain the wanted information, which may be part of the reason for low mobility. Overall, although

some improvements have been made and base requirements met, the quality of the study field has not improved notably (considering previous recommendations) since the last accreditation. The study programmes in the field are directly influenced by the strengths and weaknesses of the study field. The programmes are well structured, imply established feedback systems and analysis, and are overall well managed. The bachelor programme in branches has very small numbers of students, that makes it difficult for facility improvement, e.g. libraries that have very little specialized literature in Latvian and English, however this gives room for individual teaching approaches and student-centred learning. The bachelor programme also has had long-standing development at BSA and stays up to date with academic standards, although not many foreign guest lecturers are invited, which also stands to be part of the language knowledge issue at large. For the masters' programme, despite having an entry requirement for language proficiency, it only applies to foreign students, not to nationals. The lack of command of a second language at a university level limits opportunities, e.g. the ability to pursue doctoral studies, or continue any studies abroad. It also has issues with compliance with labour market requirements, it has been identified that no notable market analysis has been done regarding the necessity of work psychologists, therefore making the masters level programme professional specialisation lack a tangible basis for implementation. For one, during meetings with employers and graduates none were tied to work psychology or could note its' necessity in the market around them. Overall, the cooperation with employers and graduates must be improved, as the current system of surveying only includes immediate surveying at graduation and employer cooperation during practice, not after some time in the labour market or receiving the graduates at a workplace for employees.

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

### **Analysis**

According to the documentation collected from the institution, the Baltic International Academy (BSA) is a modern higher education institution (hereinafter – HEI), which, in connection with research in the humanities and social sciences, provides higher education opportunities of various types and levels to the residents of Latvia and other countries (Ref. Chapter 1.1. of Information on the Higher Education Institution/College of Self assessment).

BSA has established a quality policy and has developed and maintains a quality assurance system that contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programmes. The procedures for the development and review of the study programmes of the study field and the feedback mechanisms are defined, and they are logical and the aims of the study field are clearly defined and attainable.

The study programmes of the study field "Psychology" are implemented following the principles of the Bologna Declaration, the relevant laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia and the normative, strategic and development documents of the BSA (Ref. Chapter 1.1. of Bologna Declaration, the relevant laws and regulations of Self-assessment).

After reviewing the documentation, the studies are in accordance with the professional development BSA wants to offer, although this does not correspond to the demand of the labour market for psychology professionals.

This criterion is met at least regarding the design of the established programmes. Student support and student-centred learning are the current development areas for BSA and there is some progress.

There is an evident lack of preparation for students based on a specific branch or subject, with little value and training being given to the most demanded professional opportunities expressed by graduated students in the interviews.

About management (administration) of the study field and the relevant study programmes and attending to the objectives set:

The aim of the academic bachelor's study programme "Psychology" is to enable students to obtain basic academic education in psychology, to develop theoretical knowledge and research skills in the field of psychology and related fields, to develop analytical and critical thinking skills, communication skills and to develop skills for independent problem-solving and decision-making (Ref. 1.2.I - Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)).

The aim of the professional master's study programme "Psychology" is to develop and deepen practical skills as well as to increase the theoretical knowledge and understanding of psychology, to obtain a professional master's degree in psychology and qualification "Psychologist" (Ref. 1.2.I - Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)).

After reviewing the documentation, the study field and the study programmes mostly comply with the prescribed requirements and are in accordance with national and European normatives.

There is an adequate administrative structure to attend to the students regarding their enrollment process and resolve any questions related to their studies. That structure includes a Senate, Arbitration court of BSA, Student parliament, and administrative departments (Ref. BIA Branch\_2020\_1.docx).

BSA has a well-established and viable administrative and technical support system. During the onsite visit, it was proved by the students and lecturers, who mentioned the positive quality of support services.

However, the interview revealed a lack of knowledge in students about some resources available at the institution itself, and although the centre appears to provide the required guidance, it is insufficient to meet all the demands of the students.

Admission of graduates to BSA takes place following the Regulations "Admission Regulations and Matriculation Procedures at the Baltic International Academy" (23.10.2019, Minutes No 140) approved by the BSA Senate (<https://bsa.edu.lv/en/provisions-and-statements/>). To organize the admission of students to the academy, admission commissions are established for the current study year by the order of the BSA rector or branch managers (1.5. Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)).

The intake system is established and clear, for the most general cases. Despite establishing an access criterion regarding the level of English, this only applies to foreign students, and not to nationals. This prevents knowing the starting level of English of the students, who can finish their studies without receiving specialized training for the field in English, and not even a subject in this language. In a globalized market like the current one, the lack of command of a second language at the university level limits the possibilities of students, and in the case of English, it limits the ability to pursue doctoral studies where English is essential.

For students who would like to continue their studies at BSA in later study stages, recognition of professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education takes place following the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 932 "Procedure for Commencement of Studies in Later Study Stages", Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 505 "Regulations on Recognition of Competences Acquired Outside Formal Education or Professional Experience and Learning Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education" and BSA Senate Regulations "BIA Admission Regulations and Matriculation Procedures" and BSA Regulations "Knowledge, Skills and Competences Acquired through Non-formal Education or Professional Experience" Procedure for Recognition of Study Results Achieved in Previous Education ", approved at the BSA Senate sitting, 21.1.2018, protocol no. 136 (1.5. Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)).

In accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation implemented by European Union and based on the laws of the Republic of Latvia, the BSA has developed Policy Statute on "Privacy" (approved at the BSA Senate sitting, protocol No. 137 of 14.02.2019). BSA Internal data protection

rules and “Code of Academic Integrity and Ethics” (approved at the BSA Senate sitting, protocol No. 137 of 14.02.2019) (1.7 Description of the Study Direction (1. Management of the Study Direction)). The guidance for dealing with academic integrity violations and types of plagiarism is based on the BSA approved Code of Academic Integrity and Ethics, and it is designed to be used by students, researchers, teaching and general staff.

There is, however, no evidence that the institution uses programs focused on detecting plagiarism or other inappropriate academic practices of students.

There is no information, for example, of having reduced the number of students' plagiarism thanks to the Code of Academic Integrity and Ethics, or that students receive specific training about it.

BSA informs that all information about the study field “Psychology” and relevant study programmes (including self-assessments) is published on the BSA website [www.bsa.edu.lv](http://www.bsa.edu.lv).

The information published on the web is relevant and adequate, even though some student testimonies noted that it is insufficient. They said that they have to find information outside of the website of the institution about Erasmus program opportunities and other international options.

BSA's Self-assessment report (hereinafter – SAR) states that management of the study field is effective in achieving the goals of the study field, it is democratic, has clearly defined responsibilities of administrative staff, teachers and students, and involvement of employers. However, after the visit, there is no clear conviction that administrative, academic staff, students and employers are involved in achieving the goals and results of the study programme to achieve quality. Notably, during the visits to the central institution in Riga and the branch in Liepaja, students, graduates and employers were not informed that BSA wants to train psychologists specializing in work psychology in the professional master's programme.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The study field has clearly defined attainable goals. BSA has a relative suitable support and management approach to support students at different moments of their educational process. It also mentioned the participation of students and teachers in various decision-making processes, thus increasing the quality and coherence of the programmes. The study field and included study programmes mostly comply with the prescribed requirements and are in accordance with national and European normatives.

Strengths:

1. There is an adequate representation of the students in the decision-making bodies of BSA.
2. The study field mostly complies with the prescribed requirements.

Weaknesses:

1. There is not enough transparency regarding quality plagiarism evaluation programs.
2. There is a lack of supporting specialisation in study field.
3. There is no clear conviction that administrative, academic staff, students and employers are involved in achieving the goals and results of the study programme to achieve quality.

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

### **Analysis**

The HEI has established a quality policy which is publicly available on the BSA website.

The Study Quality Assurance System of the BSA has been developed following the requirements of the European Association for Quality Assurance in Higher Education "Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area, Part 1 European Standards and Guidelines for Internal Quality Assurance in Higher Education institutions".

BSA is developing an internationalization policy for 2019-2021. The medium-term development policy is designed based on the Academy's Development Strategy for 2016-2021 that reflects and is aligned with the academy's mission, vision and values.

It is very good that a development plan for the study field "Psychology" 2016-2022 has been created (Annex 1. Development plan of the study field "Psychology" 2016-2022). However, it is not clear what has been and what has not been done so far. No specific examples are described by BSA.

The strategic goal of the study field "Psychology" is to provide students with high-quality academic and professional psychological education that is competitive in Latvian, European and global labour markets, to improve their research skills and competences and to develop links with employers in Latvia and abroad. The quality strategy and policy have been developed following the requirements of higher education. During the visit, there were several meetings with employers, in which the links of development of the programme with foreign employers were not visible.

The SAR states that development and implementation of proposals for innovative teaching methods and practices promote the research integration, foster interdisciplinarity and implementation of the courses, practices and such learning methods which directly develop the students' innovation competencies (entrepreneurial skills and critical thinking, improvement of the transversal competences and their evaluation system). However, during the visit experts did not have the opportunity to get acquainted with innovative teaching methods. The methods seen were more reminiscent of distance learning methods than face-to-face teaching methods (especially in Liepaja and Daugavpils). There was no assurance that BSA is technically able to provide branches with innovative teaching methods.

Despite the listed shortcomings, the system ensures continuous improvement, development of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

The mechanism of obtaining and providing feedback is described in the SAR. The SAR states that students, employers and graduates are involved.

Changes to the programmes related to changes in Psychologist's law, which were justified in the SAR, are clear.

BSA has defined objectives of study programme review: to ensure the acquisition of high-quality higher education study content following the regulatory enactments of the Republic of Latvia; to provide students and teachers with a convenient, understandable and accessible learning process; to improve the pedagogical competencies of the teaching staff for successful work, including work in e-environment; to promote the long-term financial stability of the programme.

There is information on the development of new study programmes ([https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/Studiju\\_programmu\\_izstrade.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/Studiju_programmu_izstrade.pdf)). The SAR contains well-developed information for the revision or improvement of programmes (Appendix study\_programmes\_quality\_system2020.docx). However, it is not clear why BSA offers a specialization in work and occupational psychology, who initiated it or whether a market analysis has been done before. During the visit, employers represented only the field of school psychology and were not aware of the new specialization. At the description of the study field (SAR Chapter 2. Efficiency of the internal quality assurance system) chapter 2.2. there is no specific example of why a professional master's programme specializing in occupational and work psychology was established. It is important to conduct market research before creating a new specialization to substantiate the need for it in the labour market.

It is also important to find out the necessity of the programme in English. There is no evidence that

there is a demand for studies in English. During the visit to Daugavpils and Liepaja, the administrative staff, students and employers confirmed that the English language programme would not be requested and necessary. There is no other evidence of a demand for an English language programme.

The BSA has developed mechanisms for obtaining and providing feedback.

The statistical data collected by the BSA is regularly summarized according to the needs of the study process (development and compilation of self-assessment of study fields and study programmes, a compilation of the rector's report, preparation of financial documents, etc.) and prepared for submission to the external institutions and internal departments.

Statistical data on the number of students is mainly used to improve the study fields - the data is accepted and expelled students, arrears in payment of tuition, non-fulfilment of the study programme, expulsion at the student's request, are analyzed.

The BSA has developed a proposal and complaint handling procedure that helps the Academy to continuously improve all key areas of activity.

During the BSA study process, the students are regularly surveyed regarding the study content and the teaching staff. The survey is available on the BSA website. The surveys are conducted at the end of each study course. Respondents are all students in the study programmes. As a result of the survey, the direct feedback is obtained on the quality of the course, evaluation of the specific lecturer, attitude of the students, their satisfaction, sufficiency of the handouts and their correspondence to the presentation.

According to the long-term strategy of the Baltic International Academy for operations and development in 2016-2021, wherein Chapter 3.3 in the SWOT analysis at the weaknesses BSA itself writes that there are:

- 1) Lack of lecturers - human resources, especially in certain sectors, slow generational change;
- 2) Insufficient active improvement of the age structure of lecturers (increasing the proportion of young lecturers);
- 3) An insufficient number of foreign language teachers.

[https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA\\_strategija\\_LV.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA_strategija_LV.pdf)

These shortcomings were also evident during the visit, which may have been long since the previous accreditation.

Upon the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG) Part 1.8. "High schools have to regularly publish clear, accurate, objective and up-to-date information". The study agreement and the website have information on bilingual education next to the list of classes, although such a form of study is not accredited.

The other criteria of the study field correspond to Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

To improve the performance of study programmes corresponding to the study field, BSA has set goals and activities that are integrated into the overall quality assurance system.

Among the weaknesses of quality in the study process is the insufficiently developed Latvian language. Bilingual studies can still be found in the documents. The names of many study courses do not correspond to the Latvian language. The descriptions of study courses in Latvian have not been developed qualitatively, in some places there are even illogical sentences. As well as a part of the administrative and academic staff, weak knowledge of the Latvian language was observed during the visit. Many of the invited students and graduates did not understand Latvian, which indicates that BSA needs to develop the Latvian language.

## Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses

The BSA has established a quality policy and a study quality system is developed, but there are several drawbacks, related to the feedback mechanism and continuous improvement. The SAR does not provide information on the process of developing new programmes. The BSA collects and analyzes the information (statistics) on the study programmes of the study field on a regular basis and efficiently uses it to improve the study field. During the visit, experts did not receive any evidence of systematic cooperation of BSA with students, graduates and employers. The results have not fully improved since the last accreditation.

### Strengths:

1. The HEI has established a quality policy.
2. In general, the BSA study quality system is developed.
3. There is information on the development of new study programmes.
4. The BSA has defined objectives of study programme review.
5. The statistical data collected by the BSA are regularly summarized according to the needs of the study process.
6. The BSA has developed a proposal and complaint handling procedure that helps the BSA to improve continuously all key areas of activity.
7. Most of the study field criteria comply with Part 1 of the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (ESG).

### Weaknesses:

1. The system does not fully ensure continuous improvement and development of the study field and the corresponding study programmes. There is no confidence in the systematic cooperation of BSA with students, graduates and employers.
2. There are study field criteria that partially comply with the European Higher Education Area (ESG) quality assurance standards and Part 1 of the Guidelines: BSA does not have modern teaching methods in branches; The new generation of academic staff is little involved in the study process; Academic staff has poor English language skills. The results have not improved since the last accreditation. Also, the Latvian language is insufficiently developed in the study process.

## 3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

### Analysis

The principles of budgeting are stated in the SAR. It stipulates that the program budget is formed by mutual agreement between the founders of the BSA, the BSA management and the management of the study field (Chapter 3.1). Also, SAR stipulates that the income of the study fields consists of tuition fees, income from projects, as well as other incomes (e.g. renting premises, organizing various courses, etc.). It also says that the study process at BSA is financed mainly through the tuition fee revenue (85,17% - 90,57%). During the site visit, the experts were informed that the BSA Finance Department is calculating the tuition fee. Table 3.1.1 of the BSA SAR indicates the income from tuition fees. However, the information on tuition fees available on the BSA website does not match the information provided by BSA to the SAR. Unfortunately, also during the visit, the experts did not gain confidence that the system developed by BSA for determining the financial field and financial resources necessary for the implementation of the corresponding study programmes is sufficiently effective. Analyzing the available information on the number of students in the study field "Psychology" (bachelor studies at Liepaja and Daugavpils branches and master studies in Riga) doubts arise whether it is possible to ensure a quality study process with the income from tuition fees (taking into account the current number of students in each branch and in Riga). Despite the



SAR's statement that funding for science comes mainly from their resources and EU structural funds, the experts did not receive convincing information that BSA has a clear and effective system for funding research. Also, during the meeting with the teaching staff, the experts found (based on the answers provided by the teaching staff) that not enough financial support was received to be able to attend, for example, conferences or to do research.

The expert group would like to draw the attention of the BSA management to the fact that the recommendations already developed by the previous evaluation showed that there have to be improved financial matters (table 6.1.1. Expert recommendations for the study field "Psychology" and their implementation, recommendation No. 3, 5, 7):

1) That the almost only financial resource of BSA is student tuition fees and that the measures indicated by the academy at this point, unfortunately not achieving the goals – also now it shows that tuition fees are still the main financial resource, even when the number of students is decreasing.

2) That the study field has an insufficient amount of funding to improve the experimental base, which is necessary for the performance of experiments, development of student practice and qualification papers.

3) Insufficient financial support for academic staff publications in international peer-reviewed journals and academic staff participation in conferences and congresses.

Regarding the fact that 3 out of 9 recommendations made by previous experts are directly related to insufficient funding, the experts call on the BSA management to conduct an in-depth analysis of the availability of financial resources and to establish a sustainable funding model for the Academy.

All BSA buildings are the property of the Academy. It should be noted that the Riga branch has two buildings with an area of more than 3,000 m<sup>2</sup> each. The BSA central institution in Riga has good infrastructure resources – it is provided with computer classes and a laboratory for practical work to ensure the study process. There are appropriate auditoriums, where you can lead the learning process for groups of different sizes. During the visit, the experts were shown classes with 20-30 seats and auditoriums where the learning process or conferences and seminars can take place for up to several hundred listeners. The Riga branch has a large library, which is also equipped with computers and there is a possibility to hold small workshops or something similar.

According to the SAR, the BSA Scientific Library is a member of the Association of Latvian Academic Libraries, which provides access to all Association member library funds.

The library provides the study and reference literature required for the study process, access to databases and media publications, and provides services to academy students and academic staff - computerized workstations for day-to-day study, copying, printing, and other services. The library offers students, faculty, academy staff advice on using e-services, training in information retrieval skills, provides bibliographic references, lists theses and master theses, and stores the best ones (Chapter 3.3).

BSA libraries use various electronic databases (EBSCO, SCOPUS, ScienceDirect and others).

SAR indicates that the BSA website contains information about the library, a link to its catalogue and terms of use, as well as information about the library's new acquisitions. There is on the website an Electronic Book Catalogue where every student can find information about literature available in the library. And there are links to electronic databases too.

According to the SAR, the library fund is replenished systematically and regularly with books that are purposefully purchased, as well as with books that are donated (e.g., author, teachers, graduates, etc.). The library fund is also supplemented with books, which are purchased within the framework of various projects.

The information provided on the distribution of the book fund (SAR, page 76) shows that the vast majority (more than half) of the literature are books in Russian.

Daugavpils branch also has relatively modern, well-equipped premises. Although, the premises of

the Liepaja branch are less modern, where it may be necessary to assess their compliance with modern requirements.

Even though, the SWOT analysis also states that a threat for BSA is insufficient financial resources for facilities improvement.

Unfortunately, during the meetings on-site visits, branches had some problems with the equipment and online operations (microphone doesn't work appropriately). This, in turn, casts doubt on the possibility of providing quality online classes, which is vital for any HEI today, as it is almost the only way to provide quality learning. Unfortunately, experts didn't have the opportunity to testify about the online lectures, because no lectures of the study field "Psychology" (and others fields/programmes too) took place in any branch during the visit.

During the visit, the experts were also introduced to the replenishment of the library's collections, and the purchase of material and technical equipment was performed. The purchase of the latest literature in libraries is not carried out in a planned manner, it is done by evaluating the demand for programme management. The librarian himself also suggests the purchase of some literature. Upon receipt of such a proposal, the need for the specific literature is assessed and then a decision is made to purchase it. It is also the same as the purchase of material and technical support. For example, both Liepaja and Daugavpils branches do not plan to purchase new resources, but they do take place based on current demand. Consequently, the experts did not obtain enough evidence that the BSA had a unified system and procedures in terms of material, methodological, informative, etc. improvement and purchase of the material and technical provision.

During the meeting with the students in the Liepaja branch, one student mentioned that the library does not have enough necessary special literature and therefore they prefer to use the Liepaja Central Library.

Unfortunately, it must be admitted that libraries have a relatively large amount of special literature in Russian, but much less in Latvian. The collection of literature in English is also minimal. The panel was not informed regarding any plans for expanding the library resources. So, it would be recommended that BSA evaluate the possibility of supplementing the resources of special literature in both English and Latvian.

Since BSA was founded in 1992, the Academy has a long internal tradition, which is its value. The academic staff of BSA also have many years of work experience at BSA. They largely identify with BSA. The study field has professional and qualified academic staff to ensure the theoretical and practical education and training required for psychologist's education. Many members of the academic staff also have had practical work experience.

As strengths in the SWOT analysis recognized (Table 1.3.1.) that 1) the programmes are implemented by experienced and highly qualified teaching staff; 2) the lecturers have high research activity and regular participation in international and Latvian scientific conferences, symposia and congresses; 3) the academic personnel are active in research. Unfortunately, the SWOT also states that a weakness for BSA is "ageing of academic staff".

According to the SAR (Chapter 3.4), election to academic positions is based on open recruitment, considering the requirements of a person's academic qualification and professional competence. Common criteria must be set for the election of academic staff, the most important of which are the achievements of scientific and pedagogical activity. The Rector of BSA signs the contract with the elected person. An advertisement is announced for the vacancies. As the experts were informed during the visit, there are currently 6 vacancies for which recruitment have been announced. The official advertisement has announced the following vacancies: 1 professor position and 5 associate professor positions (<https://www.vestnesis.lv/op/2020/203.AKK4?search=on>). None of these vacancies in the academic staff are directly related to the study field "Psychology". At the same time, it should be noted that the requirements for candidates for the position indicate mandatory knowledge of both English and Russian at least at B2 level.

The experts would like to draw the attention of BSA management to the fact that no information is available on the BSA web page, section Academic Staff (<https://bsa.edu.lv/bsa-akademiskais-personals/>). The existence of such information would help both - current students and prospective students find a better idea of the BSA academic staff.

The national law stipulates that at least fifty percent of the persons elected to academic positions in academies must have a doctoral degree. According to the SAR (table 3.6.2.), only a little bit more than half (57.9%) of the academic staff (22 out of 38) in the study field "Psychology" is "elected", i.e. full-time permanent members of the study field "Psychology" staff. This leads to quite a significant number of part-time staff members (16). And the study field "Psychology" just reaches the minimum requirements for "elected" academic teachers holding a doctoral degree (according to national law, the minimum requirement is 50%). And these data are 2018/2019.

The methodological and scientific work of BSA teaching staff for up to 75 academic hours per academic year is included in the annual workload (Table 3.6.3.).

According to the SAR (Table 3.6.3.), the remuneration of BSA academic staff corresponds to the Regulations No. 445 "Regulations on Teachers' Remuneration". In the minds of experts Regulation No. 445 could be misinterpreted and remuneration could be determined inappropriately as amendments to these Regulations have come into force as of 01.09.2020. Based on this, we recommend re-evaluating whether the above-mentioned regulations are applied appropriately.

Following general conditions, the implementation of the study programmes of the field "Psychology" takes place in two streams - in Latvian and English. According to SAR, the foreign language knowledge of the teaching staff involved in the programmes is confirmed by the higher education document, as well as the teachers' self-assessment. BSA for determining the level of English proficiency refers to Regulation No. 407 that has expired on 01.01.2019. The level of English language skills of each lecturer is summarized in the Annex "Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study direction" and confirms that the language skills meet the requirements. Unfortunately, during the visit, the use of an interpreter was required, which casts doubt on the use of sufficient English language skills. At the same time, BSA organizes training, so that lecturers have the opportunity to regularly improve their English language skills.

According to SAR, at least five percent of the academic staff of the HEI are guest lecturers.

Each lecturer in the study field "Psychology" can join international mobility by actively participating in international conferences, symposia, giving lectures at foreign universities.

SAR states that in the given reporting period 82 lecturers have been on mobility visits to foreign partner universities. This shows that, on average, several lecturers have been on mobility visits several times each year.

To a large extent, mobility in 2018/2019 was in Russian-speaking countries and not in EU countries. Guest lecturers for the last reporting period (2018/2019) are also mostly from non-EU countries.

According to SAR, every lecturer has the opportunity to promote their international organizational competence (by attending conferences, giving lectures) at foreign universities within the framework of the Erasmus international mobility programme. In the given reporting period (till 2017/2018), within the study field "Psychology" Erasmus mobility program, 19 lecturers were on mobility visits to foreign partner universities. This means that an average of 3 lecturers were on mobility visits each year. Unfortunately, the amount of lecturers who participate in Erasmus mobility program decreases every reporting period. And there is no information on SAR about the last reporting period (2018/2019).

Regarding foreign lecturers' lectures at BSA under Erasmus mobility programme (Table 3.6.7.), there are only 8 lecturers during 2012-2015. There was no information on SAR about foreign lecturers under the Erasmus mobility programme from 2016 through 2019.

Based on the information from SAR and from meetings during the visit, the experts would like to point out that the mobility of teachers within the BSA is not significant and it should be improved in future.

According to SAR, the difficulties that BSA faces in lecturers' mobility are related to the high workload of lecturers in the study process, which does not always lead to the possibility to leave during the study period, as well as to subjective reasons (health status, poor foreign language skills, family circumstances). But, according to experts' observations, the lack of mobility is largely due to financial issues and possibly the teachers' unconvincing English language skills.

More detailed information about the teachers' teaching and research profiles should be made available on the BSA website. The academy should also seek to increase the number of "elected" lecturers who have a doctoral degree, to promote sustainability and academic excellence.

The BSA is proud of the introduced support for students - various tuition fee discounts are applied, which are attractive for students and potential students. The BSA has a student self-government, but, unfortunately, not all students with whom the experts met in person were aware of it. There is a Study Information Centre which provides counselling to students on all matters related to the study process, communication with the administration and teaching staff. During the site visit in the Riga branch, experts could see how the Center operates.

It should be noted that in all meetings with students, experts gained the impression that most students are satisfied with the opportunities offered by BSA. Students highly appreciate the opportunity to study part-time and tuition fee discounts as well. At the same time, several students were not aware of the existence of student exchange programmes and the upcoming changes in study programmes.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

In general, the decision-making process related to resources is understandable. Understandably, the main part of finances is made by tuition fees. But at the same time, BSA needs to ensure that its financial management structures are clear and unambiguous, that responsibility for these is assigned, and that they are coherent with the other decision-making processes at the Academy. Experts suggest BSA management conduct an in-depth analysis of the availability of financial resources and to establish a sustainable funding model for the Academy.

Unfortunately, BSA branches had some problems with the equipment and online operations, this casts doubt on the possibility of providing quality studies and online learning.

During the expert's interviews with academic staff, an interpreter was needed a lot, showing that not all members of the teaching staff have a sufficient level of proficiency in English. However, the expert panel noted that some of these teachers are proficient in other foreign languages like Russian. Further professionalization of the academic staff is necessary to offer a more sustainable future.

It would be recommended to be ready to change and continuously improve processes to reach an even higher level of resources and provisions following modern requirements.

### **Strengths:**

1. BSA has long traditions established in 1992, which is its value.
2. The academic staff of BSA have many years of work experience at BSA, they largely identify with BSA.
3. All premises are BSA property.
4. Infrastructure resources are developed, Riga and Daugavpils branches mainly meet modern requirements.
5. Various tuition fee discounts are attractive to students.

### **Weaknesses:**

1. There is no particular plan for how to increase financial resources in future.

2. The purchase of the latest literature in libraries is not carried out in a planned manner.
3. Not enough financial support for scientific research. The system for financing scientific research should be improved.
4. Lack of a unified system and procedures in terms of material, methodological, informative, etc. improvement and purchase of the material and technical provision.
5. Relatively low mobility of lecturers.
6. Not enough developed system for funding to purchase more books (special literature) in Latvian and English.
7. There are certain problems with elected teaching staff and English proficiency of academic staff.

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

##### **Analysis**

The directions of scientific research in the psychology field comply with the development aims on an average level. In the psychology study programmes work 38 academic staff members, 21 of them with PhD degrees. The number of professors, associated and assistant professors increased during six years. Two academic staff members are Professors and three Associate professors are involved in the BA and MA programme.

BSA collaborates with several companies of Latvia and BA and MA students have good possibilities to practice in these institutions. According to the study programme, students make research work in partnership with professors, assistant professors, lecturers and practice tutors. They must write theses. Together with their supervisors some students also wrote articles indexed in international journals (14 articles) or local publications in BSA (63 publications). Academic staff members have a partnership for joint scientific research in Latvia and several other countries as Russia, Kazakhstan, France, India, Norway, Poland, Lithuania and other countries. They have research in the field of traffic, consumer, health and penitentiary psychology. There are next research topics: research of cognitive mechanisms of implicit social cognition, applied research of implicit attitudes in various fields of professional activity, research of health psychology in professional activity, the transmission of values, attitudes and identity in intercultural aspects, professional's personality development, individual characteristics of population motivation in improving the living environment and others. Research is organized mostly in social and cognitive psychology, but in organization and work psychology not so much. Students told that statistical analysis is very difficult for them. Many students do not like research work. They are more oriented to practical work.

Scientific research and the outcomes are integrated in the study process in the BA and MA study programmes. Students and academic staff have in all branches (Riga, Daugavpils and Liepaja) libraries, access to different databases, computer classes and in Riga also a laboratory for successful scientific work. Unfortunately, some academic staff members and also some students have not enough good English language skills to use all these good possibilities. It means that the academy must organize more courses in the English language. Academic reading and writing skills are very important parts of study programmes.

The connection of scientific research with the study process is realized in different ways. Students have the opportunity to participate in the research carried out of the academic staff. They are involved in research work during writing term papers, BA and MA theses. Students also participate in scientific conferences where they present their research results. Lecturers use the research results in the teaching process. Academy needs more new doctors in Psychology and would motivate younger academic staff members without doctoral degrees to start their doctoral studies.

International cooperation in the psychology field of scientific research and the relevant study

programmes is ensured and improved in a target-oriented manner on average level. It means that Professors and Assistant professors mostly have quite good results in scientific research but lecturers would make research and write the articles based on the research more in future. Academy has agreements with the Institute of Psychology of Russian Academy of Sciences, International University of Research Higher School of Economy, Norwegian University of Technology and Science and some others. A recommendation is to involve lecturers and students more efficiently into these research activities.

Professors, associate and assistant professors are quite well-functioning and efficient in their scientific research and most of them have good results. Professors and Assistant professors have enough articles indexed in international databases (160 ARTICLES) and also monographs and articles not indexed in databases. Results are good. Academy would find possibilities to develop mechanisms to involve lecturers and also students into research in future. They have very few or not at all scientific articles. The recommendation is to involve lecturers in research projects.

According to the study programmes, students must write bachelor's or MA theses. Writing gives good knowledge about theoretical and empirical research. Some students are involved in scientific projects and they are active and efficient. But there are also some students who do not have enough English language skills and they are not able to do research in international projects. Students have enough possibilities to study and make research in universities abroad according to the Erasmus+ program but unfortunately they do not use these possibilities. Students explained that they must work and have responsibilities related with their families. Students acquire basic knowledge about research in the study courses "Theory and Methods of Research and Study Work". This course is difficult for the students. Many students are not interested in research.

There are good possibilities to develop the research process because BSA has a Laboratory of Neurocognitive Implicit Processes for research work, good libraries, different databases, computer classes and well motivated academic staff. The laboratory is equipped with computer hardware and software. Poor language skills of some students and lecturers do not permit to use all these possibilities enough. Laboratory gives very good possibilities to do successful scientific research in the psychology field.

Most graduates work in schools and this is a reason to think how to change the study programme towards needs of school psychologists.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

Professors, Associate and Assistant professors have research projects in Latvia and abroad and have written many articles in international journals and books. Lecturers of the Academy would be more active in the scientific research and publish more articles. There are good possibilities to participate in research. Academy has a Laboratory of Neurocognitive Implicit Processes, access to different databases. Poor language skills of some academic staff members and students is a reason why they are not able to use all good possibilities. It is important to motivate academic staff members to start their doctoral studies. Academy could be improved by more new teaching staff with doctor degree in Psychology.

Strengths:

1. Professors, associate and assistant professors have research projects in Latvia and also in other countries.
2. Professors and assistant professors have written quite many articles indexed in international databases, also monographs and national articles. Laboratory gives good possibilities to organize

scientific research and some members of academic staff use all these possibilities well. They participated in international conferences and published articles in indexed international journals and national books.

3. Supervision of students is good and students are satisfied.

#### Weaknesses

1. Language skills of students and some lecturers and some staff members are very low. At least B2 level in English language is required. Better academic reading and writing skills are very important to do successful scientific research work and write interesting BA and MA theses, articles. It is also important in the learning process. Lecturers must be involved more efficiently in scientific research and write articles in the international journals.

2. BSA has few new academic staff with PhD degrees. BSA needs new doctors.

3. Lecturers have few research projects and publish very few articles in international peer-reviewed journals.

## 5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

### Analysis

The aims and management of cooperation and internationalization are summarized in BSA's Internationalization Policy which matches the study field's development goals and the institution's strategic goals in providing students high-quality academic and professional psychology education that is competitive in Latvian, European and global labor markets and developing links with employers in Latvia and abroad. The main internationalization aim is to develop international competitiveness and recognition by promoting global mindsets and readiness for international professional careers in their students, working on the integration of foreign students, teaching and administrative staff in their education processes, having strong and sustainable international academic and research cooperation, as well as study programmes and content with high competitiveness in the local and international market, and organizing various international academic and research activities.

BSA has developed successful cooperation with many HEIs in Latvia for the implementation of the study field, such as University of Daugavpils (hereinafter – DU), Liepaja University (hereinafter – LiepU), Riga Stradiņš University (hereinafter – RSU) and University of Latvia. The Daugavpils branch is actively cooperating with DU by inviting guest lecturers to give in-person lectures to their students, as well as advocating for students' continued studies at DU on a doctoral level. The Liepaja branch, however, admitted during on-site visit to not having a strong cooperation with local HEIs, which is possibly due to LiepU not having study programmes in the "Psychology" study field, however, their premises are used by an RSU branch who realize this programme, and they have a Music therapy center that could be grounds to cooperation in the future.

It is unclear specifically how many partnerships with foreign HEIs are currently relevant to the study field "Psychology" and what purpose they serve, as the original List of cooperation agreements provided by BSA notes 22 cooperation agreements for Erasmus+ mobilities, information provided after the expert visit notes 38 bilateral agreements including Erasmus+, and the BSA homepage notes 19 cooperation agreements of which 7 institutions (covering 3 countries) did not appear in the original list, and the number of agreements from specific countries does not match up with the provided information. Experts consider this strange and, in the case that the available website information is not up to date, this contradicts ESG principle 1.8 of publishing clear, accurate, objective and up-to date information about their activities, as well as stands in the way of definitive analysis of these partnerships. Experts also find this to be an issue for the outgoing mobility of students.

It is known that BSA also develops inter-university study programmes with partner universities for

study programmes of similar fields of studies at the same level of student preparation, including for the study field “Psychology”, where such a programme has been developed at a bachelor level with the National Technical University “Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute”, and another one is in the finishing stages of development at a master’s level in cooperation with the Russian State University of Humanities (ref. Presentation of study field “Psychology”).

BSA also has successful cooperation with many Latvian and foreign professional organizations and employers that help organize traineeships and are consulted for development and actualization of the current study content. These include, locally – the Latvian Psychologists Association, Center for Psychophysiology and Bioregulation, Latvian Association of Professional Psychologists, Latvian Psychologists and Psychotherapists Association, scientific agency “Latenta”, Latvian Prison Administration, Latvian Railway Association, and others (agreements of cooperation seen on site). Among foreign organizations of partnership one can find Children’s Identity & Citizenship European Association, International Association of Schools of Social Work and others. For traineeships BSA has agreements with employers and supervisors from schools, associations, private companies and other institutions, altogether 22 places in Latvia and 6 foreign organizations where students can and have previously undergone traineeships; 50-60% of these partnerships are with educational institutions.

The situation is improving over time, considering only 30 years of psychology as a study-able scientific field in Latvia, and this can be recognized as a fair achievement. The partners are chosen according to the aims of the study field and give significant contribution to the development of the comparatively young scientific field.

Cooperation with employers and professional organizations is organized so:

- Representatives of employers and professional organizations are included in final examination committees;
- Employers participate in surveys regarding satisfaction with graduates and also give feedback on student skills and competencies during internship;
- Staff and students have the opportunity to participate in and conduct scientific projects with cooperation partners (e.g. Latenta, Center for Psychophysiology and Bioregulation).

This involvement helps ensure that the study content changes and conforms to employer demands over time and the standards of teaching are set by the needs of the industry, however, some forms of cooperation could be improved, as graduates during on-site visit did not recall any time that BSA had contacted them after their graduation (as for possible graduate surveying, and furthermore the chance of surveying their places of employment).

Foreign students are mostly involved via student mobility programs (e.g. Erasmus+) organized on an institutional level. Management of the studies is flexible, the study process for foreign students in the psychology study field is technically accessible for independent studies in English as well, although the staff’s foreign language knowledge is questionable after on-site visit. Experts convey an overall doubt of whether a B2 level of knowledge is enough to create a meaningful learning environment both for foreign students and especially in the case of preparing local students for professional careers abroad.

Over the last 6 years the amount of full-time international students in the study field have been slowly, but steadily increasing from approximately 15 to 25. Most foreign students come from Russian-speaking countries such as Russia, Ukraine and Belarus. Bilateral mobility (non-Erasmus) indicators note that the incoming exchange student count is very low and falling, from 9 in 2014/2015 to 1 for the past 2 academic years (ref. Presentation of study field). This could be explained by the move away from Russian as an official instruction language. In turn, Erasmus+ indicators show an increase over the years, with 16 incoming students in the field last year.

Foreign teaching staff are attracted based on individual contacts. They are brought in for those courses where local staff resources are limited, and it allows students to learn a more global



viewpoint of the latest research and practical methods in fields that may not be as popular locally, however, as students during the on-site visit note, students in branches rarely have foreign lecturers due to the lack of English language knowledge.

Foreign staff members are also attracted through various bilateral agreements, and the amount of staff members attracted per year has halved (from 13-17 to 6-8) since 2018, which can also be explained by the language restrictions (ref. Presentation of study field, total number of international academic and administrative staff, who have visited the Academy's Study Field "Psychology" under the international and bilateral mobility programmes, as well as in other international activities, incl. ERASMUS+ Staff Teaching and Training mobilities by years). BSA is also involved in EURAXESS Researchers in Motion initiative that aids incoming and outgoing researchers. The BSA relies heavily on the contacts of their academic staff, who, while knowing the study content best, can entice and suggest the best candidates for guest lecturing, however, since there has been a notable decrease in attracted foreign staff members, experts believe a more concrete systematic plan of expansion to English-speaking cooperation partners is required.

Employers and professional organizations are regularly involved in the provision of traineeships as both supervisors and traineeship leaders. Employers offer proposals for student traineeships and their management to BSA and permanent cooperation with them allows the academy to help all students find traineeship places suitable to their requirements. During the internships, employers participate in surveys providing quality analysis of the qualifications, knowledge, skills and abilities of trainers in their organizations and help develop further study processes. This is all part of a common traineeship system developed in BSA that is regulated by two separate Regulations on student practice, one for the bachelor and one for the master's study programme, which also regulates the main tasks and aims, organization and management of practice and its final evaluation, and rights and responsibilities of involved parties. Additionally, Guidelines for development and defense of a practice report have been made to help students prepare more productive traineeship reports.

The importance and need to increase international cooperation is recognized by BSA but measures to tackle this challenge have not been very successful.

Again, professional opportunities or their orientation to the student are contemplated in the programme.

The programmes in the study field have good perspectives for further internationalization, however, currently, the possibilities for staff and student international exchange in programme related areas are quite limited and should be widened (Ref. PSY\_Management\_2020\_1.pdf).

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

BSA has developed successful cooperation with several Latvian and foreign HEIs and professional organizations for the implementation of the study field that includes bilateral student and staff mobility agreements, inter-university study programme projects, and exchange of knowledge and experience. There is an established student and staff mobility system with Erasmus+ and other bilateral agreements with foreign HEIs. Common regulation oversees the organization and management of student practices, and employers are actively involved and interested in the provision of traineeships for the students of BSA.

Strengths:

1. Aims and management of cooperation and internationalization follow the development aims and strategic goals and aims of the study field.
2. The Daugavpils branch has advanced resources and advantages due to close cooperation with

DU.

3. A common system exists for the provision of traineeships. Employers are actively involved and interested in the provision of traineeships.
4. Demand for incoming student mobility is increasing.

Weaknesses:

1. Decreasing incoming staff mobility.
2. The Liepaja branch has not had any cooperation with the RSU Liepaja branch that implements a study programme in the field of psychology.
3. The extent of foreign cooperation, though known to exist, is unclear (especially to students) due to a lack of clear, accurate, objective and up-to-date information about their activities online.
4. It is unclear whether and how a regular surveying of employers is happening, and there is only immediate surveying of graduates without a follow-up.

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

### **Analysis**

Considering 9 previous recommendations given during evaluation visits in the past, BSA has created a plan of implementation (Annex 6.1). It is noted by experts that some previous recommendations have defined no clear goal, only to have emphasized on weaknesses without a recommendation of action.

Recommendations No 1 and No 6 regard the lack of joint study programmes, a doctoral study programme and student transition to other HEIs as weaknesses and encourages the development of a joint doctoral programme with a foreign university. BSA considers the implementation of both recommendations to be in process. Some inter-university study programme projects have been realised, among them in the study field "Psychology" a bachelor's programme with the National Technical University "Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute" and very recently a masters' programme with the Russian State University of Humanities. BSA plans to sign letters of intent with cooperation partners for the development of joint study programmes until 2022. During the on-site visit, the management of BSA and the study field do not note any progress on a doctoral programme and are satisfied with their cooperation with DU and University of Latvia who provide available doctoral programmes for their students. Experts believe there is no practical basis for the creation of a doctoral programme, as it would most likely be a financial strain, however, would prefer a clear statement regarding BSA's future intentions, as they mention signing a cooperation agreement for the development of a doctoral programme in psychology until 2022 in Annex 6. "Implementation of recommendations received during previous evaluation procedures".

Recommendation No 2 regards the number of guest lecturers. Experts believe there is still an issue with the number of lecturers, and administration during the on-site visit conveys a problem in attracting qualified academic staff. Over the review period, however, BSA has signed cooperation agreements and attracted guest lecturers from DU (currently 3 docents that are primarily employees of DU, and several current doctoral students of DU) and RSU (currently no docents, but mentioned over the last 6 year period), as well as Moscow State University (e.g. current docent of Methods of psychological research, data analysis and interpretation and Workplace Counselling), and notes the availability of open seminars and lectures hosted by lecturers from Lithuania, Estonia, USA, France, etc., however, experts note that there is an issue with the accessibility of foreign guest lecturers for BSA branch students (as they admit during on-site visits as well) due to a language barrier. Although an improvement over the last review period can be evidenced, further improvements must be made. Recommendation No 3 regards BSA's sources of income and their sufficiency – over the review period BSA has improved their financial management and participated in/provided national and

international mobility and research programs, such as traineeships with Erasmus+ and research project tenders of Ministry of Welfare and Latvian Council of Science.

Recommendation No 4 regards the staff's English language skills, and, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, experts still find the English language skills lackluster, even if compliant with existing Latvian legislation. The BSA regularly organizes English language courses for their staff and works on the improvement of the situation, as even now a course of English language for academic personnel is being held, but for now experts evaluate the level as average, considering the need to fluently converse and teach students in the potential English-speaking flow, and conduct research in fluent academic writing.

Experts find recommendation No 5 to be fully accomplished and needing only further maintenance and improvement of the existing laboratory facility and continued cooperation with professional organizations in conduction of traineeships.

Recommendation No 7 regards the amount of support BSA provides their academic staff for scientific publications, and the amount of publications in international peer-reviewed journals and indexed databases like EBSCO, Thompson and SCOPUS. Even though the number has doubled over the last 4 years, experts still find this amount insufficient, and find that there are not enough financial resources to build motivational incentives and support systems for academic staff. Although an improvement over the last review period can be seen, further improvements must be made.

Recommendation No 8 concerns the number of contact hours and tutorials in the study process, especially regarding BSA branches. Although the current global situation makes it difficult to evaluate the regular study process, as most happens online, testimonies from branch students verify that the study process relies largely on live lectures broadcast in their auditoriums, sometimes simultaneously cast to both branches from Riga. Students can ask questions by approaching a common microphone in the room, but generally they find this to be a very depersonalized study method. The Daugavpils branch has a slightly better situation as several staff members are also lecturers at the Daugavpils University, therefore offer their classes in person, however, staff from the main location in Riga rarely visit branches (as attested by students, ~4 times a semester). Experts find this insufficient and inappropriate, if the study programme is marketed as a face to face study form.

Recommendation No 9 concerns the number of foreign publications used as theoretical basis for bachelor and masters' theses. During the review period BSA has developed new methodological guidelines for the development of theses, which defines a minimum amount of foreign scientific publications from indexed databases that should be used, therefore technically increasing this number. Experts consider this recommendation to be fully implemented.

## **Conclusions. Strengths and weaknesses**

The implementation of the recommendations provided within the previous accreditation of the study field can be evaluated as partially successful and largely requires further work and improvements. Out of 9 recommendations, experts find 2 to be fully implemented, and 7 to be partially implemented or needing further analysis by BSA as to the resolution and specific results and long-term goals in these areas.

Strengths:

1. BSA has improved cooperation with foreign HEIs and formed joint inter-university study programme projects.
2. An experimental laboratory has been set up and improved/expanded over the review period.
3. BSA has attracted some local and foreign guest lecturers for the study process.

4. BSA has attempted to attract extra funding for various research and student-centered activities (traineeship).
5. BSA has been actively organizing English language courses for the academic staff.
6. Guidelines for development of theses have been developed and updated according to experts' recommendations.
7. The number of agreements with national and international institutions has been increased to compensate for their shortcomings.
8. An effort is being made to comply with the recommendations.

Weaknesses:

1. There is no analysis for the necessity or intentions of work regarding the creation of a doctoral programme.
2. The provision of foreign guest lecturers and seminars in English is not very accessible due to low English language skills of students.
3. The English language level of the teaching staff is still low.
4. There aren't enough financial resources and support for the research activities of academic staff in producing publications for peer-reviewed international journals.
5. Teaching methods in branches of BSA are largely oriented towards online and distance learning (during non-COVID-19 time) and students do not have enough in-person instruction.
6. Lecturers have few research projects and peer-reviewed publications in international journals.

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

- 1 Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** There are some notes from expert group, but in general BSA ensures improvement and development of quality assurance system and study field internal quality system evaluated as fully compliant. Annex: Internal Quality of Study program.doc
- 2 1.1. The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The policy and procedures for assuring the study quality are established. Annex: STUDY DIRECTION «PSYCHOLOGY» MANAGEMENT
- 3 1.2. A mechanism for the development and internal approval of the study programmes of the higher education institution/ college, as well as the supervision of their performance and periodic inspection thereof has been developed.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Regulations for the development, approval and amendment of study programmes at the Baltic International academy (BSA) have been developed.  
[https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/Studiju\\_programmu\\_izstrade.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/Studiju_programmu_izstrade.pdf)
- 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:** Described in Regulations for the Evaluation of Study Results of the Baltic International Academy:  
[https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA\\_stud\\_rezultatu\\_nolikums2019.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA_stud_rezultatu_nolikums2019.pdf)
- 5 1.4. Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Personal politics are developed and regulated :  
[https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA\\_akad\\_amati.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA_akad_amati.pdf)

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Information: I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/College, Part 5. SG. 1.7. High schools have to collect, analyze and use the necessary information in order to effectively manage the study programs

ESG. 1.8. High schools have to regularly publish clear, accurate, objective and up-to-date information.

There is added information:

- 1) Appendix No.6 BIA revenues
- 2) Appendix No.7 BIA expenses
- 3) Appendix No.8 financial stability indicators.docx

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

**Justification:** Study quality system is developed:  
[https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA\\_Studiju\\_kvalitates\\_nodrosinasanas\\_sistema.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA_Studiju_kvalitates_nodrosinasanas_sistema.pdf)

- 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:** SAR and its annexes "Cooperation and Internationalization" and "Letter of Intent for collaborative work-based practice" note organizations of collaboration imply effective collaboration with local and international partners. In the case of masters' programme, more collaboration with the speciality of work psychology would be necessary, and for mobility – more cooperation with English-speaking organizations.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** The course descriptions of the Master's program include a couple of books published in 2017-2019.

Language skills of students and some lecturers, and some staff members are very low. Lecturers must be involved more efficiently in scientific research and write articles in the international journals.

BSA has few new academic staff with PhD degrees. BSA needs new doctors. Lecturers have few research projects and publish very few articles in international peer-reviewed journals.

- 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:** SAR annex "Implementation of recommendations received during previous evaluation procedures" and chapter VI of this report indicate that recommendations have been implemented only partially and some are still in the planning process.

## 8. Recommendations for the Study Field

### Short-term recommendations

1. Until end of this accreditation procedure, update information on BSA's website regarding Erasmus+ partnerships available for student and staff mobility, as well as add information regarding other bilateral agreements for mobility.
2. Until end of this accreditation procedure remove bilingual study types for 1st and 2nd year students from the lecture plan located on the website.
3. Until end of this accreditation modify study agreements and remove the bilingual type of study.
4. Until the start of next study year, assign an Erasmus coordinator to manage information on study abroad possibilities.
5. Until the start of next study year, revise if the amendments to the Regulations No. 445 "Regulations on Teachers' Remuneration" (have come into force as of 01.09.2020.) are applied appropriately.
6. Until next accreditation, establish a system of graduate and employer surveying that would include checking in on graduates after a set time period so they have time to understand the work environment and their employers would have a more in-depth understanding of their skills and learning capacity. Develop a document that regulates this system or embed this in existing documents.
7. Until next accreditation review and develop a strategy for academic staff motivation in the long-term to improve their research capacity and production of publications for peer-reviewed international journals; include an analysis of the necessary financial basis.
8. Until next accreditation develop a mechanism to increase the mobility of lecturers.
9. Until next accreditation increase accessibility of guest lecturers, especially in branches, by inviting more local lecturers to hold classes in Latvian.
10. Until next accreditation improve the amount of contact hours (in-person teaching) for branches by attracting more local lecturers and/or previous graduates of the programmes.
11. Until next accreditation establish a transparent system for the purchase of literature in libraries.
12. Until next accreditation to improve the knowledge of the Latvian language for the academic and administrative staff by providing continuous courses in the Latvian language.

### Long-term recommendations

1. Establish more cooperation agreements for mobility with countries where a language barrier will be less problematic, and studies can be held in English.
2. Evaluate possibilities to develop cooperation between the BSA Liepaja branch and RSU Liepaja branch.

3. Before commencing further doctoral programme development plans, develop an analysis on the necessity of a BSA doctoral programme in psychology depicting the demand and possible financial basis, in order to find whether the creation of such a programme would be beneficial to BSA and the study market altogether.
4. Continue regular English language improvement courses for staff.
5. Provide more opportunities for students and staff to improve their English during the study process by using more English literature and publications from databases.
6. Provide students with information regarding extracurricular activities for improvement of English language skills, and organize such activities, if possible.
7. Marketing analysis and research must be done to create a new programmes.
8. Create a long-term plan to increase financial resources in the future.
9. Establish a transparent funding system and increase financial support for scientific research.
10. To create a unified system for the purchase of material and technical provisions.
11. Academic staff members must participate more in research projects and publish results in international journals.

## II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT

### II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT

#### 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

Based on the Psychologists Law from 01.01.2018, Article 3 "Right to Perform Psychologist Professional Activity" Paragraph 1: "A person's right to perform an independent psychologist professional activity is confirmed by a higher education diploma for the acquisition of at least 200 credit points, at least one of these programmes is a professional study programme, registration in the register of psychologists and a psychologist's certificate in a certain field of activity "and the Professional Standard of Psychologist (12. 06. 2019), BSA study field "Psychology" council developed a project "Study programmes, transitioning to a new study model (academic bachelor study programme" Psychology" (3 years) and professional master's study programme "Psychology" (2 years)) (instead of the previous 4 + 2 model).

Study parameters and changes in them since the previous accreditation are described and appropriate.

The aim of the undergraduate academic study programme "Psychology" is to enable students to obtain basic academic education in psychology, to develop theoretical knowledge and research skills in psychology and related fields (interdisciplinary), to develop analytical and critical thinking skills, communication, problem-solving and decision making skills. This is appropriate for an academic bachelor's programme. The programme has seven objectives. The aim and objectives of the programme are in line with the Baltic International Academy long-term action and development strategy 2016-2020 year.

Graduating from the academic bachelor study programme "Psychology" students have acquired knowledge, many skills and competencies, which is appropriate, but the proportion of knowledge could have been higher compared to skills and competences. Because the programme is academic, not professional.

The parameters listed: Title of the study programme; Code of the study programme according to the Latvian Qualifications Framework; Duration of studies and amount of credits; Type and form of studies; Obtainable degree or obtainable degree and qualification; Structure of studies; Psychological characteristics in the interdisciplinary aspect; General courses in psychology; Specialized courses in psychology; Elective courses; The Practice and Development and Defense of Bachelor's thesis parameters are appropriate.

The name of the study programme, the degree in Bachelor of Social Science Psychology to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.

The SAR of the programme states that Until the 2019/2020 academic year, the study programme was implemented bilingually (in Latvian and Russian). Starting from the 2019/2020 academic year, it is implemented in Latvian and English. However, the list of lectures on the BSA website (<https://bsa.edu.lv/studiju-grafiks/>) and in the study agreement (Annex: Study Agreement.pdf) still includes bilingual studies, which suggests that studies will continue in Latvian and Russian. The 2nd year student of the Liepāja branch also admitted that the studies are conducted bilingually in Latvian and Russian. Although during the accreditation visit, the head of the program said that bilingual studies are no longer implemented.

The programme in English is not yet possible and necessary because:

During the visit, there was no evidence that the academic staff was able to train students in English, as most of the lecturers and administrative staff did not speak English. As well as in Daugavpils and Liepāja branches, the administrative staff acknowledged that studies in English are not necessary.

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

In general, the name of the study programme, learning outcomes and obtained degree supplemented with the aims, objectives and admission requirements.

Most study parameters and changes in them since the previous accreditation are described and appropriate. Expert group point of view, that the studies in English alone are not yet possible. Because the academic staff has a weak knowledge of English and there is no evidence of in-depth analysis by BSA for the necessity of a study programme in English in Daugavpils and Liepāja.

Strengths:

1. Study parameters and changes in them since the previous accreditation are described and appropriate.

Weaknesses:

1. Learning outcomes could be more knowledge and fewer skills and competencies.
2. There is no marketing analysis and the management of Daugavpils and Liepāja branches admitted that there is no necessity in the branches after studies in English.

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

### **Analysis**

The study programme is including the Mandatory part, Restrictive elective courses and Elective courses:

Mandatory courses, which comprises study courses in the amount of 67 credit points (100,5 ECTS); Restrictive elective courses in amount of 47 credit points (70.5 ECTS) and Elective courses (part C) conferring 6 credit points (9 ECTS) (6\_Annex.Compliance of the academic Bachelor study programme Psychology with the state education standard.docx.)

As mentioned Restrictive elective courses shall include: guidelines, principles, structure and methodology of the scientific branch or sub-branch concerned (minimum 25 credit points); the part



of History and current issues in the development of a science branch or sub-branch (not less than 10 credit points); and Characteristics and problems of the discipline or inter-branch of science (at least 15 credit points) (6\_Annex.Compliance of the academic Bachelor study programme Psychology with the state education standard.docx.).

Based on the revised documentation, the courses meet the objectives set out in the study programme plan, although the quality of the thesis has not been evaluated.

The content of study courses are relevant to the field study and the level of student satisfaction seems good. Although the programme does not include curricular specializations.

The evaluation criteria are established, indicating, for example, one of the courses, that the completion of the study course is evaluated on a 10-point scale following the Resolution 512 of the Cabinet of Ministers of 26.08.2014. based on the following criteria: the volume and quality of knowledge gained; acquired skills; acquired competences following the planned learning outcomes (SAR Section III. Description of the Study Programme - 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof). That evaluation includes work in groups, activity and participation seminars, tests/test 1 and another form.

Mapping of study courses and obtained study results has been performed (8. Annex. Bachelor's Study Programme "Psychology", the Mapping of the Courses.docx).

In SAR Chapter 4.4. is described that study programme attitudes are based on student-centered learning, respecting students' needs for an individual approach, the support staff is competent and assists students in case of individual difficulties. The teaching staff is accessible and collaborative. Students are actively involved in the evaluation of the study programme. All study courses are aimed at achieving the results of the study programme, which is confirmed by the mapping of the planned results.

However, there are only 4 CP English courses for English proficiency training. To improve English language skills for students, the number of credits in the programme should increase.

The study courses are very detailed, but it can be difficult for students to navigate the amount of information. It would be desirable to develop easier-to-understand and transparent study courses for everyday student use.

It would also be desirable to update the latest and contemporary literature in study courses.

A traditional methodology of implementation of the teaching to which it is incorporated is used, and its evaluation. Little innovation is observed in this regard, beyond the use of technological platforms for the practices of some courses. In the various interviews the students are satisfied with the study program and with the professional opportunities it offers.

Like the institution indicates long term, in line with the ESG 2015 standards and the BSA strategy of activities and development is reviewed annually along with evaluating results and defining the current tasks; and this process area involves employees, students, graduates, employers and professionals (BSA study quality management system\_2020\_1.pdf).

According to the SAR, Section 2.5 describes that the surveys are conducted at the end of each study course. Respondents are all students of the study programme. As a result of the survey the direct feedback is obtained on the quality of the course, evaluation of the specific lecturer, attitude of the students, their satisfaction, sufficiency of the handouts and their correspondence to the presentation. Student recommendations regarding the programme changes, suggestions for adding new courses, complaints about the content of study courses, if any, are also discussed at the study programme council meetings which are held at least once in a semester but may be organized more frequently if necessary.

According to the SAR, Section 5.1 describes that the BSA conducts employer surveys which provide information on BSA graduates' professional activities. Employers can evaluate the study programme on the basis of its results - the quality analysis of graduates and working specialists.

There is an analysis of the results of graduate and employer surveys in SAR. Summarizing the

graduates' assessment of the strengths of the Bachelor's study programme "Psychology", the emphasis was on the responsiveness and support of the lecturers.

Most graduates admitted that their education in the Bachelor's study programme "Psychology" had improved their competitiveness in the Latvian labour market (4.1 points out of max 5). Graduates particularly emphasized that their education had enabled them to self-develop, fostered their career (professional) development, as evidenced by the average score of 4.3 out of max 5. Graduates acknowledged that the level and amount of the education they had received corresponded to their financial investment (4.4 points out of max 5) (see Table 2.6.6 in section 2.6.). An analysis and evaluation of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers, their use in the improvement of study content and quality was performed. After evaluating the results and in order to improve systematically the quality of the study process

Internal or quality surveys are aimed at improving processes, as well as with the participation of students in decision-making.

There is an evident lack of interest on the part of students staying outside the institution, mainly among those who study part-time since they also work. Likewise, there is a lack of information and guidance on these stays by the institution, with the students being the ones who must search for this information themselves.

During the visit, students only obtained information on mobility within the internship to Lithuania. However, visit time was not obtained for incoming student mobilities.

BSA has established ADMISSION RULES AND IMMATRICULATION PROCEDURES for matching study results, which is attached - [https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/admission/uznemsanas\\_noteikumi\\_BSA\\_2020\\_21.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/admission/uznemsanas_noteikumi_BSA_2020_21.pdf). The document does not describe inbound and outbound mobile opportunities and how learning outcomes achieved during mobility are equated.

Also, the INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY 2019-2021 is publicly available ([https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA\\_internationalisation\\_strategy\\_LV.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA_internationalisation_strategy_LV.pdf)). It describes the mobility strategy, but does not describe how the learning outcomes achieved during mobility are equated.

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

An evident effort is shown to offer a quality of teaching to students incorporating technology in this regard, which is reflected in the number of graduates at the end of the course.

Strengths:

1. Well-structured programme per module.
2. Assessment of competencies using various strategies.
3. To get students' feedback on the quality of the course, a survey has been developed and a static one has been compiled.
4. An analysis and evaluation of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers, their use in the improvement of study content and quality was performed.
5. Internal or quality surveys focus on process improvement as well as student participation in decision making.

Weaknesses:

1. There is no clear student mobility programme with other institutions.
2. Lack of information and orientation of students about international programs.
3. Not update the latest and contemporary literature in study courses.

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

#### **Analysis**

It should be noted that the resources and provision for the Bachelor study programme are considered at the level of the assessment of the study field.

In general, the resources required for the implementation and viability of the study programme reach a sufficient level. Of course, it should be considered that some provisions need to be improved (e.g. financial matters, expanding the library resources, renewal and replenishment of facilities). And it is evident that study programme further development, involvement into the research works requires additional funding, but there is no clear plan how to enhance the competitiveness of study programme and other activities and how to increase financial resources. Due to the small number of students, the premises in BSA Liepaja and Daugavpils branches are not sufficiently used. And it might lead the study programme to be unprofitable.

Unfortunately, it has to be admitted that libraries have a relatively large amount of special literature in Russian, but much less in Latvian. The collection of literature in English is also minimal. The expert group was not informed regarding any plans for expanding the library resources. So it would be recommended that BSA evaluate the possibility of supplementing the resources of special literature in both English and Latvian.

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

In general, the resources required for the implementation and viability of the study programme reach a sufficient level. At the same time, it is recommended to replenish the library with the special literature in Latvian and English. And it has to be worked on to increase the number of students in Liepaja and Daugavpils branches.

Strengths:

1. There is a sufficient level of provisions overall.

Weaknesses:

1. There are insufficient financial resources for facilities improvement in Liepaja.
2. A small number of students in Liepaja and Daugavpils branches, which makes the study programme unprofitable.
3. The libraries in Liepaja and Daugavpils branches carry a small amount of special literature in Latvian and English.

### **4. Teaching Staff**

#### **Analysis**

According to the SAR BSA undertakes measures to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme quite well. Experts found that among the academic staff members at a moment have doctoral degrees 21 from 38 (58%) working in the BA programme, most of them are participating in scientific projects in Latvia and abroad, some of them use wonderful possibilities of Erasmus+ exchange programmes. During six years the number of Professors and Associate professors increased. Now there are two Professors and three Associate professors involved in programmes. All these experiences support the teaching process. In the bachelor's programme of BSA, some guest lecturers do not have doctoral degrees and do not participate in scientific projects and they write few or not at all scientific articles.

Qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the Bachelor study programme complies with the requirements of Article 55, paragraph one, clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

Ageing of academic staff is also problematic. As mentioned before could be recommended to motivate teaching staff to obtain doctor degree and to involve lecturers into scientific research projects and writing the articles. A recommendation is to work out a strategy on how to support the development of academic staff members without scientific research experiences and how to motivate them to participate in scientific research and start or continue their studies in doctoral programmes.

Academic staff members with doctoral degrees have enough scientific articles published in international peer-reviewed journals and books. For example, Professor Irina Plotka published during six years 21 articles in journals indexed in international databases, Professor Zhanna Tsaurkubule - 19, Professor Nina Blumenau - 15, Associated Professor Geršons Breslavs - 11, Docent Armen Gabrelian - 9, Guest Docent Valeri Pethukhov - 19. They also participate in scientific projects and use results in the study process. But 12 guest lecturers need more support in their academic development. Academy would find possibilities to involve them more into research projects and writing articles. Experts are sure that it is very important for the quality of the study process. There is an insufficient fundraising activity in the BSA.

Academic staff members are involved in scientific research both at national and international level and they publish articles in the fields related to the content of the study programmes. But unfortunately, some lecturers need more partnership with professors, associate professors and assistant professors and their research experiences. Teamwork would be more efficient. Mobility of academic staff and mobility of students in international exchange programmes would be more active. Experts' recommendation is to have more funded projects in BSA.

There is in BSA a mechanism of collaboration between the teaching staff members in place which contributes to the improvement of the study process quite well. Preparation annual reports, promoting the international exchange, inviting qualified guest lecturers from Latvia and abroad, analysis of the study programme, quality control and analysis of the study process, surveys for graduates and students, use of external experts and strategic planning are everyday practice in BSA. A recommendation could be to invite more guest lecturers and participate more actively in exchange programmes.

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

Professors, Associate Professors and Assistant Professors are quite well involved in scientific research and they publish articles in international and in national journals and books. Unfortunately, 12 lecturers do not participate in research projects and have very few publications. Academy would involve them in research projects and support publishing. Lecturers would find possibilities to apply doctoral degrees. Academic staff of BSA would participate more in exchange programmes.

Strengths:

1. Academic staff members with doctoral degrees are quite active researchers and publish articles in the international and national journals.

Weaknesses:

1. Academy would find more possibilities to support the academic development of lecturers, involve them in research projects and motivate them to write scientific articles.

2. A part of lecturers has no doctoral degrees. At the moment there are only two lecturers who are working towards the PhD degree. BSA need to think about the strategy to get new doctors in psychology.
3. Lecturers participate very few in international exchange programmes as Erasmus+.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Psychology"

### Requirements

- 1 1. The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure by which state-recognised documents of higher education are issued.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme provided in Annex: Model of the diploma issued for the acquisition of the study program\_Bachelor 01042020.docx
- 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:** Annex added: AGREEMENT between BIA and University of Daugavpils.docx
- 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:** Annex added: Document proving that the BIA guarantees to students the compensation of all losses.jpg
- 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:** According to Appendix 11.4, Academic staff members involved in the study programme are proficient in the official language.
- 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:** Partially compliant  
**Justification:** According to the academic staff CV is not for everyone B2 level. There are 11 persons. During the expert visit, not all the lecturers involved spoke and understood English in order to implement the programme.
- 6 6. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of an academic doctoral study programme, at least three of which are experts approved by the Latvian Science Council in the respective field of science. At least five teaching staff members with a doctoral degree are among the academic staff of a professional doctoral study programme in arts.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:** Not applicable.

- 7 7. The academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements set forth in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programs meets the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, point 3 of the Law on Higher Education.
- 8 8. The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant  
**Justification:** In the sample study agreement, clause 1.2 mentions that the student is enrolled in a bilingual Latvian and English language programme, which is not appropriate.
- 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:** 10\_Annex. Description of the courses of the academic bachelor study programme "Psychology" 20042020.docx
- 10 10. The study programme complies with the valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided that the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant  
**Justification:** 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:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** Added Opinion of the Council of Higher Education 02042020.pdf
- 12 12. The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant  
**Justification:** 6\_Annex.Compliance of the academic Bachelor study programme Psychology with the state education standard.docx
- 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:** Not applicable.
- 14 14. Each member of the academic staff has either publications published in reviewed editions within the last six years, including international editions (if they have worked for a shorter period of time, the number of publications shall be in proportion to the work period), or artistic creation achievements (for instance, exhibitions, films, theatre performances, and concert activity), or a five-year practical work experience (except for the experience in the implementation of the study programme) in accordance with the Law on Institutions of Higher Education.  
**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant  
**Justification:** According to the SAR, a list of publications and CV some academic staff members do not fully comply with the requirements.
- 15 P5 - Overall rating  
**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Most of the criteria are appropriate. But according to the academic staff CV is not for everyone B2 level. There are 11 persons. During the expert visit, not all the lecturers involved spoke and understood English in order to implement the 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Limited funding and insufficient knowledge of English do not provide sufficient opportunities for further development.

- 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:** According to the expert analysis 4. Teaching Staff and the SAR list of publications and curriculum vitae of the academic staff members. The academic staff is not appropriate for the bachelor's program due to the fact that the bachelor's programme has more lecturers and courses, consequently, there are fewer highly qualified lecturers than the master's programme.

- 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:** Not applicable

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The academic bachelor study programme "Psychology" shows partial compliance in several aspects regarding their expected learning outcomes, aims, implementation of studies and novelty of study content.

### Strengths:

1. The name of the study programme, the degree to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are interrelated.
2. Although the programme has changed, it has a long history and a long tradition as an indicator of stability,
3. The content of the bachelor's programme meets the standards, providing the necessary educational content.
4. Summarizing the graduates' assessment of the strengths of the Bachelor's study programme "Psychology", the emphasis was on the responsiveness and support of the lecturers.
5. Academic staff members with doctoral degree participate in research projects and publish articles in international and national journals and books.

### Weaknesses:

1. Incoming mobility of students and the attraction of foreign guest lecturers are poorly developed.
2. Not update the latest and contemporary literature in study courses.
3. Limited funding and insufficient knowledge of English do not provide sufficient opportunities for further development.

4. Lecturers participate very few in the research projects and publications in international journals is not good.

### **Evaluation of the study programme "Psychology"**

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

### **6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Psychology"**

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

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Until the decision of this accreditation remove from the study agreement clause 1.2 mentions that the student is enrolled in a bilingual Latvian and English language program, which is not appropriate. Also remove it from the list of lectures on the website. |
| 2. Until next study year start using the Moodle study environment, include course descriptions, study materials, presentations, video and audio recordings, the latest research, etc. materials necessary for the acquisition of studies.                            |
| 3. Until next study year increase credit points in the study course English to improve English language skills for students.   |
| 4. Until next study year update the latest and contemporary literature in study courses.   |
| 5. Until next study year to improve English language skills to students, the number of credits in the program should increase.   |
| 6. Until next accreditation develop a strategy for attracting high school (secondary school) graduates to improve the number of students in the bachelor's study programme.  |
| 7. Until next accreditation develop modern teaching methods, especially in branches.   |
| 8. Until the next accreditation restore the library in English.  |
| 9. Until next accreditation academic staff members must participate more in research projects and publish more articles in international peer-reviewed journals.   |
| 10. Until next accreditation improve the number of contact hours (in-person teaching) for branches by attracting more local lecturers and/or previous graduates of the programmes.   |
| 11. Until next accreditation for the development of final theses more use of the SCOPUS and Web of Science databases which is available at the BSA library.  |

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

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Provide more opportunities for students and staff to improve their English during the study process by using more English literature and publications from databases. |
| 2. Provide students with information regarding extracurricular activities for improvement of English language skills, and organize such activities, if possible.         |
| 3. Increase ERASMUS mobility for students and teachers.  |
| 4. Continue regular English language improvement courses for staff.  |



5. To develop a strategy for attracting students to Daugavpils branch.

6. To plan a budget for the purchase of study books, renovation of equipment and facilities (especially in the Liepaja branch, urgent renovation of premises and furniture is needed).

## **II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT**

### **II. "Psychology" ASSESSMENT**

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

##### **Analysis**

The aim of the professional Master's study programme "Psychology" is to develop and deepen practical skills as well as to raise the level of theoretical expression and understanding in psychology constituting a professional master's degree in psychology and qualification "Psychologist". This is appropriate for the professional Master's study programme. The programme has seven appropriate objectives.

By graduating from the professional master's study programme "Psychology", students have acquired some knowledge but more skills and competencies. This is appropriate for graduating from a professional Master's study programme.

The name of the Master's study programme, the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are defined and interrelated.

Comparing learning outcomes with the list of study courses and course descriptions, it is not clear how learning outcomes are achieved. Specifically, how exactly are achieved:

- according to the skills described in the SAR: 2.1.1. Graduates can apply the professional skills required by the psychologist's professional standard, namely: psychological counselling skills, skills in individual and group or organizational psychological assistance, psychological research (assessment) skills, skills in preparing a psychologist's expert opinion, skills in providing feedback on the results of psychological research, skills to cooperate and work in a team and cooperate with other professionals in the process of client psychological reception, performance appraisal skills.

For example, 2 contact hours have been set aside for forming a psychologist's opinion, which is not enough to learn to do so. None of the study courses includes psychological counselling, individual and group or organizational psychological assistance.

- according to the competencies described in the SAR: 3.5. Graduates can understand and apply the ethical principles of psychology as well as to take independent decisions and solve problems to provide high-quality psychological assistance services.

The descriptions of the study courses do not include any books on professional ethics in the work of a psychologist.

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

In general, the name of the study programme, the degree and the professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements are interrelated. However, comparing learning outcomes with the list of study courses and course descriptions, it is not clear how learning outcomes are achieved. It would be good to include the changes in the parameters that were made from the previous accreditation.

Strengths:

1. Learning outcomes are formulated following the professional standard and the Law on

psychologists.

Weaknesses:

1. It is not clear how some defined learning outcomes are achieved, there are not supported by study courses.

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

### **Analysis**

Overall, the idea of the programme is good and the programme could be in demand in the market. The programme is completely new, if it had been developed appropriately, it could be in demand in the Latvian market. The programme includes enough internships that could ensure the development of students' skills and competencies.

The programme includes enough research methodology and data analysis courses.

However:

1) According to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 512 "Regulations on the National Standard for the Second Level Professional Higher Education" (<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=268761>), If a student has not acquired the requirements set by the Environmental Protection Law and the Civil Protection Law, he/she shall acquire them in addition to the Master's programme. The Master's programme must describe how a student who has not previously completed this course can take it in the Master's programme.

2) According to the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 512 "Regulations on the National Standard for the Second Level Professional Higher Education" (<https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=268761>)

In addition to the compulsory content of the Master's programme referred to in Paragraph 23 of these Regulations, study courses that ensure the achievement of professional competence in business (innovations, organization and establishment of enterprises, management methods, basics of project development and management, record keeping and financial accounting system) regulation of legal relations, including the formation of social dialogue in society, as well as knowledge of other innovations in business or institution management), if they have not been acquired in a lower level study programme.

Course titles, course descriptions, as well as the visit did not provide evidence of which courses do not ensure the achievement of professional competence in business (innovation, organization and establishment of companies, management methods, basics of project development and management, record keeping and financial accounting system, knowledge of labour law regulation, including the development of social dialogue in society, as well as knowledge of other innovations in running a business or HEI).

There is no course called entrepreneurship, innovation, project management.

3) The Master's programme is implemented in the Latvian language as well, therefore the study courses must comply with the requirements of the Latvian language. The names of many study courses are not correctly formulated in Latvian:

- Profesionāļa attīstības psiholoģija (in English - Psychology of professional's development). The essence of the study course is not clear and logical, seeing the title in English and the course description.

- Vadības zinātne (in English - Science of management), Latvian must have - Vadībzinība. Proof of the term can be found in the Latvian National terminology portal <https://termini.gov.lv/atrast/vad%C4%ABbz%C4%ABba>

- Inženieru psiholoģija un ergonomika (in English Engineering psychology and ergonomics). There is no such field in the Latvian language and no literature in engineering psychology is available. Given the specifics of the program, it would be better to call this course Organizational Psychology. In Latvian - Organizāciju psiholoģija.

- Profesionāļa psiholoģiskā konsultēšana un atbalstīšana (in English - Workplace counselling). Translated into Latvian according to the psychologist professional standard - Psiholoģiskā konsultēšana.

- Kroskultūrāla psiholoģija: biznesa komunikācijas (teorija un prakse). (in English Cross-cultural psychology: business communications (theory and practice)). There is no such word in Latvian - Kroskultūrāls. According to the Latvian National terminology portal course could be Starpkultūru saskarsme or Dažādu kultūru biznesa saskarsme (komunikācija).

- Komunikatīvās psihotehnoloģijas profesionālajā darbībā (praktikums) (in English - Communicative psycho-technology in professional's activity (practicum)). In Latvian, there is no word practicum (which is borrowed from Russian), but there is practice. The word psychotechnology is not used in Latvian. According to the standard point of the psychologist's profession (Psychologist's duties and tasks), point 3.3 the psychologist must learn - Implementation of psychological assistance to individuals, groups and organizations using scientifically based methods (crisis intervention, self-help skills development skills, etc.). From the course description, it can be understood that this course is practical psychological training. Therefore, this course and all other courses and their titles should be following the standard of the psychologist profession.

4) According to Chapter III of the Law on Psychologists (Article 12 - Basic Principles of Psychologist's Professional Activity), a psychologist shall observe the following basic principles in his or her professional activity: responsibility, ethics, confidentiality, honesty, etc. In-depth study of the ethics of a psychologist is also required according to the standard of the psychologist's profession. There is no study course entitled Professional Ethics in the Master's study programme (also in the Bachelor's programme). The principles of professional ethics of a psychologist are discussed in the course descriptions in 2 contact hours at each of the practices, among other practice issues - rules of student behaviour in practice, principles of professional ethics. Work safety instructions.

Article 13 also states that a psychologist can give an opinion from a psychologist. It is not clear in which study course students acquire this skill. There are only 2 hours of psychological opinion training in the Workplace Counseling course. In the standard of the psychologist's profession, one of the duties and tasks of a psychologist is - To prepare an opinion on the results of psychological research, following the purpose of psychological research. Therefore, the number of contact hours is not applicable to prepare the student for this task.

5) The study programme is designed to prepare work and organizational psychologists. There is no study course on work, organization or management psychology in the study programme.

The courses "Personnel Psychology", "Occupational Psychology" are following the specifics of the programme. The Master's programme provides enough contact hours for the requirements, each with 16 contact hours.

About the Mandatory courses, which comprises study courses in the amount of 67 credit points; Restrictive elective courses (13 credit points) (9 Annex. Professional master studies 'program Psychology plan 20042020.docx).

The BSA master's study programme "Psychology" is designed to be able to achieve the goals of the study programme by achieving the results of individual courses, observing the principles of student - centered education. Each study course has a leading lecturer, who develops and improves the study subject to be taught. Descriptions of study courses are reviewed at the meetings of the Council of the study programme "Psychology" and approved by the BSA Senate.

In chapter 2.3. described, therefore, taking into account the diversity of students' needs, each lecturer within the study course uses appropriate learning paths and uses different ways of programme implementation, using a variety of pedagogical methods according to the circumstances. In addition, in order to systematically improve the quality of the study process, the lecturers of the professional master's study programme "Psychology" are actively involved in the Moodle system. During the visit, the experts saw no more than one study course in a Moodle

environment - a Master's Thesis.

The evaluation system used within the programme complies with the regulations for the organization of BSA study course examinations (Approved at the BSA Senate meeting on March 30, 2016, protocol No. 125). The evaluation of study courses takes place in a 10-point system. As intermediate test methods, lectures and seminars use tests that motivate students to study independently throughout the semester, as well as allow to test the acquired knowledge and assess students' skills, analyze the material to be acquired. At the end of each course there is a final examination of the study course, written and / or oral examination, knowledge assessment tests, reports, essays are used, as well as practical knowledge acquisition courses, students independently develop study papers, confirming a certain level of professional skills. At the same time, forms of examination are used, such as recordings of the consultation process, development of research opinions, presentations in seminars, essays, etc. (Chapter 2.3).

Like the institution indicates long term, in line with the ESG 2015 standards and the BSA strategy of activities and development is reviewed annually along with evaluating results and defining the current tasks; and this process area involves employees, students, graduates, employers and professionals (BIA study quality management system\_2020\_1.pdf).

SAR includes an analysis of the results of graduate and employer surveys. The results of the survey showed that almost half of the graduates (47%) are currently working in a job related to their education at the BSA. Most graduates are employed in the field of work and organizational psychology (33%), in the field of education and school psychology (20%), in psychological counselling (13.3%). Some graduates work in the field of legal psychology (13.3%). Only 6.7% of graduates are not working within their specialty

Despite the foregoing, there has been no access to the evidence of the results of the evaluations and the modifications that this involves in this program, therefore, it is not possible to evaluate the real impact of the opinions collected in the evaluations on the study programme.

BSA has established ADMISSION RULES AND IMMATRICULATION PROCEDURES for matching study results, which is attached - [https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/admission/uznemsanas\\_noteikumi\\_BSA\\_2020\\_21.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/admission/uznemsanas_noteikumi_BSA_2020_21.pdf). The document does not describe inbound and outbound mobility opportunities and how learning outcomes achieved during mobility are equated.

Also, the INTERNATIONALIZATION POLICY 2019-2021 is publicly available ([https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA\\_internationalisation\\_strategy\\_LV.pdf](https://bsa.edu.lv/wp-content/docs/2020/BSA_internationalisation_strategy_LV.pdf)). It describes the mobility strategy but does not describe how the learning outcomes achieved during mobility are equated.

The interview with students and graduates shows a lack of information about the real possibilities of getting involved in international programs, together with a lack of interest on their part to go outside.

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

Master's studies are designed for practical application once the bachelor's period has passed, hence the importance of having an updated programme as shown in the BIA. The goals and tasks of the Master's study programme are described, as well as the skills and knowledge for professional qualification to be acquired after the completion of the programme, but it is not supported with the content and descriptions of the study courses.

Strengths:

1. The study programme has well-developed research methodologies and data analysis.

2. The programme includes internships with contact hours for the acquisition of professional skills.
3. The Master's programme has a student-centered approach and an assessment system.

#### Weaknesses:

1. There is no course whose title includes the professional ethics of a psychologist.
2. Insufficient contact hours in the programme are devoted to psychological opinion.
3. It is not clear how students gain knowledge and understanding of modern entrepreneurship, innovation, project management.
4. Weak Latvian language, which is in course titles and course descriptions.
5. The programme does not include courses in organizational psychology, work psychology and management psychology.

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

#### **Analysis**

The resources and provision for the study programme are considered at the level of the study field. Neither during the visit nor in the SAR, the provisions (informative, material, technical) are not divided by study programmes, it is considered as a whole.

But it is worth mentioning that the master's programme is only in Riga, not in Liepaja or Daugavpils branches. And there are sufficient provisions in Riga. There is a laboratory for practical work and it is very important for studies and research in the master's programme. But at the same time due to the small number of students, it might lead the study programme to be unprofitable.

But as it is mentioned previously:

- 1) the vast majority (more than half) of the literature are books in Russian. So it would be recommended for BSA to evaluate the possibility of supplementing the resources of special literature in both English and Latvian;
- 2) the mobility of lecturers within the BSA is not significant and it should be improved in future. Students of the master's programme need to have lectures held by foreign lecturers, to get more and wider information and knowledge.

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

In general, the resources required for the implementation and viability of the Master's study programme reach a sufficient level. At the same time, it is recommended to replenish the library with the special literature in Latvian and English. And it is important to attract more foreign lecturers.

#### Strengths:

1. The provisions are at a sufficient level.
2. There is a laboratory for practical work. It helps a lot for students to strengthen their knowledge practically.

#### Weaknesses:

1. The library has a small number of books in Latvian and English.
2. A low number of attracted foreign lecturers.
3. A small number of students, which could make the study programme unprofitable.

### **4. Teaching Staff**

#### **Analysis**

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the Master`s study programme complies with the requirements partially set forth in the regulatory enactments. It enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. BSA undertakes measures to avoid negative effects on the quality of the implementation of the study programme quite well.

Academic staff: 12 from 15 (80%) have doctoral degrees, they are participating in different scientific projects in Latvia and other countries, they use wonderful possibilities of Erasmus+ exchange programmes. All these experiences support the teaching and learning process. There are working guest lecturers who do not have doctoral degrees and do not participate in scientific projects and write few or not at all articles. Experts recommend to involve these lecturers into scientific research, and that they would continue their studies in doctoral study programmes.

By academic degrees among 15 staff members, 12 (80%) have doctoral degrees and three staff members have Master's degrees. Two of them are doctoral candidates. Their qualification, the scientific and pedagogical experience ensured the achievement of the goal of the programme. There is no doctoral programme in BSA. But there are good possibilities to participate in doctoral programmes in other universities in Latvia or abroad. Recommendation for lecturers without a PhD is to find suitable programmes and continue the studies.

Academic staff members with doctoral degrees have some scientific articles published in international peer-reviewed journals and books. They also participate in scientific projects and use results in the teaching and learning process. But some academic staff members should be more active in scientific research and write articles in international journals.

For some members of academic staff also English language skills are not on B2 level. For example, Lead researcher who is teaching Analysis of problem situation and methods of decision-making has B1 level in English, Docent who is teaching Intercultural and Community Communication has English language skills on B1 level, Professor of Science of management has A1 level in English and A2 level in German language and Docent who teach Applied Psychology has foreign language level B1. It means that 4 academic staff members working on the master`s programme have English language skills lower than B2.

The qualification of the teaching staff members partially complies with the requirements and enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and study courses.

There is in BSA a mechanism for mutual collaboration between the teaching staff members in place, which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/ modules and their correlation.

There is a mechanism for collaboration between the teaching staff members, which contributes to the improvement of the study courses/modules. Preparation of annual reports, promoting the international exchange, inviting qualified quest lecturers, analysis and evaluation of the content of the study programme, quality control and analysis of the study process, student surveys and other forms ensured the quality of academic and scientific activities in the implementation of the study programme quite well.

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

Academic staff members with doctoral degrees have many articles in international and national journals and books. They participate in research projects and present research results in conferences in Latvia and abroad. Unfortunately, in the study programme implemetation involved lecturers did not publish research results enough and they would turn more attention to scientific research and writing the articles. They would apply doctoral degrees as soon as possible. The staff

also has poor foreign language skills, the state language is also insufficiently developed throughout the institution, while the younger generation of staff is poorly involved in the management processes, which can indicate future difficulties in sustaining BSA and providing quality study process.

Strengths:

1. Qualification of the academic staff with doctoral degrees mostly complies with the requirements.
2. Most staff members have doctoral degrees and they have written publications in international journals.

Weaknesses:

1. Academic staff members without doctoral degrees would apply doctoral degrees as soon as possible. They would be more active in research and publish more articles.
2. English language skills of many academic staff members are low. BSA could organize more English language courses for staff members.

## 5. Assessment of the Compliance of the Study Programme "Psychology"

### 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:** The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme provided in Annex: Model of the diploma issued for the acquisition of the study program\_Master.docx 01042020.docx
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:** Provided in Annex: AGREEMENT between BIA and University of Daugavpils.docx
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:** Provided in Annex: Document proving that the BSA guarantees to students the compensation of all losses mg.jpg
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:** According to Appendix 11.4, Academic staff members involved in the study programme are proficient in the official language.
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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According to the CVs of the academic staff four persons don't have B2 level. During the expert visit not all lecturers were able to speak and understand English when they could provide studies.

- 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:** Not applicable.

- 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:** Not applicable.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** In the sample study agreement, clause 1.2 mentions that the student is enrolled in a bilingual Latvian and English language programme, which is not appropriate.

- 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According to expert analysis the section 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof.

See 10\_Annex. Description of study courses of the Master's study program  
Psychology\_20042020.docx

- 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 expert analysis the section 1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme It is not clear how some learning outcomes are achieved.

According to the analysis of experts from 2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof) the program should be corrected, the study content and study courses should be improved.

- 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:** Not applicable

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** There are no courses in the programme about modern entrepreneurship, innovation, project management.



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:** Not applicable

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** According to the SAR, a list of publications and CV some academic staff members do not fully comply with the requirements.

15 P5 - Overall rating

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Some of the criteria are appropriate and some are not.

## 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:** Partially compliant

**Justification:** Limited funding, library resources and insufficient support of studies in English do not provide sufficient opportunities for further development.

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:** There are some notes from expert group, but in general, according to the SAR, list of publications and CV qualification of the academic staff members on Master`s programme evaluated as fully compliant.

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:** While seeing the master's theses during the visit, many students used outdated literature, although the university has access to SCOPUS and Web of science databases. The databases may not be fully used due to insufficient English language skills.

## Conclusions by specifying the strengths and weaknesses

The professional Master's study programme "Psychology" has some deficiencies in their compliance with necessities for study implementation, e.g. English language skills of staff, amount of research activity and academic publications, unclear achievement of some learning outcomes, and some issues with sample documents. Overall, the idea of the programme is good, the programme is conceptually completely new, if it had been developed on a market research basis, it could possibly be in demand in the Latvian market.

#### Strengths:

1. The name of the study programme, the degree to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and admission requirements are defined and interrelated.
2. A new programme with future development opportunities.
3. The study programme has well-developed research methodologies and data analysis.
4. Most academic staff members have doctoral degrees.
5. Academic staff members with doctoral degrees have publications in international peer-reviewed journals or national books and journals.
6. The list of publications and CV qualification of the academic staff members on the Master`s programme is fully compliant.

#### Weaknesses:

1. Limited funding, library resources and insufficient knowledge of English do not provide sufficient opportunities for further development.
2. In the sample study agreement, clause 1.2 mentions that the student is enrolled in a bilingual Latvian and English language programme, which is not appropriate.
3. There is no course whose title includes the professional ethics of a psychologist.
4. It is not clear how some learning outcomes are achieved and it is not supported with study course content and descriptions.
5. Weak course titles and course descriptions quality in Latvian language.
6. The programme does not include courses in organizational psychology, work psychology and management psychology.
7. There are no courses in the programme - entrepreneurship, innovation, project management.
8. Some academic staff members do not have B2-level English language skills..
9. Lack of a greater orientation towards continuity in a PhD.
10. A very small number of students in the programme, what could cause the unprofitability of the programme and affect the quality of the study process.

### Evaluation of the study programme "Psychology"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

### 6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Psychology"

#### Short-term recommendations

- |  |
|--|
| 1. Until the decision of this accreditation remove from the study agreement clause 1.2 mentions that the student is enrolled in a bilingual Latvian and English language programme, which is not appropriate. Also remove it from the list of lectures on the website. |
| 2. Until the decision of this accreditation revise and apply learning outcomes in accordance with legislation and profession standards and how they are achieved.  |
| 3. Until next study year to improve the names of study courses in the Latvian language, in accordance with the standard of the psychologist profession.  |
| 4. Until next study year include study course about the professional ethics of a psychologist.   |
| 5. Until next study year include study courses in organizational psychology, work psychology and management psychology.  |

6. Until next study year include study courses entrepreneurship, innovation, project management related to the modern world, change and innovation.
7. Until next study year increase contact hours in the programme are devoted to psychological opinion.
8. Until next study year improve using the Moodle study environment, include course descriptions, study materials, presentations, video and audio recordings, the latest research, etc. materials necessary for the acquisition of studies.
9. Until next study year update the list of literature sources in course descriptions, including the latest research on the subject.
10. Until the next accreditation develop a system and find funding to purchase more books (special literature) in Latvian and English.
11. Until next accreditation develop strategy for attracting students from BSA and other HEI to improve the number of students in the Master`s study programme.
12. Until next accreditation develop it is recommended that students promote the choice of courses in English provided by foreign guest lecturers.
13. Until the next accreditation Academy would have more funded research projects.
14. Until the next accreditation to motivate students to find scientific articles in databases, read them and write based on these materials Master`s theses.

### Long-term recommendations

1. Develop a system and find funding to attract foreign lecturers.
2. It is recommended that students' participation in seminars and conferences organized by the institution or by other university institutions be encouraged.
3. Academic staff members without doctoral degrees would apply doctoral degrees as soon as possible.
4. Academic staff would publish more articles in international peer-reviewed journals.
5. Recommendation is to improve English and Latvian language skills of students and teaching staff.
6. Encourage the internalization of both teachers and students, increasing stays abroad, as well as attracting visiting students and researchers.
7. Increase the offer of courses that allow a professional orientation from bachelor.
8. Increase ERASMUS mobility for students and teachers.
9. More use of the SCOPUS and Web of Science databases which is available at the university.

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

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

## Assessment of the Requirements for the Study Field

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation		Comment
Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 21 of the Law on Institutions of Higher Education, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study direction whilst implementing their internal quality assurance systems:	Fully compliant		There are some notes from expert group, but in general BSA ensures improvement and development of quality assurance system and study field internal quality system evaluated as fully compliant. Annex: Internal Quality of Study program.doc
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	SAR and its annexes "Cooperation and Internationalization" and "Letter of Intent for collaborative work-based practice" note organizations of collaboration imply effective collaboration with local and international partners. In the case of masters' programme, more collaboration with the speciality of work psychology would be necessary, and for mobility – more cooperation with English-speaking organizations.
R3 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the development level thereof (if applicable).		Partially compliant	The course descriptions of the Master's program include a couple of books published in 2017-2019. Language skills of students and some lecturers, and some staff members are very low. Lecturers must be involved more efficiently in scientific research and write articles in the international journals. BSA has few new academic staff with PhD degrees. BSA needs new doctors. Lecturers have few research projects and publish very few articles in international peer-reviewed journals.

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		SAR annex "Implementation of recommendations received during previous evaluation procedures" and chapter VI of this report indicate that recommendations have been implemented only partially and some are still in the planning process.

### 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	Psychology (43313)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Not relevant	Average
2	Psychology (47313)	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Fully compliant	Partially compliant	Average

### The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

There are no dissenting opinions of the experts