

# Expert group joint opinion

Evaluation Procedure: Assessment of Study Field

Higher Education Institution: University of Daugavpils

Study field: Health Care

Experts:

1. Inga MILLERE (Chair of the Experts Group)
2. Irma Nool (Secretary of the Experts Group)
3. Ivana Lalić
4. Daiga Rudzīte (Employers' Confederation of Latvia)
5. Marta Viļuma (Student Union of Latvia)

# **Summary of the Assessment of the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes**

## **Summary of the Assessment of the Study Field and the Relevant Study Programmes**

Daugavpils University is a significant center of education and science in Daugavpils and Eastern Latvia. Daugavpils University is working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and It should be noted that the Ministry of Health also conceptually supports the development of health care field study programs in the Latgale region.

The justification for conducting study programs is explained in relation to social/economic needs. DU development goals are envisaged by the "Daugavpils University development strategy for 2015-2020" which needs to be updated. All presented materials during the Accreditation process show DU's overall competence for strategic development as a higher education institution and good background for the study field of Health care, but at the same time expert team found that there is a lack of attention of the top management regarding the study field of Health care – not shown in the structure, not amended in the Strategy etc.

According to the system established by Daugavpils University study quality management, the main role is played by the head of the study field and the study field council, however, during the on-site visit, the team of experts could not be convinced that the study field council performs this task properly. The content and aim of the study programs correspond to the study direction "Health Care".

After getting acquainted with the DU self-assessment and the information provided during the on-site visit and later also sent in addition, it can be concluded that the study and information base is identified, resources and material and technical support are available and in accordance with the specifics of the study programs.

The field of study "Health care" does not have unified research directions, but it would be necessary for the research strategy to be in the field of health care and be necessary for the development of interdisciplinary research. It is necessary to develop joint research projects with employers to ensure the development of evidence-based practice competence of students in the health care study programs and the implementation of evidence-based practice among medical, nursing and rehabilitation professionals. Not all academic staff members in the last six years have published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions. There are many publications but not connected with physiotherapy or nursing.

DU has good cooperation with the universities of Latvia and employers for developing the study field. In the cooperation with universities abroad very few partners from European universities are involved and it needs to be increased. The representative from the university abroad in the Study direction council would be beneficial for developing the curriculum. On on-site visit, discussions with teaching staff came out that guest lecturers have no possibility to participate in Erasmus + program for teacher exchange.

It would be beneficial to have a permanent contract with foreign lecturers and it would be necessary for DU strategically determine the proportion of guest lecturers in the study field.

The higher education institution proves the compliance of the general goals of all study programs with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution. All of the indicators of both professional bachelor study programmes of the Health care direction – "Physiotherapy" and "Nursing" are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The higher education institution checks and ensures the harmonization of learning outcomes at the level of the study program and subjects, and thus ensures the achievement of the envisaged learning outcomes in the study programmes it conducts.

The anticipated learning outcomes of the study programmes conducted by the higher education institution correspond to the level and profile of the qualifications acquired by them. The higher education institution has clearly defined the learning outcomes of study programmes that are in line

with the mission and goals of the higher education institution. Proof of this is the attached documentation: regulations on study and / or assessment, study plan and syllabus and teaching plan, planned learning outcomes of all study programmes, diploma supplement, employment analysis of graduates, feedback from graduates and their employers or associates, feedback from students.

A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

It was recognizable that the material and technical base and its provision are available to both students and teaching staff, organized according to the specifics and level of the study program, and are able to provide ample opportunities for future students and teachers to improve and develop in their chosen profession. Technologies for improving the learning process have been purchased within the framework of EU co-financed projects. In addition to specific study rooms, the infrastructure of Daugavpils University is available to students. Despite the fact that, in general, the resources of the DU library are good, the list of study literature lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care in relation to physiotherapy and rehabilitation as well as nursing.

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programmes complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study program and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study program and the relevant study courses. Still for the implementation of the study program more nurses with master's degrees and physiotherapists with longer practical experience with permanent contracts are needed.

The experts were convinced during the accreditation process that both PBSP are in compliance with all needed legislation acts except PBSP "Nursing". PBSP "Nursing" only partly comply the Law "On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications" and EU directives, and as a result the program lacks around 40 KP of clinical practice.

## **I - Assessment of the Study Field**

### **I - Assessment of the Study Field**

#### **1.1 Management of the Study Field**

##### **Analysis**

Criteria:

1.1.1. The Daugavpils University (henceforth – DU) is an educational institution under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science. The University implements 16 study fields - Education, pedagogy, and sports" (10 study programmes), "Art" (6 study programmes), "History and philosophy " (4 study programmes), "Language and culture studies, native language studies and language programmes " (9 study programmes), "Translation" (1 study programme), "Psychology" (3 study programmes), "Economics" (3 study programmes), "Management, administration, and real estate management" (3 study programmes), "Law" (3 study programmes), "Life sciences" (5 study programmes), " Chemistry, Chemical Technologies and Biotechnologies" (2 study programmes), "Physics, material science, mathematics, and statistics" (6 study programmes), "Information technologies, computer technology, electronics, telecommunications, computer management, and computer science" (3 study programmes), "Environment protection" (2 study programmes); " Internal Security and Civil Protection " (2 study programmes) and "Health Care" with 2 study programmes corresponding to the Latvian education system.

DU development goals are determined by "Daugavpils University development strategy for 2015-2020.

([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DU\\_attistibas\\_strategija\\_25.01.2021.-converted.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DU_attistibas_strategija_25.01.2021.-converted.pdf)).

Based on letter No. 4-10e/21/99 "On Development Strategies of Institutions" issued by the Ministry of Education and Science on 11.01.2021, for the implementation of nationally mutually harmonized education and science policy and successful implementation of the ongoing reforms, by the decision of the DU Senate (Protocol No.1 of the DU Senate meeting of January 25, 2021) the period of "Daugavpils University Development Strategy 2015-2020" has been extended until the start of a new approved strategy (indicative 2023). In 2016, two amendments to the Strategy were approved. It is desirable to clarify the exact goals of DU.

Daugavpils University Development Strategy predicts that DU will strengthen the leading positions of its higher education institution and research center in Eastern Latvia and develop into one of the most important education and science centers in Latvia (Self-assessment report).

The strategy sets targets for achieving the goals and the corresponding ones evaluation indicators in all areas of university activity.

The goals of the study field are defined in the Strategy 2015-2020 and they reflect the needs of the Latvian National Development Plan, the LR Public Health Guidelines for 2014-2020, and the development of human resources and healthcare in the country. However, it should be noted that the Health Care field Development Strategy mostly applies only to the Physiotherapy study program. Strategy 2015 -2020 envisages, based on the experience of DU in the training of physiotherapists, establishing a new master's study program for the training of specialists in health promotion and public health issues, however, this goal has not been achieved. It should also be noted that the Strategy does not mention anything about the development of the Nursing branch.

All of the above shows DU's overall competence in the strategic development of the higher education institution and background in the study field of Health care, but at the same time, it indicates the lack of attention of the top management regarding the study field of Health care. Daugavpils University is working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and Science and it should be noted that the Ministry of Health also conceptually supports the development of health care field study programmes in the Latgale region, having regard in particular Order No. 537 of the Cabinet of Ministers "On the Conceptual Report" On the Further Development of the Nursing Profession "

(<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/310369-par-konceptualo-zinojumu-par-masas-profesijas-turpmako-attistibu>).

Daugavpils University is a regional center of higher education and science that unites and develops the main study and research potential of Eastern Latvia in the fields of natural, humanitarian, social and educational sciences. The task of Daugavpils University is to provide high-quality studies and scientific research corresponding to the modern level, creating an intellectual basis for the harmonious development of the region. DU mission is to contribute to the development of a sustainable future society by implementing scientific research on an international level and ensuring high quality education in the fields of natural, engineering, education, health, humanities and social sciences, thus promoting the sustainable development of Latgale region and the whole country.

Daugavpils University has described, defined and published its standards and regulations for the verification of intended learning outcomes (examination procedures) as part of its studies, including methods of quality assurance, impartiality, transparency, complaints procedures and other relevant areas. Admission to study programmes is regulated by Regulations on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Admission Study Programmes, Regulations on Opening and Managing Daugavpils University Study Directions and Study Programmes([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_DU\\_Studijuvirziena-un-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parvnolikums.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_DU_Studijuvirziena-un-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parvnolikums.pdf)), DU Regulation on the recognition of competences acquired outside formal education and through professional experience and the learning outcomes achieved in prior learning

([https://old.du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Nolikums\\_par\\_arpus\\_formalas\\_izglitibas\\_apguto\\_vai\\_profesion%C4%81laja\\_pieredze\\_ieguto\\_kompetencu\\_un\\_iepriekseja\\_izglitiba\\_sasniegtu\\_studiju\\_rezultatu\\_atzisanu\\_DU.pdf](https://old.du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Nolikums_par_arpus_formalas_izglitibas_apguto_vai_profesion%C4%81laja_pieredze_ieguto_kompetencu_un_iepriekseja_izglitiba_sasniegtu_studiju_rezultatu_atzisanu_DU.pdf)).

1.1.2. According to the Daugavpils university established study quality management system of internal assessment, DU study direction councils constantly perform by elaborating self-assessment reports. Internal assessment is implemented and coordinated by the DU Centre of Study Quality Assessment (henceforth – CSQA) approved by the Senate. In accordance with DU study internal quality ensuring policy, there is a systematic assessment of study directions and programmes in order to make sure how the programme objectives and study outcomes are reached, the compliance of the programme with the current developments of national economy and labor market demands (Self-assessment). The main bodies where according to this system analysis is taken are - Study direction council and Council of Studies.

According to the established system, Study direction council should assess the process of studies within a programme, and its outcomes, and propose to the head of the study direction and study programme directors measures for the programme improvement and integration of recent ideas in the study content and process. The respective structural units discuss the submitted proposals and initiate changes in the study course amount, their content and calendar arrangements in semesters, then in faculty councils and after their support are addressed to DU Council of Studies that examines the justification of changes proposed. There are several internal studies quality measures - student surveys, formal indicators of students' academic performance as well as the professional indicators of the academic staff members in respective spheres (participation in conferences, research and other projects, applied projects, publications, etc.), as well as at the end of each academic year surveys of students ( <https://aptaujas.du.lv/index.php/651637> ), employers ( <https://aptaujas.du.lv/index.php/544412> ), and alumni ( <https://aptaujas.du.lv/index.php/764263/lang-lv> )

According to the system established by Daugavpils University study quality management, the main role is played by the head of the study field and the study field council, however, during the on-site visit, the team of experts could not be convinced that the study field council performs this task properly ( see chapter 1.1.3.).

The team of experts got the impression that this work is mainly performed by the directors of the study programmes, especially the director of the study programme Physiotherapy.

There have been no changes in the parameters of the PBSP “Nursing” since the issuance of the license: the issuance of the license on 04.08.2021, expert opinion dated from 29.07.2021 ( AIC Annex Atzinums\_DU\_PBSP\_Māszinības\_licencēšana.pdf)

Since the previous accreditation of the Professional Bachelor Study Program (PBSP) “Physiotherapy” (31.05.2013.), Daugavpils University’s PBSP “Physiotherapy” has been improved in accordance with the standard of the Physiotherapist profession : new study courses were introduced such as Physiotherapy and mental health, mental disorders, Rehabilitation multi-professional team, Health promotion and prevention in physiotherapy, Physiotherapy in gynaecology and obstetrics, Emergency medicine, Disaster medicine. The content of study courses was improved to include current requirements, as well as more industry specialists were involved in the implementation of the program..

1.1.3. Daugavpils University governing so to say self-governing is based on the rights and opportunities of the staff to engage in academic and scientific, administrative, and economic decision-making and major decision-making institutions consist from Constitutional Assembly, Senate, rector, Academic Court of Arbitration (Self-assessment report).

The Structure of management of the Daugavpils University is shown in the structure diagram (file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/Parvaldības%20struktūra%20(2).pdf ). It should be noted that the structure chart does not fully reflect the situation, regarding the field of health care, it lacks the Department of Nursing.

The management of the study field “Health Care” takes place in accordance with the “Regulations for Opening and Managing the Study Fields and Study Programmes of Daugavpils University”

([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_DU\\_Studiju-virzienu-un-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parv-nolikums.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_DU_Studiju-virzienu-un-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parv-nolikums.pdf) ). Council of Studies is a management authority that supervises issues of study planning, organizing, and coordinating, contributes to the conditions for the academic work at faculties and departments. The team of experts had the opportunity to get acquainted with the document that determines the composition of the Study Council. Study direction council is formed upon the recommendation of DU Council of Studies and approved by DU Senate. The management of the study field "Health Care" takes place in accordance with the "Regulations for Opening and Managing the Study Fields and Study Programmes of Daugavpils University" ( [https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_DU\\_Studiju-virzienu-un-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parv-nolikums.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_DU_Studiju-virzienu-un-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parv-nolikums.pdf) ). The general management of the study field is provided by the DU Study Council, the solution of specific issues is under the responsibility of the Council of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, the Department of Anatomy and Physiology, the Department of Nursing and the Council of the study field "Health Care" (Self-assessment report). The management structure of the study field is shown in the Annex II\_2.1.3. [file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/II\\_2.1.3\\_Studiju%20virziena%20Veselibas%20aprupe%20parvaldibas%20struktura%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/User/Downloads/II_2.1.3_Studiju%20virziena%20Veselibas%20aprupe%20parvaldibas%20struktura%20(2).pdf)

The Department of Anatomy and Physiology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics is a specialized unit of PBSP "Physiotherapy", the Department of Nursing at the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics is a specialized unit of PBSP "Nursing". The study field comprises two study programmes - PBSP "Physiotherapy" and PBSP "Nursing, led by program directors. However, it was not completely clear, during the site visit, composition and procedure of recruitment and functions of the study field council. Expert team only after the site visit received the Composition of the Council of the study field "Health Care" (updated and approved by the DU Senate on 13.06.2022).

During the visit, neither the representatives of the academic staff nor the directors or students of the study programmes could provide any information about the Council of the study field and could not name what the council has done for the study programmes. During the meeting with the head of the study field "Health Care", the team of experts could not gain confidence that the head is informed about the management of the study process at Daugavpils University, as well as about the topicalities and development of the study programmes PBSP "Physiotherapy" and PBSP "Nursing. The lack of an information exchange process between all levels of management is reflected in on-site visits by management and staff.

1.1.4. Daugavpils University has a system for the admission of students, the recognition of the study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education and evaluation of the achievements and learning outcomes of the students. Admission to PBSP "Physiotherapy" and PBSP "Nursing" of DU study field "Health Care" is provided in accordance with the "Admission Regulations for Full-Time and Part-Time Basic Studies" ( [https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/uznem\\_not\\_pilna\\_nep\\_laika\\_pamatstudijam\\_2022.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/uznem_not_pilna_nep_laika_pamatstudijam_2022.pdf) ) annually approved by the DU Senate. Students of PBSP "Physiotherapy" and PBSP "Nursing" of the study field "Health Care" are also matriculated in the later stages of the studies ([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/KARTIBA\\_STUDIJU\\_UZSAKSANAI\\_VELAKOS\\_POSMOS.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/KARTIBA_STUDIJU_UZSAKSANAI_VELAKOS_POSMOS.pdf) ) taking into account the recognition capabilities of the applicants' professional experience, previously acquired formal and non-formal education (Regulations on the Recognition of Competences Acquired Outside Formal Education or Professional Experience and Learning Outcomes Achieved in Previous Education at Daugavpils University (<https://du.lv/en/about-us/documents/> ).

The system for admission of students with previously acquired formal education corresponds fully to the legal requirements, is logical and efficient, and is supplemented with the necessary legal internal documentation and forms.

Based on the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia and the Order

No. 537 of the Cabinet of Ministers "On the Conceptual Report" On the Further Development of the Nursing Profession ", DU started implementation of PBSP "Nursing" in the academic year 2021/2022. Admission to PBSP "Nursing" took place in the academic year 2021/2022. In total, 400 students (state funding) matriculated in all study courses in the program, including students who wanted to continue their studies and transferred from Daugavpils Medical College. According to the information provided from Daugavpils university the process of transferring students from DMC took place in accordance with "THE PROCEDURE FOR THE INITIATION OF STUDIES IN SUBSEQUENT STUDY STAGES AT DAUGAVPILS UNIVERSITY". Protocols were not created in this process.

PBSP "Nursing" is implemented within the framework of cooperation between DU, Daugavpils University Agency "Daugavpils University Daugavpils Medical College" and Daugavpils Regional Hospital envisaging sharing of academic, professional and material resources of cooperation partners in the implementation of the programme. No regulatory documents have been developed for the cooperation between Daugavpils University and Daugavpils Medical College.

1.1.5. Daugavpils University uses various assessment principles and procedures for assessing achievements of students - the formative evaluation of learning outcomes, summative assessment, graded test or an examination as well as the final examination takes place orally, in writing or in the form of an achievement test. The students can get acquainted with the criteria, conditions and related procedures for the assessment of their progress in the course descriptions of the study programme (Annex II\_3.2.1\_Studiju kursu apraksti\_Fizioterapija.zip and Annex III\_3.2.1\_Studiju kursu apraksti\_Maszinibas.zip). The assessment principles and criteria are described in the description of each study course, which are also available in the DU MOODL system . When starting to work with the students in the classroom, the lecturers acquaint the students with the requirements of the study course and the system for the knowledge and skills assessment. During the on site visit, the students confirmed this to a team of experts. According to Self Assessment, in order to analyze the adequacy of assessment methods and procedures for achieving the aims of the study programmes and the needs of the students, the results of students' surveys, formal student progress indicators are described, the content of each study course and the quality of its teaching are examined. The expert team is not convinced that this process is carried out accordingly in the Study field Council as it is described in the Self-assessment ( see chapter 1.1.3.). After discussions with Study programme Directors, Head of the study direction Council, and academic staff, the impression is that the analysis takes place in a fragmented and not sequential continuous manner.

The assessment of learning outcomes is described in detail in "Regulations on Studies at Daugavpils University" (<https://du.lv/en/about-us/documents/> ).

1.1.6. Daugavpils University has established the principles of academic integrity, DU follows the "General Guidelines for Academic Integrity" ([https://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RED\\_Guidelines\\_RTU\\_VS\\_amended\\_v2.pdf](https://www.academicintegrity.eu/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/RED_Guidelines_RTU_VS_amended_v2.pdf) ), which help to develop a common understanding of honesty issues. The study programmes of the study field follow the principles of academic honesty in accordance with the Regulations on studies at Daugavpils University ([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NOLIKUMS\\_PAR\\_STUDIJAM\\_DU\\_2018.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/NOLIKUMS_PAR_STUDIJAM_DU_2018.pdf) ). Within the framework of the ESF SAM 8.2.3.0/18/A/010 project "Improvement of Daugavpils University Management and Management Competences", a training course "Academic Integrity" was organized for DU employees. DU has developed and follows the "Procedure for Submission of Final Thesis for Plagiarism Control at Daugavpils University" ( [https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/plagiata\\_kontrole.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/plagiata_kontrole.pdf) ), which provides for the submission of mandatory electronic versions of final theses and storage in the Information System of Daugavpils University and provides an opportunity to compare the final theses of the students with a set of theses defended during the previous years.

In general there is developed the "Code of Ethics for Daugavpils University Employees and Students" (<https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Etikas-kodekss.pdf>) which sets out guidelines for the ethical performance of DU employees and students. The Code requires that the students support and maintain academic and professional integrity and the academic staff assess the students' work in a timely, honest and fair manner, support and maintain academic and professional integrity.

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

Daugavpils University is a significant center of education and science in Daugavpils and Eastern Latvia. Daugavpils University is working in close cooperation with the Ministry of Education and It should be noted that the Ministry of Health also conceptually supports the development of health care field study programmes in the Latgale region.

Daugavpils University Development Strategy predicts that DU will strengthen the leading positions of its higher education institution and research center in Eastern Latvia and develop into one of the most important education and science centers in Latvia. The justification for conducting study programmes is explained in relation to social/economic needs. The Structure of management of the Daugavpils University is shown in the structure diagram also on the webpage, but it should be noted that the structure chart does not fully reflect the situation, regarding the field of health care. DU development goals are envisaged by "Daugavpils University development strategy for 2015-2020", which needs to be updated. The Health Care field Development Strategy mostly applies only to the Physiotherapy study program. Strategy 2015 -2020 envisages, based on the experience of DU in the training of physiotherapists, to establish a new master's study program for the training of specialists in health promotion and public health issues, however, this goal has not been achieved. It should also be noted that the Strategy does not mention anything about the development of the Nursing branch.

According to the system established by Daugavpils University study quality management, the main role is played by the head of the study field and the study field council, however, during the on-site visit, team of experts could not be convinced that the study field council performs this task properly. The content and aim of the study programmes correspond to the study direction "Health Care".

#### **strengths**

- 1.Daugavpils University is a significant and important center of education and science in Daugavpils and Eastern Latvia
- 2.DU shows a clear awareness of the necessary linkage to the labor market
- 3.The content of the study program corresponds to the study direction "Health Care".

#### **weaknesses**

- 1.Non-updated "Daugavpils University development strategy."
- 2.Not-updated The Health Care field Development Strategy
- 3.Not -updated Structure of management of the Daugavpils University
- 4.Unclear role of the study field "Health care" Council in the management of system

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

### **Analysis**

1.2.1. The Daugavpils University has stated that it has established a quality policy both on the SAR and onsite visit with the Meeting with HEI management, the group responsible for the preparation of the Self-Assessment Report and QA system,. It has been stated as included in the document under Other annexes within the SAR p.9. under List of Regulations for internal quality assurance in English.



Although, this document just contains a list of names of the documents not accessible links that provide the ability to check the information and documents there. The quality policy when checked is not available for access on the website of the DU as well. On the SAR p. 9 and during the onsite visit, the University outlined that they have improved and updated their quality policy as a part of ESF project in 2021. Within the framework of the project, the new normative acts for the internal study quality assurance were drawn up such as "Procedures for Ensuring the Effectiveness of DU Study Internal Quality Assurance System".

Regarding the development and maintenance of the quality assurance system, all the necessary tools are in place and are implemented within the process. For example, the DU takes into serious consideration the feedback provided by the students and graduates in order to improve the study process and quality of the courses within the study programmes. The University outlined their use of Moodle e-studies environment as a crucial part of successful study process provision for the students and lecturers.

During on-site visits, HEI management and directors of study programmes, were asked about the system established regarding continuous improvement, development and efficient performance of the study field in the existing study programmes. Study programme directors outlined that students overall are very active when motivated in participation of the questionnaires and answering the questions of study quality, and what should be improved or changed. Overall, in the Physiotherapy programme 80% of students participate in surveys while in the Nursing programme around 70%. Based on these surveys conducted and the feedback provided, changes within the study programmes are made accordingly to the recommendations received. Although, beforehand these recommendations are reviewed by study programme directors. During the visit, in the meetings with the Head of the study field of "Health care" council and program directors, the experts did not gain confidence about the role of the study field council.

1.2.2. All of the groups - students, employers and graduates are involved in the feedback mechanism. Student surveys are conducted once or twice a year electronically - <https://aptaujas.du.lv/index.php/651637>. During on-site visits, employers indicated that their surveys usually happen after students have done their internships at the specific hospital, clinic for example. Then they provide personal feedback of the student, the skills, knowledge and overall performance and growth during the months of the internship. The example of the survey is available here - <https://aptaujas.du.lv/index.php/544412>. Graduates also are involved in the feedback mechanism. During the on-site visit, they stated that they usually fill questionnaires after graduation of DU on how they liked the study process, and whether the knowledge gained is useful. Graduate surveys are available here - <https://aptaujas.du.lv/index.php/764263/lang-lv> In case of proposals, suggestions and recommendations by the involved groups, they are reviewed and addressed by the specific study programme director.

One of the examples students and academic staff mentioned regarding student active involvement in the quality assurance process was during Covid pandemic they prepared a separate questionnaire by their own initiative. Student representatives of the Student Council also had separate organized meetings with the Dean of the faculty regarding the situation and survey results. Another example indicated by one of the students was regarding feedback. At first she felt scared to reach out regarding some issues or problems but now she feels as if she can approach and ask for preferences or suggest some changes in the future of the course structure, for example. Most of the lecturers are easy going. In her opinion, the Nutrition and Psychology courses did not seem as deep as she expected. She wishes for more practicality during the study process. She talked about the problem with the study programme director and accordingly changes were made for students later on. Now as she is in the last study years, she finally is satisfied with having more practical skill gaining rather than pure theoretical studies. She likes to work now in parallel with studies so she can immediately apply the skills gained in practice.

Overall, it can be stated that the feedback mechanisms that are in place are logical and effective. All of the stakeholders – employers, graduates and students are involved in feedback mechanisms. As it has been indicated during on-site visits, all of the suggestions from them have been taken into account and heard.

1.2.3. There is an effective mechanism in place for submission of student complaints and proposals. As indicated in SAR p.29, there is an opportunity for students to submit any proposals or complaints to the study programme director. There are various forms on how they can be submitted - in written form, orally or in electronic form. Students can also choose whether they feel comfortable enough to reach out in person or submit these complaints anonymously. If it regards student complaints, in such cases it is also possible that Student Council represent the student in regards to the complaint submitted and participate in the reviewal process.

During onsite visits with students and study programme directors, they indicated that the formal procedure is rarely used as students feel as they can freely approach teachers, study programme directors in case of problems. If the complaint is delivered directly by the person, the approach is very easy and open. The student comes to the study programme director and informs of the specific situation and tries to resolve it right away. In case of anonymous submissions that are delivered electronically, the procedure is a bit longer. As indicated in SAR p.30, students can fill a questionnaire made by the Student Council which is available here - [https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOwIBjCmssb5mz2PHQcYr\\_9EekUcTk1th6byx3-ZKn5LTOQg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfOwIBjCmssb5mz2PHQcYr_9EekUcTk1th6byx3-ZKn5LTOQg/viewform) called the Questionnaire of trust. Although, the link provided to the DU website where students can submit proposals in the SAR p.30 is invalid. It is a Zoom link when accessed it shows - invalid meeting. When searched separately in the DU website, it was not found either.

During onsite visits, study programme directors indicated that students are aware that they can approach them any time to give feedback, ask for help and assistance in case of need. Students of Physiotherapy are more proactive and coming forward. As explained, it may be due to the fact that the Nursing programme was added to the DU after reformation of Colleges only around a year ago and students of this programme had to adapt to the new environment and understand the overall system and how it works in university instead of College.

Overall, students are aware that they can submit proposals and complaints that arise during their study process. For example, students mentioned during an onsite visit that students felt overloaded by the schedule and requested the possibility to study in a hybrid that half of the lectures are online and some of the lectures onsite. DU tried to approach and discuss this question and a consensus was found. In the SAR pp. 31-32, there are other examples indicating how student proposals were later on implemented in the study programme or study process.

In cases of individual complaints received, students receive direct answers and are involved in the process of resolution of the situation so that the issue arising is addressed correctly and any problems within the process are not left behind unaddressed. So, it can be concluded that the feedback of the outcome is also provided to the parties involved.

1.2.4. As indicated in SAR p.32, DU operates an informative system DUIS, that holds statistical data and information on study programmes, students, and academic staff members. The system is accessible from the DU inner network. Data are entered into DUIS by study programme directors, faculty records managers; they are summarized and verified by the Department of Studies.

The DU has a mechanism in place for the purpose of obtaining the necessary information from the students regarding various processes. The main purpose of course is to ensure that the quality of the studies is good and ensure that every shortcoming is eliminated. The results obtained during these surveys are analyzed and necessary improvements are done according to the received recommendations or suggestions. As mentioned before in 1.2.1. and 1.2.2., the main tool of quality assurance is various surveys and feedback gained from students, graduates and employers that are

regularly conducted to monitor the quality of study courses and study process. As indicated in SAR p.33, the results of the surveys are discussed at the meetings of the council of the study direction. The information obtained is passed on to the director and the teaching staff implementing the study programme. Evaluating the quality of the programmes of the study direction and certain study courses provides for taking a decision regarding necessary changes in the content of the study courses or in the organization of the study process. The data gained in surveys are collected in the DU survey system (Open Source Project LimeSurvey), data are analyzed and their results are reflected in the study direction self-assessment reports. All the summaries of surveys of students, graduates and employers in 2021/2022 academic year are available under Annexes named II\_2.2.4\_summary of survey results. However, it is not exactly clear where the information of the survey results are seen and provided for students.

1.2.5. The DU has its own official website which is available here - <https://du.lv/> that includes the necessary information for students, lecturers, potential students and other interested parties. The University website includes an in-depth outlook for the interested potential students for all of the study programmes. The information is provided both in Latvian and English and can be accessed here:

1. The study programme of Physiotherapy - <https://du.lv/studijas/studiju-programmas/2-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba/fizioterapija/>
2. The study programme of Nursing - <https://du.lv/studijas/studiju-programmas/2-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba/maszinibas/>

As indicated in SAR p.34, at the time of preparation of SAR, a new website is under development in both English and Latvian.

Students and lecturers use Moodle e-environment as the platform of exchange of information and communication. For both of these groups, most of the information is provided there. Every person has their own login and password. In case of some changes, students can see changes in course schedules, exam plan, summaries of previous year's surveys and other necessary types of information.

There is also information available on VIIS official register and the provided information is in correspondence with the information provided on the website and E-platform. There is accessible information on both of the study programmes implemented within the study field of health care - physiotherapy and nursing. As at this point both of the programmes are implemented in Latvian, the information is in Latvian. It can be accessed here on both of the study programmes: [https://www.viis.gov.lv/registri/izglitibas\\_programmas](https://www.viis.gov.lv/registri/izglitibas_programmas) when searched for DU, study programmes of health care and accordingly "Nursing" and "Physiotherapy".

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

The University has established a well-functioning quality-assurance system that is effective. There is a quality policy but the quality assurance policy was not found on the university's website. Student surveys get conducted regularly and student suggestions and recommendations are taken into account. There is a Moodle e-environment in place where all the necessary information is being provided for an effective study process. Students, graduates and employers all are involved in quality assurance. Information regarding study courses and study programmes offered and detailed description is accessible on the website of the DU. There is a complaint/suggestion system in place where students can express their concerns or problems freely, although the complaint system electronically was unable to be accessed. Student suggestions are taken into consideration and changes are implemented accordingly.

Strengths:

1. Student, graduate, and employers surveys are conducted regularly;
2. Complaint and suggestion mechanism is in place;
3. Information regarding study courses and study programmes offered and detailed description is accessible on the website of the DU;
4. Student suggestions are taken into consideration.

Weaknesses:

1. Publicly unavailable quality policy;
2. Unclear where to be found and unavailable submission of proposals and complaints on DU website;
3. It is not exactly clear where the information of the survey results are seen and provided for students;
4. Unclear role of the "Health care" study field Council in the Quality Assurance System of study quality.

### Assessment of the requirement [1]

- 1 R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The DU quality assurance policy is not available publicly on the website. It was not listed as a separate document that could be reviewed. There lacks clearance on submission of complaints and suggestions electronically. They are not accessible on the website of the university. It is also not clear where students or graduates, employers receive a summary of feedback of the results of the surveys they have participated in.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

University has stated that they have established a quality assurance policy and has updated it as part of ESF project in 2021. Although, the document of the policy was not uploaded online.

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

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

In accordance with the "Regulation on Studies at Daugavpils University" (<https://du.lv/en/about-us/documents/>) and "Regulations on Opening and Managing Daugavpils University Study Directions and Study Programmes" ([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_DU\\_Studiju-virzienu-un-studiju-programmu-atveršanas-un-parv-nolikums.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_DU_Studiju-virzienu-un-studiju-programmu-atveršanas-un-parv-nolikums.pdf) - available in Latvian) there are established mechanisms for the development, internal approving of study programmes, their monitoring and periodic examination.

Although there is a very unclear role of the "Health care" study field Council in the Quality Assurance System of study quality.

- 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 published.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

“Regulation on Studies at Daugavpils University” and study course descriptions of each study programme state the criteria, conditions, and procedures of the assessment of students’ academic

performance that attests to reaching the intended outcomes of studies. The Regulation and study

course descriptions are freely available to students. Students have an opportunity of giving proposals for the criteria, conditions, and procedures of the assessment of students’ academic performance in surveys.

- 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

DU has elaborated internal normative acts and mechanisms that regulate the ensuring of the qualification and work quality of the academic staff: “Regulation on elections to academic positions in

Daugavpils University” and “Procedure of assessing the scientific activity of Daugavpils University

academic staff”. Self-assessment reports include the results of surveys. Although, the academic staff did not mention any mentorship activities of the new staff, for example, or any sort of other monitoring activities of each other's work.

- 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

Surveys of students, alumni, and employers are organized every year. CSQA carries out express surveys to learn students’ opinion on current issues related to the process of studies. There is regular

cooperation with the Student Council, exchange of opinions, and examination of proposals.

- 7 1.6 - The higher education institution/ college ensures continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its quality assurance systems.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

DU study quality management system observes the compliance with ISO 9001:2017 quality standards. Compliance with this standard testifies to the fact that DU tends for the quality of its education services by maintaining the quality management system. However some elements of the system don't work properly (e.g. Study field of Health care Council)

### 1.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

#### Analysis

1.3.1. As mentioned in the submitted documents the source of funding for the study field “Health Care” is the state budget funding for studies (grant) and tuition fees (it is specified in SAR p.32). The calculation of costs for one student in the study field programmes is performed in the DU Finance and Accounting Department, including the salary fund and the employer’s state compulsory social security contributions, business trips, material, energy and inventory costs, purchase of books,

equipment and investment costs, as well as social security costs. DU management experts pointed out that for the development of science in the DU study field “Health Care”, funds for the development of the science base are allocated from the Ministry of Education and Science. The study field obtains the funds intended for the development of science on the basis of the scientific achievements and indicators of the lecturers for the previous year, which are evaluated by the DU Department of Science. Lecturers of the study field can apply for payment for publications indexed in Web of Science or SCOPUS databases, as well as receive a fee for the Hirsch index. In addition, for several years now it has been possible to participate in the Daugavpils University research project competition and receive funding (<https://old.du.lv/daugavpils-universitate-izsludinats-ieksejo-petniecibas-projektu-konkurss-2022-gadam/>). The students can apply for student research project competitions or together with the lecturers participate in research project competitions and receive funding for the implementation of their research activities.

Experts are not convinced that DU has established a system for determining and redistributing the financial support required for the implementation of the study field and the corresponding study programmes.

1.3.2. For the implementation of the study field “Health Care” programmes, the material and technical base of DU is used in three DU buildings, as well as Daugavpils Regional Hospital premises and the ones of other cooperation partners (e.g., SIA Fiziofit, Dr. Požarska private practice). The implementation of the study field “Health Care” is related to the close integration of studies, and professional and scientific research work. To ensure the study process and conduct scientific research for the implementation of the study field “Health Care”, the students have access to 6 specialized study rooms at DU Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, 4 research laboratories at DU Institute of Life Sciences and Technology, 3 lecture halls (50, 80, 107 seats), as well as DU DMC newly equipped study rooms: patient care process simulation centre (procedure room and manipulation room), innovative technology laboratory, where research is carried out and innovations are introduced in the study process, emergency medical aid simulation centre.

DU management presented the infrastructure modernization projects to the experts, within the framework of which the study and research opportunities for the students of the study field “Health Care” have been improved, are the following ones:

- ERDF project “Modernization of STEM, health care and art study programmes at Daugavpils University” (agreement No. 8.1.1.0/17/I/005, project implementation time: 2017 – 2020, DU total costs: 1 425 138.00 EUR). Within the framework of the project, the material and the technical base of study programmes have been developed, equipment, laboratory materials, inventory and tools have been purchased, as well as library collections have been supplemented and information technology equipment has been developed to offer high-quality education that meets international standards and is competitive.

- ERDF project “Development of research infrastructure in the fields of smart specialization and strengthening of institutional capacity at Daugavpils University” (agreement No. 1.1.1.4/17/I/008”, project implementation time: 2017 – 2020, DU total costs: 3,069,684, 21 EUR). Within the framework of the project, infrastructure has been developed by purchasing new equipment in the priority development areas defined in the internationally recognized research programmes: mathematics, physics, nanomaterials, materials engineering, and biology.

- ERDF project “Improvement of the quality of Daugavpils University study programmes and ensuring the environment accessibility” (agreement No. 2010/0115/3DP/3.1.2.1.1/09/IPIA/VIAA/021, project implementation time: 2010 – 2015, DU total cost: EUR 16 715 991). Within the framework of the project, the auditoriums of the study building at 1 Parādes Street were renovated and adapted for people with functional disorders, their energy efficiency was increased, as well as the equipment, tools, facilities and information technologies were modernized. The building of the DU Life Sciences

and Technology was attached to the existing building of DU; it has study and scientific laboratories that are fitted up with modern equipment within the project.

Experts made sure during the visit that the study and the research processes are provided in sufficient quantities with the necessary photocopying equipment, visual presentation equipment, video filming and video reproduction equipment, modern photo equipment and audio equipment. The students and the lecturers have constant access to the Internet and the Internet connection of the local DU network, e-learning environment Moodle, as well as the opportunity to use e-mail and teleconferencing, and various online platforms, such as ZOOM.

1.3.3. During the visit, the experts got acquainted with the information provided for students, as well as mentioned in the self-assessment report replenishment of the library collection and subscription of databases take place at the request of the lecturers of the faculties. Applications for the purchase of books are regularly (every academic year) reviewed and approved by the DU Budget Commission, thus implementing a mechanism for purchasing the latest publications for the DU library. The library does not digitize the collection, but the final theses of the DU students are uploaded to the library's information system. The library regularly informs the faculties about the latest literature, database trials and subscription options, so that the faculty lecturers and students can get acquainted with new offers.

The lecturers and the students have access to the services offered by the DU Library – the library's electronic catalogue, ordering, reserving and renewing books on the Internet, automated service provide to the user, as well as access to electronic databases. The library users have the opportunity to use the open access reading room with 60 workstations, incl. 15 Computerized, Subscription, Bibliography and Information Sectors. The DU network provides access to the following electronic databases:

- EBSCO Publishing (it includes 8 databases: Academic Search Elite, Business Source Premier, MasterFILE Premier, Newspaper Source, ERIC, Business Wire News,
- MEDLINE, Health Source - Consumer Edition, Agrikola); there are around 10,000 scientific journals in a number of disciplines.

Students also have access to DU laboratory scientific libraries with more than 50 regularly updated foreign scientific journals.

Computers of the faculty equipped with the relevant software (Cubasis, Sibelius, Sound Forge, Sonor, etc.) are offered for the development of term papers and bachelor theses.

The opening hours of the library are suitable for the needs of students on working days: from 9.00 am to 8.00 pm, on Saturdays: from 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

Students also have access to the DU DMK library infrastructure, which consists of a subscription sector, a modern reading room with the possibility for students to work in it, and book storage. The library has 6 new computers with widescreen monitors, the Internet and Wi-Fi access. The reading room has 20 user workstations.

During the visit, the experts were introduced to the literature available in the library and concluded that there is very little specialized literature for the study field "Health Care" in both Latvian and English. At the request of the experts, the DU management submitted a document confirming what literature will be purchased in the near future.

1.3.4. As DU management pointed out during the visit, DU has developed an e-learning environment (Moodle), and as a result of providing direct communication (e-mail, consultations) information is available in each study course. DU lecturers systematically use the e-learning environment Moodle (<https://estudijas.du.lv/> - available in Latvian) and place various study materials in it: materials for lectures, seminars and practical classes, which support students' independent work. At the same time, e-learning reduces the risk of students dropping out in cases where it is not possible to attend all study courses in full due to their work or health conditions.

The study courses also include sending homework and tests via e-mail or adding them to the e-learning environment Moodle, receiving work evaluations and reviews by e-mail, consultations in the e-environment, and the opportunity to use library and Internet resources. During the visit, the experts had the opportunity to make sure that they met with students and teachers, by integrating a variety of modern IT solutions (e-mail, Moodle, ZOOM, Skype, Facebook), the programme offers more flexible conditions for e-learning. The e-learning environment Moodle is synchronized with the DU information system DUIS, which facilitates students' access to study courses created in the e-learning environment without additional registration.

Experts also made sure that DU regularly organizes professional development courses for the lecturers, for example, development of study courses in the e-learning environment Moodle, use of the e-learning environment MOODLE in the distance learning process, assessment in the e-learning environment MOODLE. If necessary, the lecturers are provided with individual consultations. The students can receive technical support at the Student Service Centre and the Dean's Offices of the faculties.

DU has an information system DUIS that contains descriptions of all study courses, a timetable of classes, and a student can see his/her progress and individual orders related to the study process in his/her profile.

During the visit, the experts observed that some of the guest lecturers do not use the MOODLE system, this was also pointed out by the students.

1.3.5. As indicated in the DU self-assessment report information in SAR p. 40 on vacancies for academic positions and competition announcements are published on the DU website or in the official publication of the Republic of Latvia "Latvijas Vēstnesis", thus giving any interested person the opportunity to apply for a job at DU within one month after the announcement of the competition.

Election to an academic position takes place in accordance with the requirements of "Regulations on elections to academic positions at Daugavpils University" ([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Nolikums-par-velesanam-akademiskajos-amatos-DU\\_APST\\_IPRINATAIS.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Nolikums-par-velesanam-akademiskajos-amatos-DU_APST_IPRINATAIS.pdf) - available in Latvian).

Both the citizens of the Republic of Latvia and foreign citizens whose academic education and professional qualifications meet the requirements of the fields of science or art, the study and the research at DU and who speak the state language and professional English may be elected to academic positions at DU.

After the announcement of the competition and receipt of the documents of the candidates for academic positions, the Faculty Council (Senate) or the Scientific Council of the scientific institute shall make a list of candidates for the respective academic position, indicating the number of positions and vacancies, length of scientific and pedagogical work.

At the meeting of the Faculty Council (Senate) or the Scientific Council of a scientific institute, the attendees are introduced to the documents of the applicants and motivated opinions of the structural units about each applicant for the academic position. After discussions with all the candidates for the respective position, the Council (Senate) or the Scientific Council shall decide on election or non-election to the relevant position by open voting.

DU follows the procedure for attracting qualified teachers and it is open.

1.3.6. As indicated in the DU self-assessment report in SAR p. 40 DU developed internal regulatory enactments and mechanisms that regulate the qualification and quality assurance of academic staff:

- Regulations on elections to academic positions at Daugavpils University ([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Nolikums-par-velesanam-akademiskajos-amatos-DU\\_APST\\_IPRINATAIS.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Nolikums-par-velesanam-akademiskajos-amatos-DU_APST_IPRINATAIS.pdf) - available in Latvian);
- Procedure for evaluation of the scientific activity of the Daugavpils University academic staff



([https://old.du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/zinatniskas-\\_aktivitates\\_vertesanas\\_kartiba.pdf](https://old.du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/zinatniskas-_aktivitates_vertesanas_kartiba.pdf) - available in Latvian);

● Student's surveys  
(<https://old.du.lv/daugavpils-universitates-2020-2021-studiju-gada-studejoso-aptauja/>)

During the visit, the experts were informed that several criteria have been used to select the academic staff to be involved in PBSP "Physiotherapy" and PBSP "Nursing". Those are:

- compliance of the qualification of the academic staff with the requirements specified in the regulatory enactments;
- adequate knowledge of the state language and foreign languages.

As indicated on SAR pages 40, 41, the following basic criteria are defined in the academic staff evaluation system:

- Excellence – sustainable and continuous development, ensuring process and resource management;
- ability to effectively use academic freedom – to freely choose the directions and methods of academic activity, to create and publish new knowledge, to openly discuss its content, to look for opportunities to implement it in practice;
- academic culture – collegial cooperation with students and other academic staff based on the principles of academic ethics, mutual respect, demandingness, interest and support;
- responsibility for one's work in front of the public and the state in accordance with the DU quality management system and quality culture.

The qualification of the academic staff complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, as all the lecturers have a Master's/Medical Doctor's degree or a Doctor's degree, or a physiotherapist's/nurse's qualification (according to the study course to be profiled). It was decided at DU that (in accordance with Section 39 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, taking into account the need to acquire practical skills and knowledge in the subjects of the professional study programme profile) a person with a Medical Doctor's degree may hold a position of a guest lecturer if he or she has an appropriate medical certificate and at least seven years of practical work experience in the field corresponding to the subject to be taught. Study courses can be delivered only by lecturers that hold a Master's degree – both the elected lectures and guest lecturers.

Most of the lecturers of the professional study courses are specialists practising in the field (physiotherapists/nurses with a Master's degree and medical doctors).

Specific criteria for the physiotherapy/nursing study programmes are also applicable for the selection of the academic staff:

- practical work experience in health care institutions;
- participation in internationally or nationally significant health care or research projects during the last six years;
- scientific publications in the field of health care and related fields;
- contribution to the development of various methodological materials, including e-learning tools;
- professional development in the field relevant to the industry.

An important criterion for the involvement of the DU academic staff is the experience in the implementation of the ESF Project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/022 "Strengthening the professional competence of the academic staff in the fields of strategic specialization of Daugavpils University". The project envisages the improvement of the competence of the academic staff of Daugavpils University, promoting renewal and international competitiveness. The aim of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the academic staff of Daugavpils University by involving foreign academic staff, doctoral students and applicants for scientific degrees and by improving the competence of the DU academic staff.

As the DU management pointed out "ERASMUS+" programme supports staff development – the DU lecturers go to one of the foreign cooperation universities or participate in staff training, improving

professional competencies, ensuring participation in training, observing work at a foreign cooperation university or branch organization. Foreign mobility gives the DU lecturers and staff the opportunity to gain knowledge and specific skills by learning from the experience and good practice of foreign partners, as well as to improve the practical skills required for the work at DU and professional development, encourages the academic staff to expand and improve the range and content of the study courses offered, and enables the students who do not have the opportunity to participate in the mobility programme to benefit from the knowledge and experience provided by academic staff and foreign guest lecturers from other European universities, and facilitates the exchange of knowledge and teaching experience between European higher education institutions. DU management emphasized that DU has greater mobility outside the European Union, for example to the Philippines, Armenia, Indonesia and Turkey.

1.3.7. As indicated in the SAR p.43, PBSP “Physiotherapy” and PBSP “Nursing” is provided by 85 lecturers. DU is the main place of election for 37 lecturers, 48 are guest lecturers. 51 lecturers represent the professional environment of health care in Latvia – 19 have a Medical Doctor’s degree, 14 are certified physiotherapists with a Master’s degree and 13 nurses with a Master’s degree, ergotherapist, internist, doctor's assistant. 28 lecturers (24%) have a Doctor’s degree and 3 are candidates for a Doctor’s degree.

The workload of lecturers is determined in accordance with the “Procedure for Accounting the Workload of the Academic Staff at Daugavpils University”. The formation of the teaching staff considers the stability of the number of academic positions and persons, equal distribution of workload; the involvement of industry professionals in the study process is promoted in order to ensure the quality implementation of professional programmes. Attracting lecturers with a doctoral degree is being intensified in order to implement high-quality study programmes in accordance with regulatory enactments.

1.3.8. As indicated in SAR p.44 DU infrastructure has been modernized and adapted to improve the accessibility of the environment for people with disabilities (movement, vision, hearing impairment), as well as there have been opened children’s rooms for students, who are young parents, so that they could to change and feed their babies and a playroom to entertain the students’ children while they are at their classes (<https://old.du.lv/vides-pieejamiba-du/> - available in Latvian). This was confirmed by the experts during the visit.

In 2016, the Latvian Association of Disabled People and their Friends “APEIRONS” awarded Daugavpils University a prize in the nomination “Education for All” on the grounds that “Daugavpils University, as a higher education institution, had done the most in ensuring accessibility of the environment. DU became accessible to people with special needs – the students have ideal conditions to attend full-time studies”. DU modernized its premises and buildings not only for people with disabilities but also for the visually impaired people, which is especially noted by the evaluators of the environmental accessibility competition, noting that “the building is easy to navigate and move around for everyone – <https://www.la.lv/ne-tikai-iekļut-eka-bet-ari-parvietoties-invalidu-apvieniba-apbalvo-labakos-vides-pieejamibas-veicinatajus> - available in Latvian).

## **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

After getting acquainted with the DU self-assessment and the information provided during the on-site visit and later also sent in addition, it can be concluded that the study and information base are identified, resources and material and technical support are available and in accordance with the specifics of the study program.

The information base is adequate, but experts recommend that it be improved and improved in the

long run.

#### Strengths:

1. Students have access to several libraries, so more rooms and more methodological materials, databases, and other services to use to study the study program.
2. The teaching staff can adjust, change and improve the material and technical base for the needs of the study courses also during the study process.

#### Weaknesses:

1. The list of study literature lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care.
2. not clear a system for determining and redistributing the financial support required for the implementation of the study field and the corresponding study programmes.

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

#### **Analysis**

1.4.1. DU development goals are envisaged by “Daugavpils University development strategy for 2015-2020” . There is no development strategy for ongoing years, but the development strategy has been extended until the start of a new approved strategy in 2023. According to the development strategy is the aim to develop scientific and creative work on an international level, deepening integration of scientific research in the study process, facilitating technology transfer and development of innovations and contributing to public understanding of science. Directions of scientific research are not mentioned.

The main directions of research of students related to the study field “Health Care” related to PBSP “Physiotherapy” are:

- physical health, parameters of physical development, physical activity;
- musculoskeletal disorders and their prevention;
- efficiency of rehabilitation of patients with various diseases and possibilities of medical rehabilitation in Latgale region.

The main directions of the research of the students related to the study field “Health Care” related to PBSP Nursing are:

- organization of the care process for patients with various diseases; measures to prevent various diseases;
- overcoming stress for nurses during the Covid 19 pandemic;
- dietary habits of the population, quality of life;
- awareness of the population about the causes of various diseases, diagnostic possibilities

According to the description of the Bachelor thesis the research directions in Nursing are:

- healthy person;
- disease prophylaxis;
- medical examination methods;
- process of care;
- modern technologies in medicine;
- achievements in medicine;
- health care system legislation;
- untraditional medicine opportunities;
- history of medicine;
- promoting healthy lifestyle;
- human – environment – health.

Co-operation with the research units of the university and other cooperation partners in conducting scientific research, which is coordinated with “Public Health Guidelines for 2021-2027” should be

promoted in the following directions:

- the role of physical activity in improving the quality of life;
- the common understanding of the population and the employers about healthy and safe living and working environment;
- the impact of environmental factors on health;
- the role of local governments, educational institutions, and employers in promoting a healthy and active lifestyle;
- research of the lifestyle habits of the population, ensuring the analysis of the prevalence and tendencies of health risk factors, evaluating the potential impact on the health of the population of Latvia;

● development and implementation of modern methods and interactive solutions in the implementation of health promotion and disease prevention measures for various target audiences.

The study field "Health Care" does not have common research directions, but it would be beneficial to develop interdisciplinary research.

The research directions need to be clearer and more commonly understood. The research strategy is needed in the field of health care. On the discussions during on-site visits with students, teaching staff, and employers it turned out that students can choose the research topic by themselves or the topics are provided by the supervisor. Choosing the research topics by themselves, will not always correspond to research directions.

More cooperation with employers is needed in the field of research, taking into account their needs for research. Also, the results of the research conducted at the university should be more disseminated with employers.

1.4.2. The results of the research are used to update the content of the study courses. The information obtained in scientific events is used in the management of study courses and works, as well as in the preparation of teaching aids. The research and creative activity of the academic staff is closely related to the study process, promoting students' understanding of the relationship between the innovation sector and the needs of the real organization.

According to the study plans there is 4 CP for the Research methodology study course and 11 CP for the bachelor thesis in physiotherapy; 2 CP for the Research methodology study course and 12 CP for the bachelor thesis in nursing. The amount of research methodology courses needs to increase, especially the part of data analysis, to provide practical lessons on data analysis.

1.4.3. 2009/2010 academic year - co-operation was started with the teaching staff of the Warsaw Medical University of the Republic of Poland in conducting joint scientific research on the quality of physiotherapist training, there are joint publications of academic staff. 2019/2020 - co-operation was initiated with the teaching staff of Sofia University of Medicine in conducting joint scientific research on the training of physiotherapists, topical problems of physiotherapy; there are joint publications. (see application 2.5.2).

Currently, DU does not have cooperation with European universities for joint research projects in the field of health care.

1.4.4. DU promotes the development and improvement of the academic staff by moving towards a competent staff. Most lecturers have experience in the field, which confirms their suitability for work in the program. The scientific capacity of the teaching staff is confirmed by the final work supervised by the publications indexed in the Web of Science and SCOPUS databases, incl. doctoral theses) and research in the implementation of which the lecturers of the study program participate. DU evaluates the scientific activity of the teaching staff every year, within the framework of which the results of research work, activity in projects, as well as pedagogical and organizational work are evaluated. Within the framework of the study process, the latest current events in the field are

constantly followed - the academic staff participates in projects, and the results are used to update the content of study courses. Lecturers actively participate in the approbation and dissemination of research results by speaking at scientific and practical conferences and seminars (II\_2.4.4\_conferences\_seminars\_message\_chemp\_Physiotherapy). The information obtained in scientific events is used in the management of study courses and works, as well as in the preparation of teaching aids. The research and creative activity of the academic staff is closely related to the study process, promoting students' understanding of the relationship between the innovation sector and the needs of the real organization. The staff of the programme consists of lecturers who regularly cooperate in the improvement of study processes, thus achieving interdisciplinarity in the development of students' knowledge and skills. It is important to note that each lecturer involved in the implementation of the study program is an active scientist, providing science-based studies. DU has a motivation system for academic staff, cascading science performance indicators to the level of a researcher, i.e. see setting the following criteria: Number of WoS / SCOPUS publications (at least 1 year); participation in research projects; participation in international scientific events (at least 1 participation per year); research mobility (at least 1 participation in 2 years), etc. In cases when the lecturer does not meet the set requirements, DU may make a decision to terminate the contract.

Lecturers of the study field can apply for payment for publications indexed in Web of Science or SCOPUS databases, as well as receive a fee for the Hirsch index. In addition, for several years now it has been possible to participate in the Daugavpils University research project competition and receive funding

(<https://old.du.lv/daugavpils-universitate-izsludinats-ieksejo-petniecibas-projektu-konkurss-2022-gadam/>), but unfortunately Health care study field academic staff is not active in that.

On on-site visit discussions with teaching staff came out, that guest lecturers are not involved in the scientific work and they have limited possibilities to get involved. Also, there are lacking of funds for research and participation in conferences.

1.4.5. When developing study and bachelor's theses, students carry out research both in the laboratory of the department and in health care institutions, using modern equipment purchased in recent years. In recent years, there have been several presentations at international conferences and publications with student participation. Every year, within the framework of the DU International Scientific Conference, the work of the "Science of Health" section of the branch of science is 48 organized, in which students report on the results achieved in their studies and bachelor's theses. The topics of the study papers and bachelor's theses in health care are coordinated with the supervisors and approved at the department meeting, evaluating the topicality of the proposed topic for today and the chosen study program. At the end of the last study semester, the predefense of the bachelor's thesis is organized, in which the quality of the practical research carried out during the elaboration of the bachelor's thesis and the compliance of the bachelor's thesis with the requirements is assessed, as well as admission. When developing study and bachelor's theses, students carry out a variety of research activities in the field of health care. The results are reported not only during the State examinations, but also at conferences, but also at the 58th International Scientific Conference of DU, the conference "Rehabilitation Opportunities and Challenges IV" on June 17, 2017 and on June 16, 2018, at the conference "Rehabilitation Opportunities and Challenges V". There is a need to promote students to participate in international scientific conferences abroad to present their research.

1.4.6. Different forms of innovation (product innovations, process innovations, marketing innovations, organizational innovations) are applied in the study direction "Health Care" and DU. Product innovation. The following may be used for the involvement of students in research, bachelor's, study and independent work: Laboratory of Physiology (DU, P 1), Laboratory of Organic

Chemistry and Biochemistry (DU, P 1a), Laboratory of Analytical Chemistry (DU, P 1a), Laboratory of Genomics and Biotechnology (DU, P 1a), Laboratory of Parasitology and Histology (DU, P 1a), Emergency Medical Simulation Center (DU DMK) and Laboratory of Innovative Technologies (DU DMK). They include the study process, as well as research and implementation of innovations in the study process. These are modern, comfortable laboratories that meet the requirements of work safety and ergonomics, the aim of which is to promote students' competitiveness and ability to use new technologies and information sources. Laboratories promote the updating of the content of study programmes, increasing the quality of research work development by introducing innovative technological, methodological and IT solutions. An innovative product is also the virtual anatomage table Alpha (DU, P 1), which gives the opportunity to imitate real situations in the digital world, helping to train and develop skills in a safe environment. Process innovation. Over the last two years, the organization of e-learning has been developed very rapidly using Zoom for conducting online classes; video recordings are recorded; The DU elearning website (MOODLE) provides descriptions of study courses, necessary study materials, links to certain information for the study course, colloquia and exams. Lecturers have the opportunity to create a student assessment book and students (individually) can follow the progress of the study course. The administration of the DU e-study website is well organized, the administrator's consultations are available (in person, online or by correspondence), the DU e-study website provides instructions and tips on the use of e-studies ([https://estudijas.du.lv/pluginfile.php/1498729/mod\\_resource/content/2/E-studiju\\_vides\\_kursu\\_saturs\\_aizveides\\_rokasgramata\\_v1.pdf](https://estudijas.du.lv/pluginfile.php/1498729/mod_resource/content/2/E-studiju_vides_kursu_saturs_aizveides_rokasgramata_v1.pdf) - available in Latvian). Marketing innovations. DU uses certain marketing tools (Open Doors Online, Researchers 'Night Online, Defending Students' Research Online, Information on DFU on Social Networks, etc.). In 2022, the DU website was renewed and improved. Organizational innovation. DU uses several digitized systems: DUIS (allows to digitize many processes and document processing: certificate, order, study contract, their amendment, preparation of diplomas, input of statistics, collection of statistical data), Namejs (document management system that provides correspondence, order, contract, reference, management of procurement documents, efficiency of the document circulation process), HoP (employee self-service portal, which provides the employee with the opportunity to view information about himself / herself, absences of his / her colleagues, apply for leave, check his / her accrued leave days, etc.) During the on-site visit, it was noticed that the university has modern equipment for conducting studies.

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

DU development goals are envisaged by "Daugavpils University development strategy for 2015-2020", which needs to be updated. The study field "Health Care" does not have common research directions, but it would be beneficial to develop interdisciplinary research.

The research directions need to be clearer and more commonly understood. The research strategy is needed in the field of health care. On the discussions during on-site visits with students, teaching staff, and employers it turned out that students can choose the research topic by themselves or the topics are provided by the supervisor. Choosing the research topics by themselves, it will not always correspond to research directions.

It is necessary to develop joint research projects with employers to ensure the development of evidence-based practice competence of students in the health care study programs and the implementation of evidence-based practice among medical, nursing and rehabilitation professionals. Also, the results of the research conducted at the university should be more disseminated with employers.

The amount of research methodology courses need to increase, especially the part of data analysis, to provide practical lessons on data analysis.

DU has some cooperation projects with other universities, but more cooperation is needed with European universities to develop joint research projects. Also, there are lacking of funds for research and participation in conferences.

DU promotes the development and improvement of the academic staff by moving towards a competent staff. Most lecturers have experience in the field, which confirms their suitability for work in the program. The scientific capacity of the teaching staff is confirmed by the final work supervised by the publications indexed in the Web of Science and SCOPUS databases, incl. doctoral theses) and research in the implementation of which the lecturers of the study program participate. Guest lecturers are not involved in the scientific work and they have limited possibilities to get involved.

When developing study and bachelor's theses, students carry out research both in the laboratory of the department and in health care institutions, using modern equipment purchased in recent years. In recent years, there have been several presentations at international conferences and publications with student participation. More opportunities are needed to promote students to participate in international scientific conferences abroad to present their research.

Different forms of innovation (product innovations, process innovations, marketing innovations, organizational innovations) are applied in the study direction of "Health Care" and DU. The university has modern equipment to conduct studies.

Strengths:

1. Modern equipment
2. Qualified academic staff to conduct research activities

Weaknesses:

1. No common research strategy exists
2. Guest lecturers are not involved in the research activities
3. Applied research projects are missing
4. Little research projects with other universities
5. Lacking funds for publishing and participation in conferences

## **Assessment of the requirement [2]**

- 1 R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Scientific research should be visible and commonly understood, therefore common research strategy is needed.

Guest lecturers should be more involved in the research activities.

For developing research the needs of employees should be taken into account and therefore applied research projects would be beneficial. Also research projects with other universities.

## **1.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation**

### **Analysis**

1.5.1. Within the framework of the study field, co-operation is implemented with various Latvian institutions in order to promote the achievement of the goals of the study field and study results. Riga Stradiņš University (RSU) support plays an important role in the development of programmes. For instance, The implementation of PBSP "Physiotherapy" was started on the basis of a cooperation agreement (1998) between DU, Daugavpils City Council, RSU and National Rehabilitation Center

(NRC) "Vaivari" on launching a physiotherapy study program at Daugavpils University in accordance with the requirements of the European Association of Physiotherapists. The establishment, implementation and development of the PBSP "Nursing" Program is implemented within the framework of cooperation between DU, DU DMC and Daugavpils Regional 50 Hospital (DRH), envisaging the sharing of academic, professional and material resources of cooperation partners in the implementation of the program. During the development of the program, consultations with the Latvian Nurses' Association were carried out and an oral opinion was received from PBSP for the implementation of Nursing at DU. Consultations with the Ministry of Health were carried out and an opinion was received in the field of health care on the compliance of the developed study program with the requirements set for the regulated profession. Several external experts are involved in the implementation and implementation of PBSP "Physiotherapy" and PBSP "Nursing" - industry professionals from LFA, LMA, RSU, DU DMK, NRC "Vaivari", SIA "Daugavpils Psychoneurological Hospital", SIA "Daugavpils Regional Hospital", "Center polyclinic", SIA "Daugavpils Children's Health Center", SIA "Kraslava Hospital", SIA "Jēkabpils regional hospital", SIA "Preili Hospital" etc. employers, incl. heads of local government and private medical institutions. The views of all stakeholders are heard, aligning the content of the programmes with economic developments and labor market needs. A cooperation agreement has been concluded with the DRH on the implementation of professional study courses in the clinical environment in order to provide studies based on the clinical environment. There is close cooperation with NRC "Vaivari", where not only clinical practice in physiotherapy takes place, but also practical classes in the study course "Physiotherapy in Neurology" are conducted. Employers are involved in the development and improvement of study programmes and the provision of clinical practice. According to the statistics compiled on a regular basis so far, the following institutions form a particularly important group among them: NRC "Vaivari" Children Clinical University Hospital State Ltd. "Daugavpils Psychoneurological Hospital" SIA "Daugavpils Regional Hospital", "Center Polyclinic", SIA LUC MEDICAL SIA "Daugavpils Children's Health Center" Kraslava Hospital Ltd. Jēkabpils Regional Hospital Ltd. SIA "Preili hospital" Vidzeme Hospital SIA Fiziofit Latgale region family doctor practices. Cooperation partners in Latvia are selected according to the following criteria: higher education institutions implement similar study programmes in the field of health care (bachelor's programmes in physiotherapy and nursing); implementation of the study process with the support of employers - studies based on students' clinical practice and work environment; implementation of the study process with the support of specialists in the field - as guest lecturers, specialists in the field are invited both in the provision of study courses and in the final/state examination commissions; evaluation of the content of the study program - professional associations of the field (Latvian Association of Nurses, Latvian Association of Physiotherapists), Ministry of Health (in the development process of PBSP Nursing). Cooperation partners are selected according to the profile of health care study programmes - physiotherapy, rehabilitation and nursing. 51 Information on the concluded cooperation agreements on the provision of internships is available in the Appendix II\_2.5.1\_Agreements on internships.

The cooperation with the universities of Latvia and employers is sufficient for developing the study field.

1.5.2. Foreign cooperation partners of the study direction "Health Care" are selected ERASMUS and European Social Fund projects (ESF project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/022 "Strengthening the professional competence of the academic staff of Daugavpils University strategic specialization" direction "Health Care"), implemented by DU, within the framework of projects. The Erasmus BIP project (Erasmus BIP "Soft Skills and Professional Development in Rehabilitation Team") was launched in February 2022. The project coordinator is Kaunas University of Applied Sciences (Lithuania), partners - Daugavpils University (Latvia), Medical University of Lodz (Poland), Tartu Health Care College (Estonia). 2009/2010 academic year - co-operation was started with the teaching staff of the



Warsaw Medical University of the Republic of Poland in conducting joint scientific research on the quality of physiotherapist training, there are joint publications. 2019/2020 st. g. - co-operation was initiated with the teaching staff of Sofia University of Medicine in conducting joint scientific research on the training of physiotherapists, topical problems of physiotherapy; there are also joint publications. Lecturers of the field actively use the Erasmus + program and have exchanged experiences at J. Kochanowska University of Kielce (Poland), Kaunas College in Lithuania, University of Health Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania), Bialystok Medical University (Poland), Health and Wellness Center "Energy" (Sventoji, Poland), Lithuania), Diakonian University of Applied Sciences (Helsinki, Finland), University of Kaunas (Lithuania) and Pomeranian Academy (Slupska, Poland), Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa w Koszalinie (State University of Applied Sciences in Koszalin, Poland), Sofia Medical University (Bulgaria), Polytechnic Institute of Lisbon (Lisbon, Portugal), Kaunas College / University of Applied Sciences (Kaunas, Lithuania), Panevėžys University of Applied Sciences (Panevezys, Lithuania), Karkonosze College (Jelenia Gora, Poland), Spruce Sanatorium Kinesiotherapy, Department of Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy (Lithuania). During the visits, classes were conducted, opportunities for further cooperation in the field of research and provision of student internships were discussed (incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff). Six times PBSP Physiotherapy students participated in the International Student Massage Championship in Lithuania (Kaunas), and DU AFK lecturer S.Stalidzāne prepared the students and was a member of the international jury (II\_2.4.4\_conferences\_seminars\_massage\_chemp). Foreign cooperation partners are selected according to the following criteria: higher education institutions implement similar study programmes in the field of health care 52 (bachelor's programmes in physiotherapy and nursing); lecturers have common scientific interests and research projects (development of scientific research publications). The following mechanisms are used to attract foreign cooperation partners: ERASMUS Mobility - DU Erasmus+ coordinator sends an Erasmus + information letter to all partners at the beginning of the year about how foreign students and teachers can apply for study, traineeships or professional development. DU Erasmus+ coordinator participates in international Staff Week several times a year, where it is possible to establish new contacts and conclude inter-university agreements for the exchange of students and teachers within the framework of the Erasmus + program. Employment of foreign teaching staff in the study field "Health Care" of the ESF Project No.8.2.2.0/18/A/022 "Strengthening the Professional Competence of the Academic Staff in the Fields of Strategic Specialization of Daugavpils University".

In the cooperation with universities abroad there are only some partners from European universities involved and it needs to be increased at least up to 10 partners in European universities.. The representative from the university abroad in the Study direction council would be beneficial for developing the curriculum.

On on-site visit, discussions with teaching staff came out that guest lecturers have no possibilities to participate in Erasmus + programme for teacher exchange.

1.5.3. ERASMUS funding and the European Social Fund (ESF project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/022 "Strengthening the professional competence of the academic staff in the field of strategic specialization of Daugavpils University" study direction "Health Care") implemented by DU is used to attract foreign lecturers in the study direction "Health Care". ESF project no. 8.2.2.0/18/A/022 PBSP "Physiotherapy" attracted 5 foreign lecturers who led classes and prepared lecture and independent work materials for study courses: Normal Physiology, Human Anatomy, Pathological Physiology, Physiotherapy in Neurology and Physiotherapy in Orthopedics and Traumatology (II\_2.5.3\_incoming and outgoing mobility of teaching staff). To attract foreign students, DU provides information about its offer, which can be found on websites (eg. <https://www.studyabroad101.com/universities/daugavpils-university>, <https://du.lv/en/studies/admission/>, <https://www.learnrussianineu.com/semester-abroad-programmes/study-abroad-daugavpils-universit>

y). DU also implements marketing activities: contracts are concluded with recruitment agents, as well as: e-marketing, participation in international education fairs and agent forums, etc. For short-term mobility, foreign students actively use the Erasmus + program for studies and internships (<https://du.lv/en/news/apply-for-erasmus-studies-and-traineeship-scholarship/>) (II\_2.5.3\_DU incoming and outgoing mobility of students).

In discussions with students, they would like to see more foreign lecturers.

There is no permanent contract with foreign lecturers, but it would be beneficial in developing the study field. It is necessary for DU strategically determine the proportion of guest lecturers in the study field.

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

DU has good cooperation with the universities of Latvia and employers for developing study field. In the cooperation with universities abroad very few partners from European universities are involved and it needs to be increased. The representative from university abroad in the Study direction council would be beneficial for developing the curriculum. On on-site visit, discussions with teaching staff came out that guest lecturers have no possibilities to participate in Erasmus + programme for teacher exchange.

The higher education institution/ college has developed a system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field. There is no permanent contract with foreign lecturers, but it would be beneficial in developing the study field. It is necessary DU strategically determine the proportion of guest lecturers in the study field.

Also, the number of incoming teachers and students should be increased. The number of contracts with European universities should be increased.

Strengths:

1. Good cooperation with the universities of Latvia and employers for developing the study field.
2. A system and procedures for the attraction of the teaching staff and students from abroad within the study field exist.

Weaknesses:

1. Few contracts with European universities
2. Lacking representatives from universities abroad in the Study direction council
3. No permanent contract with foreign lecturers
4. Low amount of incoming teachers and students

### **Assessment of the requirement [3]**

- 1 R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

There are too few contracts with European universities. In order to develop study field representatives from universities abroad in the Study direction council would be beneficial. For international cooperation and study field development, permanent contracts with foreign lecturers and increasing in incoming teachers and students is needed.

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

### **Analysis**

1.6.1. The contribution of the higher education institution to the analysis of recommendations and their application in specific study areas and related study programmes is evident. The higher education institution analyzed proposals for improvements and implemented activities based on previously conducted evaluations (internal and external). Higher education analyzes the improvements and plans further development based on them. Examples of evidence: action plan and reports on the implementation of the action plan based on the recommendations of the commissions from previous evaluations and examples of results achieved on the basis of recommendations from previous evaluations.

The implementation of short-term recommendations received during previous evaluation procedures has been met. It was based on specifying the instructions of the study plan, supplementing bibliographies with more recent editions, especially in study courses that will use the new international guidelines adopted in recent years.

The university has a number of successful examples of how it has analyzed suggestions for improvement from previous assessments and translated them into improvement measures. In particular, there is a strategy and a consistent academic plan and mission statement for each study program. An alumni organization has been established, and the school regularly looks at the careers of graduates.

The recommendations from the previous accreditation, in the report to diversify data sources for program monitoring have been implemented. Also the recommended consolidation of existing programs has been visibly advanced.

During the talks in University of Daugavpils, university representatives, especially at the level of deans, department heads and experienced lecturers, showed a good understanding of the topic and made visible efforts to implement it. In the curricula of the study programs, especially at syllabus level, the learning outcomes are implemented throughout.

The educational equipment has been significantly improved and has reached an excellent standard, especially in the field of Physiotherapy, which impressively documents the further development of the university. The equipment of the new study program, nursing, is still in state-of-the-art.

In addition to the design of the internship and the practical parts of the studies, the panel recommends paying more attention to the quality of the final theses: The panel team has made a very good impression on the professional field reference and practical project work, but at the moment there is still no consistent academic foundation that one would expect at bachelor level. The university should strengthen this without falling into the misleading trap of expecting only theory-based work from students that lacks professional relevance.

It is recommended to expand the range of cooperation partners of clinical practices by concluding cooperation agreements with clinical university hospitals. Still in the process of being performed. Namely, the higher education institution still plans to expand the range of cooperating partners in clinical practice by concluding cooperation agreements with clinical university hospitals. Since the last assessment, a new internship agreement has been signed in 2022 with Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Kraslava Hospital, Balvi and Gulbene Hospital. Also, both directions, physiotherapy and nurses perform exercises at the listed locations. Also, according to the documents provided, it is evident that a cooperation agreement with the University of Stradins Riga, Children's Clinical University Hospital, is envisaged.

The library should check hand in hand with the updating of the study programs whether the available access options to ebooks (especially textbooks) are sufficient.

The university should pay close attention to the development of human resources in terms of the number of employees and their quality. Especially in the field of nursing, it is necessary to recruit

additional staff.

One risk here is the question of how easily or how quickly the university can attract qualified teachers. The idea of initially recruiting interested persons as external associates and only subsequently hiring them on a permanent basis is to be regarded as good practice. Yet, in view of labor market constraints, the feasibility of these good intentions is questionable. Particularly when external lecturers themselves have

intensive professional obligations to fulfill, there is a danger that, firstly, there will be no interest in a transfer to a permanent teaching position at a higher education institution and, secondly, that the operation of the higher education institution will be impaired by a lack time and motivation to deal with, e.g., didactic standards. Another problem for high-level external lecturers could be the availability of time and the frequent need for schedule changes or short-term cancellations. The university will not be able to avoid this as it is exposed to the external market in these matters. It should, however, establish effective processes that make it possible to master this challenge as professionally as possible.

There was no clear evidence - neither from documents nor from the on-site visit - of how the institution is following the recommendations of the previous accreditation report to keep an eye on the workload of teachers in order to avoid overwork. However, this is a critical success factor for sustainable development, especially if the recruitment of new teachers is delayed. Thus, special study of nursing, the panel's recommendation is to keep an eye on teacher overload in order to identify undesirable developments quickly and to be able to take structural countermeasures in time.

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

The panel concludes that the long-term goals set during the previous evaluation process are still in the process of implementation.

The panel would highlight the implementation of expanding the availability of medical databases (eg PUB MED, Scopus, web of science).

Also, cooperation with partners of clinical practices and conclusion of sufficient cooperation agreements with clinical university hospitals is visible. Since the last assessment, a new internship contract has been signed in 2022 with Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Kraslava Hospital, Balvi Hospital and Gulbene Hospital.

The implementation of the previous recommendation improved the quality of studies and attracted a large number of students, both Latvian and foreign (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland), which is clearly shown by statistical data obtained in the period 2013-2021. However, there is a noticeable difference in incoming students (17 of them) and outgoing students (41 of them). Therefore, the Panel would recommend inclusion in international and professional European programs and projects in order to further develop and improve international cooperation in the form of incoming and outgoing mobility of students (and teachers).

The material and learning space for the study of physiotherapy are completely satisfactory and enable students to use the infrastructure (laboratory, equipment) for practical work. This achieves a high degree of interdisciplinarity and infrastructural connection, especially in the study of physiotherapy.

The panel would conclude that the University has insufficient available literature, in Latvian and English, and a lack of equipment for the newly opened nursing study.

#### **strengths**

1. Accessibility to medical databases (e.g PUB MED, Scopus, web of science)
2. Cooperation with partners of clinical practices and the conclusion of sufficient cooperation agreements with clinical university hospitals. Since the last assessment, a new internship agreement

has been signed in 2022 with Riga East Clinical University Hospital, Kraslava Hospital, Balvi and Gulbene Hospital.

3. Visible attraction of domestic and foreign students (Bulgaria, Lithuania, Poland)

4. The material and space for conducting studies are completely satisfactory and allow students to use the infrastructure (laboratory, equipment) for their practical work. This achieves a high degree of interdisciplinarity and infrastructural connectivity, especially in the physiotherapy study program. weaknesses

1. Insufficient available literature, in Latvian and English languages.

2. Insufficient number of nurses involved in the implementation and improvement of the study program

3. Lack of equipment for the newly opened study of nursing.

#### **Assessment of the requirement [4]**

- 1 R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study area of physiotherapy are fully met. The given recommendations are mostly fulfilled. Those that are not, are planned in the long run.

The recommendation was made about the opening of a study program in a related field to physiotherapy, and a new program in the healthcare field was licensed - PBSP Nursing.

#### **1.7. Recommendations for the Study Field**

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

- |   |
|---|
| 1. To update DU Strategy  |
| 2. To update The Health Care field Development Strategy   |
| 3. To update the Structure of management of the Daugavpils University and make it available on the website.   |
| 4. Make the quality policy available on the website and easy to be found.   |
| 5. Ensure that the official formal submission of proposals and complaints on the DU website is accessible to students. The link indicated is invalid and not working so it must be updated.       |
| 6. To ensure that survey results are provided to the students. It can be done by uploading the summary of results on the Moodle platform in a form of a PowerPoint presentation or Word document. |
| 7. Clearly define the role of the "Health Care Council" in the study quality assurance system and make it function accordingly.   |

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

- |  |
|--|
| 1. To develop a common research strategy for DU and for field of Health Care   |
| 2. To create a financial support determination and redistribution system for the implementation of the study direction and the corresponding study programmes. |

3. To develop research projects, incl applied research, in the field of Health care in collaboration with other universities and employees.
4. To consider the possibility of allocating funds for publications and participation in conferences, taking into account the supported study directions and determining the supported areas of study for research and evidence-based practice development.
5. To develop collaboration with European universities in the field of Health care.
6. To involve representatives from universities abroad in the Study field Health care council.
7. To develop cooperation and ensure long-term contracts with foreign lecturers in the field of Health care.
8. To evolve and enrich the list of study literature with specialized literature sources in the field of health care.
9. To be involved in international and professional European programmes and projects in order to further develop and improve international cooperation in the form of inbound and outbound mobility of students (and teachers).

## II - "Physiotherapy" ASSESSMENT

### II - "Physiotherapy" ASSESSMENT

#### 2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

2.1.1. The study programme "Physiotherapy" with the qualification "Physiotherapist" complies with the study field of "Health care" indicators, conditions, and criteria. The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is four years, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and practical experience to enter the labor market.

2.1.2. The title of the study programme is "Physiotherapy" in the study field "Health care" with education classification code 42722 -where 42 corresponds to Second-level professional higher education (fifth-level professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree) or second-level professional higher education (fifth-level professional qualification), which can be implemented after general or vocational secondary education. The duration of studies in full-time studies is four years, the third digit of the code "7" stands for - Health Care and Social Welfare, and consecutively "72" stands for the field of Health Care, while the next "2" corresponds to Medical services, according to the MC regulation Nr. 322 "Noteikumi par Latvijas izglītības klasifikāciju" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitibas-klasifikaciju>). The study duration of the DU PBSP "Physiotherapy" is four years and the language of implementation is Latvian. During the study process, students must acquire 160 credit points. As the professionals are specifically meant to be prepared only for Latvian labor market and for the purpose to prepare specialists who are working in parallel with their studies, gaining practical skills since the first study year, the parameters set are seen as justifiable and reasonable.

The professional qualification given after finishing the studies at the university of the professional bachelor's study programme is the "physiotherapist" in combination with bachelor's degree. The goal of the study programme is to provide professional studies in physiotherapy that are applicable in practice, based on a theoretical foundation in health care science in correspondence with the economic and social needs of the state. The learning outcomes are based on objectives which

include knowledge, skills and competencies which are according to Latvian qualification framework for the 5th qualification level and the requirements included in the professional standard and corresponds to the sixth level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (6th LQF)). The study outcomes that wish to be achieved are in line with the aim, tasks and qualification of a physiotherapist. The main tasks of the programme are to prepare the specialists that are competitive in the field of health care and have in-depth knowledge obtained during their studies and have all the necessary skills to work in the field. The objective of the study programme is to base the study programme on strong theoretical grounds, mostly meet the standards of physiotherapists that can be useful and applied in clinical practice. According to SAR p. 62, Admission regulations at Daugavpils University are issued in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 846 "Regulations on the Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for the Admission to the Study Programmes" (10 October, 2006) and the DU Constitution.

The admission requirements of the study programme is secondary education. It can be stated that all of the indicators are interrelated and effective. As indicated in chapter

2.1.3. Since the previous accreditation term: ( 31.05.2013. -31.12.2022) there are various changes made within the study programme. According to the SAR p. 61, the programme has been improved in accordance with the standard of the Physiotherapist profession, as agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Council for Vocational Education and Employment October 13, 2021 Protocol No.6. - <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-187.pdf> and Cabinet Regulation No. 268. According to this new standard, new study courses were implemented within the study programme - "Physiotherapy and mental health", "Mental disorders", "Rehabilitation multi- professional team", "Health promotion and prevention in physiotherapy", "Physiotherapy in gynaecology and obstetrics", "Emergency medicine", "Disaster medicine". The expert group believes that the changes made of the study programme are relevant and according to the new standard of the profession of physiotherapist. As the new standard requires more practical lessons, the university has accordingly implemented and updated the study programme. Thus, it can be said that the changes are in line with the standard and justified.

2.1.4. The study programme is in demand and the specialists after graduating the programme are needed in the job market.

Daugavpils University is focusing mainly on the students of the Latgale region and Daugavpils city as similar programmes are implemented in Riga which means that students from Riga choose to stay in their city of origin.

According to the SAR p.63, graduates of PBSP "Physiotherapy" work in hospitals, health centres, rehabilitation centres, private practices, social care and educational institutions and elsewhere, satisfying the current and prospective demand for physiotherapists in Latvia and especially in Latgale. As indicated by the employers, there is no other similar programme provided in the region that prepares physiotherapists so this programme is of high importance in the region. The last survey of graduates of the program was organized in February 2021 and 145 respondents in the age group of 23 to 52 participated having graduated from DU PBSP "Physiotherapy" from 2003 to 2020. The study found that 134 or 92.4% of respondents work as physiotherapists or in a physiotherapy-related industry, however at the same time successful Certification exam after graduation result is approximately 39.6% for DU graduates. It should be mention that according the Article 28. of the Medical Treatment Law - Obtaining a diploma of medical education allows a medical practitioner until registration in the Register of Medical Practitioners to practice medicine only under the supervision or management of a medical practitioner who has a certificate and who is registered in accordance with the regulations on the Register of Medical Practitioners ( <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/44108-arstniecibas-likums>). The relatively low successful Certification exam

rate probably point out the need for development evaluation of knowledge and competence at the university and/or to the improvement of study process in clinical practices to achieve the ability of young specialists to carry out profession-appropriate activities independently and at a high professional level.

The dynamics of student numbers during the last 8 years of the reporting period was influenced by various factors - demographic situation of the country, financial problems, small offer of state-funded study places in the program (30 places). Within the time frame 2013-2021, the student numbers varied from 35(2014/2015 academic year) to 60 (2021/2022 academic year) students. In the programme from 2013/2014 to 2018/2019 it has been at the same level on average 40 students. However, during the last 3 years there has been an increase in the number of students. It is mostly due to more state funding provided within the study programme.

As informed during on site visit, on average in the programme there is a dropout during the first study year of approximately 15-20 students while fewer in second, third and fourth study years. The largest drop-out is made up of students who have experienced financial problems, family circumstances, health problems, inability to combine studies with work.

#### 2.1.5. Not applicable

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme “Physiotherapy” with the qualification “Physiotherapist” complies with the study field of “Health care” indicators, conditions and criteria. The goals, objectives, learning outcomes are in line and in compliance. The corrections made within the study programme since the previous accreditation is according to the professional standard. The programme is in demand and there is a flow of incoming students every study year. There is a certain level of dropout rate in the study programme but it is reasonable due to various possible reasons such as financial problems. health problems or Covid. There are no specific shortcomings indicated. Everything is in compliance with the criteria.

#### Strengths:

1. More than 90% of the graduates work in physiotherapy related workplace.
2. Ability for graduates to find a workplace easily and work.

#### Weaknesses:

1. High dropout level of students during the first study year ( around 15 -20 students).

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

#### **Analysis**

2.2.1. Daugavpils University has described, defined and published its standards and regulations for the verification of intended learning outcomes (examination procedures) as part of its studies, including methods of quality assurance, impartiality, transparency, complaints procedures and other relevant areas. Admission to study programmes is regulated by Regulations on Requirements, Criteria and Procedures for Admission Study Programmes, Regulations on Opening and Managing



Daugavpils University Study Directions and Study Programmes([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3\\_DU\\_Studijuvirzienun-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parvnoikums.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/3_DU_Studijuvirzienun-studiju-programmu-atversanas-un-parvnoikums.pdf)), DU Regulation on the recognition of competences acquired outside formal education and through professional experience and the learning outcomes achieved in prior learning ([https://old.du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Nolikums\\_par\\_arpus\\_formalas\\_izglitibas\\_apguto\\_vai\\_profesion%C4%81laja\\_pieredze\\_ieguto\\_kompetencu\\_un\\_iepriekseja\\_izglitiba\\_sasniegtu\\_studiju\\_rezultatu\\_atzisanu\\_DU.pdf](https://old.du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/Nolikums_par_arpus_formalas_izglitibas_apguto_vai_profesion%C4%81laja_pieredze_ieguto_kompetencu_un_iepriekseja_izglitiba_sasniegtu_studiju_rezultatu_atzisanu_DU.pdf)).

Daugavpils University is a regional center of higher education and science that unites and develops the main study and research potential of Eastern Latvia in the fields of natural, humanitarian, social and educational sciences. The task of Daugavpils University is to provide high-quality studies and scientific research corresponding to the modern level, creating an intellectual basis for the harmonious development of the region. DU mission is to contribute to the development of a sustainable future society by implementing scientific research on an international level and ensuring high quality education in the fields of natural, engineering, education, health, humanities and social sciences, thus promoting the sustainable development of Latgale region and the whole country.

The content of the study program justifies the goal of the program, which is to prepare specialists of the fifth degree of professional qualification of physiotherapists with a bachelor's degree in health care, to promote the competitiveness of physiotherapists in changing socio-economic conditions and on the international labor market. Also, to carry out in-depth acquisition of knowledge in physiotherapy, which enables the development of new or improvement of existing work skills and the preparation of students for creative, research and pedagogical work in the profession.

The results of the PBSP "Physiotherapy" study (knowledge, skills, competences) are mostly in accordance with the PROFESSIONAL STANDARD OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS (<https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=expert%2Fannex%2Fdownload&id=1473&key=79&suffix=English&spid=2580> ) agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on 13 October 2021, protocol no 6 ( <https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-187.pdf> ). Study course descriptions do not provide evidence that the content of the study program fully covers all the knowledge and skills noted in the professional standard, for example, knowledge and skills for working with persons with oncological diseases and for alleviating functional disorders caused by therapy, full knowledge of philosophical paradigms that guide modern understanding of human health, body and related rights and necessary knowledge in the interpretation of the most common laboratory tests. It should be noted also that the content of several study courses overlaps, for example, the courses "Theory and Methodology of Health Sports", "Sports Medicine" and "Therapeutic Exercise" deal with assessment of cardiorespiratory work capacity and dosage of exercise; The content of the study course "Therapeutic exercise" overlaps with specialized courses such as "Physiotherapy in internal diseases, rheumatology and geriatrics". This corresponds with the Opinion of the Association of Physiotherapists.

The content of the study program mainly meets the needs of the industry, the labor market and follows scientific trends by updating the content of the study subjects in accordance with the news on the labour market and changes in by-laws, but at the same time successful Certification exam after graduation result is approximately 39.6% for DU graduates. This could be pointed to the need to develop more evaluation of knowledge and competence at the university and/or to the improvement of study process in clinical practices to achieve the ability of young specialists to carry out profession-appropriate activities independently and at a high professional level.

By updating the standards of the Physiotherapy profession, descriptions of existing study courses were improved, new study courses were introduced, which attracted a wider profile of specialists in the existing field. The information contained in the study subjects and the goal of the program, the tasks and the results to be achieved are directly related because the acquired knowledge, skills and

competences within the study subjects are applied in the clinical environment.

In accordance with the DU mission, the PBSP "Physiotherapy" study plan has been improved in accordance with the latest requirements as defined in the Professional Standard for Physiotherapists and Government Regulation no. 268 of March 24, 2009. "Regulations on the qualification of doctors and students who acquire programs of the first or second degree of professional higher medical education in medical practice and the amount of theoretical and practical knowledge of these persons"

(<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/190610-noteikumi-par-arstniecibas-personu-un-studejoso-kuri-apgust-pirma-vai-otra-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-mediciniskas>). The content and plan of the study program is based on theoretical foundations and the foundations of professional development. Theoretical foundations burden the 1st and 2nd semesters, while professional development is the burden of the 3rd - 6th semesters. Theoretical subjects and optional subjects of the bachelor's program are mastered in grades 1-6. semester. Clinical practice (25 weeks) is divided as follows: 7 weeks in the 6th semester (Clinical practice in physiotherapy I), 6 weeks in the 7th semester (Clinical practice in physiotherapy II) and 12 weeks in the 8th semester (Clinical practice in physiotherapy III). Study papers are defended in the 2nd, 4th, and 6th semesters, but the 7th and 8th semesters are reserved for the creation of a diploma thesis. Study papers are defended in the 2nd, 4th, and 6th semesters, but the 7th and 8th semesters are reserved for the creation of a diploma thesis. The mandatory content of the professional bachelor's degree in Physiotherapy consists of general education study subjects in the amount of 20 credits, basic theoretical courses in the field in the amount of 37 credits, professional development courses in the amount of 60 credits, clinical practice - in the amount of 25 credits, a state exam that consists of the creation and defense of a bachelor's thesis and an exam in physiotherapy - in the amount of 12 CP, optional subjects - in the amount of 6 KT.

The general objectives of the physiotherapy study programme are in line with the mission and strategic goals of the University of Daugavpils and the demands of the labor market. The goal of PBSP "Physiotherapy" is to provide professional physiotherapy studies that are rooted in the theoretical foundations of health science, meet the standards of the physiotherapist profession and are applicable in clinical practice in accordance with the economic and social needs of the state. After completing of studies, students are employed very quickly in health organizations and other entities. The results of the study programme are formulated in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework<sup>3</sup> (EQF) and the Latvian Qualifications Framework<sup>4</sup> (LQF) level 8 and the European Higher Education Area Qualifications Framework third cycle qualification level.

#### 2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. Realization of learning-by-doing outcomes began one year ago and they understand in their application. The recommendation of the panel is that the University management have to organize education courses on how to implement learning outcomes in the teaching process in order to keep up with the new guidelines. Implementation of learning outcomes have to be monitored permanently.

The university is informed that knowledge, skills and competence of a student are evaluated having acquired each course, the requirements of which are determined by the study course description according to Law on Higher Education Institutions, Section 561. The study plan of the study programme may also include learning/study practice /on the-spot courses/workshops/hands-on courses, the volume of which is indicated in the study plan, the time is indicated in the study schedule. These study courses are implemented in accordance with the regulations approved by DU Senate.

The University of Daugavpils uses feedback from students, employers, professional organizations and alumni in the procedures of planning, proposing and approving new programmes, and revising or closing the existing programmes according to MK 512 regulations "Regulations on the state standard of second-level professional higher education (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761-noteikumi-par-otra-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-valsts-standardu>). Feedback with stakeholders is at a high level. Many of them are very cooperative and try to help students in developed in their professional career. They are very impressed and satisfied with plan of University to develop graduate study programmes.

Study programmes are elaborated by Councils of Study Directions, profiling departments/institutes, groups of academic staff or professors and approved by the DU Senate after being coordinated at the meeting of the Council of the Study Direction and/or profiling department/institute, the Faculty Board, DU Council for Studies. An independent programme expertise shall be organized prior to approval, which shall include the substantiation of the efficiency of the study programme implementation, also indicating the significant differences between the study programme and similar study programmes of the same level and the same study direction implemented by DU. The strategic goal of the programs is to provide professional studies that meet the requirements of the national economy, culture, national defence and security, as well as social needs, are based on the theoretical foundations of the field, meet the professional standards (if approved by the Tripartite Cooperation Council for Vocational Education and Employment). The aim of PBSP "Physiotherapy" is to provide professional studies in physiotherapy that are rooted in the theoretical foundations of the health care industry, meet the standards of the profession of physiotherapist, and are applicable in clinical practice.

Inspecting the study regulations and reviewing the submitted documentation, the panel would conclude that the higher education institution has described, defined and published its standards and regulations for checking the intended learning outcomes (examination procedures) as part of physiotherapy studies. The data contained in the study program has a clear goal, tasks and results to be achieved are directly related because the acquired knowledge, skills and competencies are fully applied in the clinical environment.

Experts recommend that external collaborators should include the latest research, trends and knowledge from the labour market in the teaching process in order to enable the acquisition of experience and practical knowledge at a high level of quality. The university should provide mechanisms for periodic monitoring of the quality of the study program and its continuous improvements well as student centred learning methodology application. For example, rules, procedures, etc. for adopting and ensuring the quality of a new study program and its continuous improvement. It is recommended that the University review the ways of collecting feedback to ensure that it is based on quantitative and qualitative analyses of feedback from current and former students, as well as suggestions from other key stakeholders in study programs through the use of, for example, surveys and discussions with focus groups. The student-centered approach to the study process is ensured by involving students in the supervision of the program, conducting surveys of students about the study courses and the study program in general. The student-centered approach is ensured by the criteria for the evaluation of study courses and test papers defined and stipulated in internal regulatory enactments; the information included in the descriptions of the study courses regarding the expected results, students' independent work.

2.2.4. The amount of clinical practice is 25 CP, it is implemented in accordance with the study plan of the professional bachelor study programme "Physiotherapy". 1 CP of practice corresponds to 30 academic contact hours in work with a patient. Professional qualification practice is a compulsory part of the study process integrating theory and practice. The practice is organized in accordance with the Regulations on Professional Qualification

The aim of the practice is to enable students to acquire and strengthen the practical skills required

in the profession of physiotherapist, as well as to improve students' theoretical knowledge in physiotherapy. The proposed number of physiotherapy students is suitable for quality internships. It is recommended, due to the specifics of the practical part of the study, that classes, especially those in the form of seminars and exercises, are conducted in small groups.

#### 2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. Based on the submitted documentation and detailed analysis, the panel would conclude that the mentoring process was successfully implemented, which shows the statistical presentation of graduate students in the period from 2013-2021 (Annex III 3.1.4. Statistical data on Students\_Physiotherapy). This shows us that the selected topics of the final papers are relevant and correspond to the study programme. Evaluation of final works is carried out in accordance with the given principles (Professional bachelor study program "Physiotherapy" compliance with the national education standard Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of August 26, 2014 No. 512 "Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher Education", <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761-noteikumi-par-otra-limena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-s-valsts-standartu> . A unique form for evaluating final theses ( Annex II\_3.2.6\_Defended bachelor thesis 2020\_2021 ) was developed, which is based on the following principles: evaluation criteria are clear and understandable, publicly published and available in advance, evaluators are familiar with testing and examination methods, evaluation gives students the opportunity to demonstrate to what extent they have achieved the expected learning outcomes; students receive feedback that, if necessary, gives advice on the learning process, assessment is consistent, fair, appropriate for all students and is conducted in accordance with legislation and approved procedures; there is a procedure for considering student appeals.

Each bachelor's thesis is evaluated by a reviewer, who evaluates the topicality of the topic of the thesis, formatting, compliance with the level of the bachelor's thesis, and the content of the thesis. Electronic versions of final theses are stored in the DU Information System, which enables all students to become familiar with previously conducted research. Final theses are submitted in accordance with the binding finalization procedure, and students submit an electronic version for plagiarism control.

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

The higher education institution proves the compliance of the general goals of all study programmes with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution.

The justification for conducting study programmes is explained in relation to social / economic needs and includes an analysis of the necessary capacities of the higher education institution for conducting these programmes.

The intended learning outcomes of the study programmes conducted by the higher education institution correspond to the level and profile of the qualifications acquired by them. The higher education institution has clearly defined the learning outcomes of study programmes that are in line with the mission and goals of the higher education institution. Proof of this is the attached documentation: regulations on study and / or assessment, study plan and syllabus and teaching plan, planned learning outcomes of all study programmes, diploma supplement, employment analysis of graduates, feedback from graduates and their employers or associates, feedback from students.

The higher education institution checks and ensures the harmonization of learning outcomes at the level of the study program and subjects, and thus ensures the achievement of the learning outcomes in the study programmes it conducts.

The higher education institution, on the basis of evidence of the achievement of the intended

learning outcomes (e.g. student tests, seminar papers, presentations, etc.), continuously revises and improves the teaching process. Evidence of the above are feedback from graduates and associates, feedback from students and external stakeholders, examples of written exams, seminar papers, project assignments, etc., student final papers and exams, and ways to check the learning outcomes that students should have after their studies, examples of revised learning outcomes, changes in the teaching process.

The higher education institution enables learning and acquiring skills through student internships and is part of study programmes and is organized outside the higher education institution in cooperation with the labor market.

Student internships are conducted in a systematic and responsible manner that enables the achievement of learning outcomes related to student internships. Proof of this is the attached contracts with employers, the rulebook on professional practice, the diary of professional practice and feedback from students and employers, and the systematic collection and analysis of feedback from students and mentors on the quality of student practice.

#### Strengths:

1. The higher education institution has clearly defined the intended learning outcomes of the study programme (in short and simple sentences).
2. The learning outcomes are written from the student's perspective and are measurable.
3. The higher education institution proves the compliance of the learning outcomes with the mission and strategic goals of the higher education institution.
4. The higher education institution proves the compliance of the learning outcomes with the general goals of the study program
5. The learning outcomes of the study program are in accordance with the requirements of the profession and internationally recognized standards for the profession and ensure the modernity of the program.
6. The learning outcomes of the study programme clearly reflect the competencies required for inclusion in the labor market, continuing education, or other needs of the individual/society.
7. The learning outcomes of the study programme are comparable to the projected learning outcomes of related programmes in the country and abroad.
8. The learning outcomes of the study program include the development of generic (general/key/transferable) and professionally specific competencies.
9. Mechanisms are provided for the implementation of student internships in a systematic and responsible manner that will enable the achievement of the learning outcomes related to student internships.

#### Weaknesses:

1. External collaborators should include the latest research, trends, and knowledge from the labor market in the teaching process.
2. The higher education institution needs to envisage mechanisms for periodic monitoring of the quality of the study program and its continuous improvement. For example rules, procedures, etc. for the adoption and quality assurance of a new study programme and its continuous improvement, there is an unclear role of the "Health care" study field Council in the Quality Assurance System of study quality.

#### **Assessment of the requirement [5] (applicable only to master's or doctoral study programmes)**

- 1 R5 - The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or field of artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable

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

### **Analysis**

2.3.1. During the visit, the experts team got acquainted with the DU infrastructure, information networks, DU research center databases listed in the DU self-assessment documents, as well as materials, services, computer applications that students and teachers can use within the study program. scientific activity. Experts acknowledge that DU is able to provide a wide range of opportunities for prospective students and teachers to improve and develop in the chosen profession. In 2018/2019, the procurement "Supply of equipment for modernization of the study field Health Care within the framework of ERDF prognosed project "Modernization of STEM, health care and art study programmes at Daugavpils University" of programme "Development and employment" priority direction "Education, skills and lifelong learning" 8.1.1. A specific support objective "To increase the number of modernized STEM, including medicine and creative industries, study programmes" was started and will continue. The latest technologies for improving the learning process have been purchased within the framework of EU co-financed projects. A digital anatomy dissection table and scales with a height meter, modern equipment for physiology laboratories, as well as mannequins for emergency medical care etc. were purchased for training. Structural units involved in the implementation of the study program: Department of Anatomy and Physiology of the Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Department of Physics and Mathematics, Department of Chemistry and Geography, Institute of Life Sciences and Technology, Department of Informatics; The Center for Foreign Languages and the Department of English Philology and Translation Studies of the Faculty of Humanities; Department of Pedagogy and Pedagogical Psychology of Faculty of Education and Management; Department of Social Psychology of Faculty of Social Sciences; UNESCO department, library. (Self Assessment report II. 3. 2.3.1.- 2.3.3)

As the study process is partly based on several principles of the e-learning environment, forms and methods of study organization suitable for the e-learning environment are used. Students are offered a developed e-learning environment (Moodle), as well as direct communication (e-mail, consultations) information is available in each study course. DU full-time academic staff systematically use the e-learning environment Moodle and place various study materials in it: materials for lectures, seminars, and practical classes, which are support for students' independent work. It should be noted that only a part of the guest lecturers use this system.

During the visit, the experts made sure that teachers and students are offered informative courses, training, and seminars on how to use e-learning, as well as teachers to create their own e-courses.

The collections of the DU library, both from the point of view during the on-site visit and from the description, confirm that the study program has a base with study materials for the acquisition of the study program and additional newer literature will be purchased. However, the list of study literature lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care in relation to physiotherapy and rehabilitation. Outdated information or information that does not comply with the principle of evidence-based medicine is specified as mandatory and supplementary literature for several study courses.

The library also offers students a variety of scanning and copying services. The library also has an on-site electronic catalog, book ordering options can be booked and extended both on-site and remotely, and there is an automatic customer service system when a student picks up their book, registers it at the appropriate facility and removes or transfers it.

The DU network also provides access to various databases - EBSCO Publishing, PubMed, Cambridge journals, Science Direct. Experts admit that there could be more databases related to the medical

industry - Accesss Medicine, ClinicalKey, UpToDate. During the visit, the head of the library informed us that regular statistics are compiled and evaluated, and that databases are used more often by students. Purchases of new books are also made every year by replenishing and renewing the collection, while obsolete items and obsolete literature are excluded from the collection.

Both the DU management and the teaching staff emphasized that they are making great efforts to renew and improve the infrastructure and the provision of the material and technical base by attracting project funding. Experts were convinced of this during the visit, as there is a lot of variety available for students' technology and teaching tools.

Students and teachers have access to a modern and various material and technical base. DU has thought about students with special needs, both in the description and during the visit. In study classrooms and existing practical skills rooms, the simulation center is accessible to people in wheelchairs, as well as information is available to visually impaired, hard of hearing people. Most of the hallway signs are in Braille. In addition, students with children have been considered, as children's rooms and playrooms have been set up while the parent is studying.

#### 2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. The source of funding for the study field "Health Care" and also for the study programme "Physiotherapy" is the state budget funding for studies (grant) and tuition fees. Calculation of costs per student of PBSP "Physiotherapy" and information on the percentage distribution of funding are attached in the Appendix III\_3.3.3\_cost calculation Physiotherapy\_new. Total costs for 1 student per 1 study year is 5022.37. The calculation of costs is made on the condition that at least 25 students study in the study programme in state-funded budget places. According to information from DU the total number of students in DU PBSP "Physiotherapy" in the reporting period (2013-2021) varied from 35 (2014/2015 academic year) to 60 (2021/2022 academic year) students.

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

Specialists recognize that the material and technical base and its provision are available to both students and teaching staff, organized according to the specifics and level of the study program, and are able to provide ample opportunities for future students and teachers to improve and develop in their chosen profession. Technologies for improving the learning process have been purchased within the framework of EU co-financed projects. In addition to specific study rooms, the infrastructure of Daugavpils University is available to students. Despite the fact that, in general, the resources of the DU library are good, the list of study literature lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care in relation to physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

#### Strengths

1. Students have access to several libraries, thus more rooms and more methodological materials, databases, and other services to be used to study the study program.

#### Weaknesses

1. The list of study literature lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care in relation to physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

### **Assessment of the requirement [6]**

- 1 R6 - Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes

### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study provision, informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the conditions for ensuring the implementation of the study program and achievement of study results, which is confirmed by the submitted documents and the interview with the university. However, the list of study literature lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care in relation to physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

## **2.4. Teaching Staff**

### **Analysis**

2.4.1. For the implementation of the PBSP “Physiotherapy” study plan 3 professors, 4 associate professors, 18 university lecturers/leading researchers/MD (and at least 6 years of work experience), 20 lecturers and 4 assistants are involved. ( Self Assessment report 3.4.1.1. table. PBSP “Physiotherapy” academic staff.) All PBSP “Physiotherapy” study courses are taught in Latvian. The qualification of the academic staff complies with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, as all lecturers have a master's degree, doctoral degree or a professional diploma and certificate of a medical practitioner. However, it is necessary to point out the question of compliance of the academic staff and the respective study courses, for example, the study course “Public Health” or “Health promotion and prevention”, this also corresponds with the indications in the opinion of the Ministry of Health (AIC attachments- VM atzinums par\_DU\_studiju virzienu\_Veselības aprūpe.docx). It should also be noted that the experts find that the undergraduate work of the students is supervised by an academic staff with a bachelor's degree, which is unacceptable. It should be also noted that the academic staff's qualifications meet the formal requirements (master's degree in biology, pedagogy), one might wish that the lecturers' formal qualifications were related to physiotherapy/rehabilitation.

14 lecturers with the qualification of a physiotherapist are involved in the implementation of the PBSP “Physiotherapy” programme ( Self Assessment report 3.4.1. description)

By attracting more and more teaching staff from the professional field, an opportunity is gained to achieve study results in better quality. The teaching staff of the professional field is constantly improving in professional development training, thus it is possible to review and improve the content of study courses by introducing current innovations in the field of physiotherapy.

While on-site during the meeting with the academic staff of the study program, in a discussion with an expert team, the team made sure that English language skills should be improved. Despite the fact that the study program is implemented only in Latvian, knowledge of English is very necessary for academic staff to ensure the study process in accordance with modern evidence-based practice and international standards, i.e. academic staff must be familiar with recent years of scientific literature of the specific field - physiotherapy and rehabilitation that is only available in English in scientific databases. Also, more physiotherapists especially with practical experience more than 5 years should be recruited with permanent contracts.

2.4.2. Changes in the number of academic staff for the reporting period are reflected in detail in Section 1.5.1 Number of academic staff of the report of the study field “Health Care” available on DU website ([https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Veselibas\\_aprupe\\_2020\\_2021.pdf](https://du.lv/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Veselibas_aprupe_2020_2021.pdf)). Most of the teaching staff of professional study courses are specialists practicing in the field. The professional courses related to physiotherapy are taught by lecturers with the qualification of a physiotherapist and a master's/doctorate degree. To provide study courses in the field of health care, in the Departments of Anatomy and Physiology and Nursing associate professors have been elected and university lecturers have been involved in the study course “Physiotherapy in internal medicine, rheumatology and geriatrics” and in the supervision of course papers and bachelor's theses within



the framework of ESF Project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/022. A significant contribution to attracting foreign teaching staff, doctoral candidates and raising the qualification of the academic staff whose place of the main election is DU comes from the implementation of ESF Project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/022 "Strengthening the Professional Competence of Academic Staff in the Field of Strategic Specialization of Daugavpils University" in the field of studies "Health care" in section 2.3.6 of the report.

#### 2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. Analysing the annex II\_2.3.7\_basic information on teaching staff.xlsx and Scientific publications in the last six years (full-time employed academic staff in the field of health care) it can be noticed that 19 academic staff members have been involved in publishing articles or conference proceedings. Mainly the publications are published by PhD-s, no publications were found published by physiotherapists. Only 3 publications are connected with the field of physiotherapy. Taking into account the above, it can be concluded that the number of publications of academic personnel in the field of health care in relation to physiotherapy is insufficient.

Evaluating Annex II\_2.3.7basic information on teaching staff.xlsx and Annex II\_2.3.7\_CV\_ENG in order to clarify the professional experience of the academic staff involved in the study process of PBSP "Physiotherapy" it can be concluded that the full-time employed physiotherapists have insufficient professional experience - only two of them have experience more than 5 years, which relates to the guest lectures - two from nine have experience more than 5 years and right to realize professional training and education according to the Medical Treatment Law (article 33.) and the regulations of the Union of Professional Organizations of Latvian Medical Practitioners. The minority of lecturers involved in the implementation of the study program and who participate in the training of profession-specific competencies, have not received their further academic education in the field of health care - these lecturers have obtained a master's or doctor's degree in biology or pedagogy.

2.4.5. The existence of the programme and the ability to achieve the set goal and expected results during its implementation are possible if there is a full-fledged team of professionals, united by an understanding of the training of physiotherapy specialists, the essence of studies, study structure, and organizational forms. The cooperation of the program's teaching staff is diverse, deciding on the activities related to the organization and management of the study process; considering questions about the study content; planning clinical practices; cooperating in research. In the regular meetings of lecturers, the content of study courses and the structure of the program are discussed, as well as how to maintain the basic principle of course development - systemic nature and how to improve the forms of organization of the study process in order to promote students' growth. At the time of submitting the self-assessment report, the ratio between the number of students and teaching staff in the study program is 1:2.8, which ensures an individual approach on the part of the lecturers.

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by indicating strengths and weaknesses**

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. The professional experience of the full-time employed academic staff physiotherapists involved in the study process of PBSP "Physiotherapy" have insufficient professional experience - only two of them have experience more than 5 years, which relates to the guest lectures - two from nine have experience more than 5 years and right to realize professional training and education according to the Medical Treatment Law (article 33.) and the regulations of the Union of Professional Organizations of Latvian

Medical Practitioners. The minority of lecturers involved in the implementation of the study program and who participate in the training of profession-specific competencies, have not received their further academic education in the field of health care - these lecturers have obtained a master's or doctor's degree in biology or pedagogy Which formally meets the legislative requirements, but raises doubts about in-depth competence in physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

Not all members of the academic staff in the last six years have not published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions. There are many publications but not connected with physiotherapy. The publications by physiotherapists should be the priority. Also, the language skills of the academic staff should be improved to be involved in scientific work.

A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

1. Lacking physiotherapists with a permanent contract
2. Lacking physiotherapists with sufficient professional experience
- 3.. Publications are not connected with physiotherapy
- 4.. Lacking publications by physiotherapists

## **Assessment of the requirement [7]**

- 1 R7 - Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

There is insufficient number of physiotherapists with a permanent contracts. Academic staff publications should be more connected to physiotherapy. Research in physiotherapy helps to improve the field of physiotherapy and study program.

All academic staff does not have sufficient skills in English to be involved in scientific work, but this is essential to read scientific articles and to be involved in international cooperation.

Full-time employed physiotherapists have insufficient professional experience - only two of them have experience of more than 5 years, which relates to the guest lectures - two of nine have experience of more than 5 years and the right to realize professional training and education according to the Medical Treatment Law (article 33.) and the regulations of the Union of Professional Organizations of Latvian Medical Practitioners.

## **2.5. Assessment of the Compliance**

### **Requirements**

- 1 1 - The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The study programme complies with the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of August 26, 2014 No. 512 "Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher

Education”

(<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761-noteikumi-par-otralimena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-valsts-standartu>). In general experts conclude that study programme is well and concisely designed and based on the needs of the labor market. The volume of the bachelor's study program in full-time studies is 160 credit points. The duration of full-time studies is eight semesters. General education study courses have 20 CP. Branch theoretical (professional activity) theoretical courses and information technology courses have 37 CP. Branch (professional activity) professional specialization courses have 60 CP. The practice has 25 CP. Development of a bachelor's thesis has 12 CP. It should be noted that civil and environmental protection courses are also included, respectively "Civil protection 1 CP and Environmental protection, labor protection and fire safety 2CP.

- 2 2 - The study programme complies with a valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided if the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification (if applicable)

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study programme is based on professional standard - PHYSIOTHERAPISTS (agreed at the meeting of the Tripartite Cooperation Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment on 13 October 2021, protocol no 6 (

<https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-187.pdf> ).

According information provided by DU (SAR, chapter 3.1.1.), to assure programmes compliance with professional standard, new study courses were introduced, for example: Physiotherapy and mental health, Mental disorders, Rehabilitation multiprofessional team, Health promotion and prevention in physiotherapy, Physiotherapy in gynaecology and obstetrics, Emergency medicine, Disaster medicine.

In general experts conclude that the content of the study subjects has been improved to include current requirements and results of the study programme "Physiotherapy" (knowledge, skills, competences) are mostly in accordance with the professional standard. However Study course descriptions do not provide evidence that the content of the study program fully covers all the knowledge and skills indicated in the professional standard, for example, knowledge and skills for working with persons with oncological diseases and for alleviating functional disorders caused by therapy, full knowledge of philosophical paradigms that guide modern understanding of human health, body and related rights and necessary knowledge in the interpretation of the most common laboratory tests.

It should be noted that the content of several study courses overlaps, for example, the courses "Theory and Methodology of Health Sports", "Sports Medicine" and "Therapeutic Exercise" deal with assessment of cardiorespiratory work capacity and dosage of exercise; The content of the study course "Therapeutic exercise" overlaps with specialized courses such as "Physiotherapy in internal diseases, rheumatology and geriatrics". Experts findings also corresponds with the Opinion of the Association of Physiotherapists.

- 3 3 - 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 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The study program of physiotherapy is implemented in the Latvian language, and the courses and study materials are made in the language in which the study program is conducted and are in accordance with requirements from Article 561, paragraph 2 and Article 562, paragraph 2 of

the Law on Higher Education (Annex:II\_3.2.1\_Study course description\_Physiotherapy.zip ).

- 4 4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The content of the diploma of study, which is issued to students by the higher education institution, after the completion of studies is according to the study program and the conditions adopted in accordance with the Law and contains all necessary information. The aforementioned addition to the diploma follows the model developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/CEPES). The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data and to ensure academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context and status of studies undertaken and successfully completed by an individual appointed to the original qualification to which this supplement is attached. A sample of the diploma and its supplement is in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers 16.04.2013. to Regulation No. 202 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=256157/>

- 5 5 - 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 Higher Education Institutions.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 6 6 - 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 Higher Education Institutions.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 7 7 - 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 (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 8 8 - 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

Based on Table 2.3.7 Basic information on teaching staff, it can be seen that the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program in the Latvian language know the official language. Also, the rector's statement in the Statement of recognition based on European language assessment levels states that the teaching staff knows the language at a minimum level of B2 to C2 level of knowledge.

- 9 9 - 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 (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 10 10 - The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The sample contract for studying at the University of Daugavpils in the physiotherapy study program describes the mandatory provisions that are in accordance with the program requirements and in accordance with the DU study process that regulates normative acts. The study contract sample determines the essential elements of the study contract concluded between the University and the student during the study cycle, as well as other issues of importance for the regulation of mutual rights and obligations between the student and the University of DU. The sample contract for studying complies with the requirements of Cabinet Regulation No. 70 of 23 January 2007 "Mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement".

- 11 11 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution or college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

DU has concluded agreement with Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU), which confirms that in case of discontinuation of the DU study programme, RSU will matriculate students of the DU study programme in the RSU Second Level Professional Study Programme "Physiotherapy". (Annex: II\_2.1.4\_Agreements with RSU.zip)

According to the agreement between DU and the student, point 7.4, it is clearly stated that the student is familiar with the information and that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated).

- 12 12 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked due to the actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

As proof, DU in annexes added confirmation statement (signed by rector, 18.02.2021.) in which DU confirms that DU guarantees compensation for damages caused to the student if, due to DU conduct (act or omission), the study direction "Health Care" is not accredited or the licenses of the study programmes belonging to the study direction are withdrawn and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme (annex: II\_2.1.4\_GUARANTEE\_compensation.pdf).

Also attached a sample of the study agreement includes point 2.13. "If within the term of validity of the Agreement study programme mentioned in paragraph 2.1. loses the accreditation or is closed, DU undertakes to provide the Student with the opportunity to continue the studies in other DU study programme or other higher education establishment, with which DU has concluded a corresponding agreement. In this case the tuition fee is defined by the higher

education establishment, in which the Student continues the studies." (annex: II\_2.1.4\_Agreement\_studies\_DU\_samples.zip)

- 13 13 - The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.(1), Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 14 14 - Compliance with the requirements specified in other regulatory enactments that apply to the study programme being assessed (if applicable)

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

Study programme "Physiotherapy" harmonized the qualifications according to the Regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers dated March 24, 2009, no. 268 "Regulations on the qualifications and theoretical and practical knowledge of healthcare professionals and students of the first or second degree of professional higher medical education". Issued in accordance with Article 27 and Paragraph 3 of Article 33 of the Law on Treatment (annex: III\_3.2.1\_Appendix\_Compliance of the qualification to be acquired with Cabinet Regulation No. 268\_Physiotherapy.pdf)

### **Assessment of the requirement [8]**

- 1 R8 - Compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study programme "Physiotherapy" mostly comply with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments. Programmes knowledge, skills, competences, mostly are in accordance with the PROFESSIONAL STANDARD OF PHYSIOTHERAPISTS, however, experts found some inconsistencies and content overlaps (more information above, under point 2), which DU should eliminate in order to ensure full compliance of the program with the requirements contained in the standard.

### **General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths and weaknesses of the study programme**

The main goal of physiotherapy studies is to prepare specialist physiotherapists of the 5th degree of Bachelor of Health Care in order to implement the acquired knowledge in physiotherapy that enables the development of new or improvement of existing work skills and the preparation of students for creative, research and pedagogical work in the profession. The panel would emphasize the need for research projects in the field of physiotherapy. The panel believes that the institution is always looking for quality teachers and that it has put in place procedures to make sure that the best candidates get employed and advance. Teacher recruitment procedures arise from the development goals of the higher education institution and they are aligned with the legislation and internal regulations in effect, as provided in evidences Daugavpils University Senate Regulations and Regulations on elections to academic and administrative positions. It is recommended to establish a formal vocational training system so that teachers are able to keep track of new findings in their field of work and thus encourage greater achievement in professional and/or scientific activities. Teachers should also take part in the workshop on defining learning outcomes to enhance the teaching process.

This alone promotes the competitiveness of physiotherapists in changing socioeconomic conditions and on the international labor market.

### Strengths

1. The higher education institution understands the importance of feedback from students and alumni in order to harmonize the study program with the requirements of the labor market of Latvia and the European Union, the requirements of higher education and the economy.
2. Upon completion of their studies, students are issued the appropriate documents (diploma and supplementary study document) in accordance with the relevant regulations in Latvian and English. Proof of this are examples of diplomas and supplementary study documents for all qualifications issued by the higher education institution, a supplementary study document containing all the prescribed information and feedback from students and alumni.

### Weaknesses

1. The library partially satisfies the requirements of the study and professional activities with its content.
2. Academic staff - physiotherapists with a short professional experience period.
3. Not enough physiotherapists with the permanent contract in the implementation and improvement of the study programme.

## Evaluation of the study programme "Physiotherapy"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Good

## 2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Physiotherapy"

### Short-term recommendations

1. It is recommended to establish a formal vocational training system so that teachers are able to keep track of new findings in their field of work and thus encourage greater achievement in professional and/or scientific activities. Teachers should also take part in the workshop on defining learning outcomes to enhance the teaching process.
2. It is recommended that the University should foresee mechanisms for periodically monitoring the quality of the study program and its continuous improvement. For example: rules, procedures, etc. for adopting and ensuring the quality of a new study program and its continuous improvement, the role of the Council of the Health Care study program in the Study Quality Assurance System is unclear.

### Long-term recommendations

1. To ensure that guest academic staff include the latest research, trends and knowledge from the labor market in the teaching process.
2. To ensure that the mechanisms for periodical monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the study program: rules, order, procedure, etc. would be followed accordingly.
3. To strengthen the role of the "Healthcare" study direction council in the study program quality assurance system.
4. To evolve and enrich the list of study literature incl. research and evidence-based practice literature in physiotherapy and rehabilitation.

- |  |
|--|
| 5. To involve more physiotherapists with permanent contracts and with longer professional experience in the implementation and improvement of the study program, specifying the composition of the teaching staff involved in the field of specialization. |
| 6. To develop research projects incl. Applied in the field of physiotherapy.   |
| 7. To encourage the development of publications by physiotherapists in the field of physiotherapy.   |
| 8. To promote the improvement of the sufficient English language skills of academic staff in the field of physiotherapy.   |
| 9. Try to find solutions to increase the number of state budget places/scholarships for the purpose to eliminate high dropout levels of students that leave studies due to financial problems.   |

## II - "Nursing" ASSESSMENT

### II - "Nursing" ASSESSMENT

#### 2.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

##### Analysis

2.1.1. The study programme "Nursing" with the qualification "General care nurse" complies with the study field of "Health care" indicators, conditions and criteria. The length of the implementation of the study programme, which is four years, is evaluated as sufficient for acquiring the necessary skills and practical experience to enter the labor market.

2.1.2. The title of the study programme is "Nursing" in the study field "Health care" with classification code 42723., where 42 corresponds to Second-level professional higher education (fifth-level professional qualification and professional bachelor's degree) or second-level professional higher education (fifth-level professional qualification), which can be implemented after general or vocational secondary education. The duration of studies in full-time studies is four years. Where the third digit of the code "7" stands for - Health Care and Social Welfare, and consecutively "72" stands for the field of Health Care, while the next "3" corresponds to Nursing, according to the MC regulation Nr. 322 "Noteikumi par Latvijas izglītības klasifikāciju" (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/291524-noteikumi-par-latvijas-izglitibas-klasifikaciju>)

The degree provided after finishing the studies at university is a professional bachelor's degree in healthcare with a professional qualification of "general care nurse." The goal of the study programme is to provide DU matriculated students with a broad and comprehensive practice-based theoretical knowledge in the field of health care and a set of practical skills in accordance with the "Nurse" qualification (General care nurse) professional standard (PS 144). The gained skills during studies in this programme through second-level professional higher education knowledge base and professional competence to promote development of competitive professionals are in accordance with the requirements of the regulated professions set by Latvia and the European Union, at the same time stimulating the development of scientific research in the health care sector.

The learning outcomes are based on objectives which include knowledge, skills and competencies which are according to Latvian qualification framework for the 5th qualification level and the requirements included in the professional standard and corresponds to the sixth level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (6th LQF)). The learning outcomes provide that the graduates of this programme will be capable and knowledgeable experts and practitioners of the field with all the necessary competencies. These competencies include the ability to independently provide general



care for patients at different ages, independently perform clinical procedures, participating in patient diagnostic and treatment procedures. The results that wish to be achieved are in line with the aim, tasks and qualification of a nurse. These results are knowledge and understanding of medical history, theories, concepts. It is also crucial for a nurse to be aware of rehabilitations for all age persons, critical thinking skills in medical practice as well as medical psychology. The results also include implementation of research methods, application of medical care and practice skills and knowledge. According to SAR p. 84, Admission regulations at Daugavpils University are issued in accordance with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, Cabinet of Ministers Regulations No. 846 "Regulations on the Requirements, Criteria and Procedure for the Admission to the Study Programmes" (10 October, 2006) and the DU Constitution.

The admission requirements of the study programme is secondary education. It can be stated that all of the indicators are interrelated and effective. As indicated in chapter 2.1.1., the study duration is four years and the language of implementation is Latvian and is planned to be implemented in English. During the study process, students must acquire 160 credit points. As the professionals are specifically meant to be prepared for both Latvian and foreign labor markets and for the purpose to prepare specialists who are working in parallel with their studies, gaining practical skills since the first study year, the parameters set are seen as justifiable and reasonable.

2.1.3. There have been no changes in the parameters of the study programme since the issuance of the license, despite the recommendations made in the licensing process. The only change within the study programme that is wished to be implemented in English. It is planned with the purpose to attract foreign students to the DU and promote the university abroad according to the SAR p.83. DU states that they have the necessary skills and resources to provide the study programme in English language. As stated during on site visit, lecturers are provided with the opportunity to improve their language skills of English through language courses. It has to be noted that during an onsite visit the university used the assistance of an interpreter which raises a concern of the preparedness to provide studies in English of topics of specificity in nursing. B2 level is the minimum requirement to be able to teach in English. Regarding resources in English, DU seems partly prepared because the databases provided and books are available but, it should be noted that the list of study literature lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care inc. in nursing (see Chapter 1.3.).

At this point, the DU is outlining in the SAR p. 85, that the nursing programme in English is to be in high demand of Ukrainian civil population that has emigrated from Ukraine due to war conditions in their country. The university puts an emphasis that there has been a general interest from students to study this programme in English language.

As mentioned above in the previous paragraph, there is a concern by the expert group at this point whether the DU can successfully provide the studies implementing them fully in English due to the knowledge level of the teaching staff. In its papers and in SAR the DU emphasizes that the teaching staff has the skills and ability to provide but the expert group during onsite visit noticed that some part of the teaching staff were not as knowledgeable and needed the help of an interpreter to participate in the expert visit. That raises a concern of the ability to provide a successful study process for foreign students and skills of the language in at least B2 level. As it has been mentioned within the SAR p. 83 and was also outlined during onsite visit, the lecturers have the opportunity to develop their skills through English language courses provided by the university. It is part of the ESF project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/022 "Strengthening the Professional Competence of the Academic Staff in the Fields of Strategic Specialization of Daugavpils University". After the review of the II\_2.3.7\_CV\_ENG.zip which includes the CVs of the teaching staff, it is clear that the majority of the teaching staff has the necessary language skills, but there are some lecturers that are lacking them and have to improve. It is not sufficient if a lecturer has A2 level to teach a course with medical terminology and explain the processes.

In the SAR p. 42, the DU indicates that they plan to improve the English skills of the teaching staff in

the near future within this ESF project but as the programme is planned to be implemented in the near future as well it seems insufficient at this point.

2.1.4. The study programme is in high demand in the Latgale region as it is the only study programme right now that provides the opportunity to study this profession and acquire the necessary skills to become a practicing nurse. Thus, it is important that this study programme is maintained in the region. It is crucial also from the aspect that otherwise, all of the students that wish to study this profession will have to emigrate to the capital or elsewhere. Especially as during Covid-19 pandemic which impacted largely the whole world with the spread of the virus, it indicated the need for nurses as specialists and providers of general medical care and assistance. In 2020, it clearly showed that in Latvia we lack general care staff in hospitals. In addition, health workers are highly concentrated in urban areas, creating inequality and accessibility problems for people living in rural areas, thus, it is highly necessary that nurses are educated in such an amount that they are located also in smaller cities within the country. According to the SAR pp. 86-87., based on the data of the audit report on Human Resources in Health Care by the State Audit Office of the Republic of Latvia (14 June, 2019) (<https://static.lsm.lv/documents/oy.pdf>), there is a shortage of at least 3,598 nurses and at least 30% less nurses are being trained in the country. The creation, implementation and development of the PBSP "Nursing" program takes place within the framework of cooperation between DU, Daugavpils University Agency, Daugavpils University's Daugavpils Medical College and Daugavpils Regional Hospital, envisaging sharing of academic, professional and material technical resources by the cooperation partners in the implementation of the program.

Regarding the dynamics of student numbers, the study programme applied for accreditation in 2021/22 which provides a limited amount of information to be analyzed. According to SAR p.87, a total of 400 students in state funded places are matriculated in the program in all study courses. At the end of winter semester, only 13 students have been exmatriculated. In 2022, 133 students are studying in the 2nd semester, 27 students in the 4th semester, 40 students in the 6th semester, 166 students in the 8th semester and 21 students are on a study break. There is a low dropout rate for this programme. In the autumn semester it was only 2,5%.

2.1.5. Not applicable

### **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses**

All of the indicators of the study programme are in compliance with the existing preconditions of the implementation of the study programme. The study programme "Nursing" with the qualification "General care nurse" complies with the study field of "Health care" indicators, conditions and criteria. There are no specific shortcomings indicated. Everything is in compliance with the criteria. The only concern is the implementation of the study programme in English. It is of importance that the lecturers have the necessary language skills to provide the studies fully in English and do not lack the skills to explain study material. Overall, the study programme is in high demand in the Latgale region and there is a low dropout rate for this programme. Currently, there is a shortage of specialist nurses around four thousand.

Strengths:

1. High demand for nurses in the labor market;
2. Ability for graduates to find a workplace easily and work;
3. Low dropout rate.

Weaknesses:

1. Lack of English knowledge of the academic staff.
2. Lacks specialized literature sources in the field of health care inc. in nursing

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

### **Analysis**

2.2.1. Representatives of all stakeholders (DU management, academic staff, employers, graduates and students) have participated in the development of the DU development strategy and have made a significant contribution to defining the vision and strategic approach. Both national-level higher education and research policy planning and regional documents have been taken into account, as well as the current situation in the sectors, their future development potential and the prevailing trends in the world science area.

With the compliance of the content of the study program with the requirements set out in MK regulations No. 268 and its analysis is available in Appendix III.3.2.1. pdf.

DU management drew the attention of experts to the fact that the innovative approach of the PBSP Nursing study process is focused on the acquisition of professional skills and envisages the implementation of work-based studies, where the programme is implemented in a clinical setting and simulation classes are performed at DU DMC and / or medical institutions.

Considering the favorable geographical location of DU, the students study at the university mainly for the counties of Latgale planning region. This means that the implementation of PBSP "Physiotherapy" and PBSP "Nursing" is very important from the point of view of national and regional development interests, as it ensures the development of the local human resources and training of qualified specialists for the state and the municipal health care, social and educational institutions, as well as the private sector.

During the visit, the experts were convinced of the well-thought-out aspects of content development in PBSP Nursing: to regularly review and improve the content of study courses and study methods, with the main emphasis on study methods that promote cognitive, problem-solving and critical thinking; to conduct regular surveys of students, employers and graduates, providing feedback and improving the study programme; to ensure the attraction of guest lecturers - professionals in the field.

Graduates of the programme have the opportunity to study in master's level study programmes in the field of health care at RSU and LU, as well as in corresponding master's study programmes in higher education institutions of Latvia and other countries and to acquire professional development education programmes for nurses.

The experts made sure that the study programmes compiled with Latvian normative documents, including the standard of professional education and the professional standard of the Nurse (General Care Nurse).

Experts found that the study programme "Nursing" partly complies with the Law "On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications" and EU directives, although additional information was requested several times. During the visit, in discussions with DU representatives, the experts noted DU's specific interpretation of the Law "On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications" and EU directives. According to this Law: four academic years of full-time study in the amount of 160 credit points, which includes at least 4600 theoretical and clinical contact hours, of which theoretical studies occupy at least one third and clinical studies - at least half of the minimum duration of the educational program. Educational and medical institutions that provide nursing education programmes are responsible for coordinating theoretical and clinical training throughout the course of study. And more, EU directive explain the meaning of clinical training "Clinical training is that part of nurse training in which trainee nurses learn, as part of a team and in direct contact with a healthy or sick individual and/or community, to organize, dispense and evaluate the required comprehensive nursing care, on the basis of the knowledge and skills

which they have acquired. The trainee nurse shall learn not only how to work in a team, but also how to lead a team and organize overall nursing care, including health education for individuals and small groups, within the health institute or in the community. " (Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, Article 31 point 5.) Since DU PBSP "Nursing" has 20 KP of clinical practice (Annex III\_3.2.1\_Study plan Nursing.xlsx), taking into account the above mentioned, it can be concluded that the study program lacks around 40 KP of clinical practice, which is implemented in clinical setting as part of a team and in direct contact with a healthy or sick individual and/or community, to organize, dispense and evaluate the required comprehensive nursing care.

The opinion of the Latvian Nurses Association also points to the non-compliance of the programme with the above-mentioned legal acts regarding practice .( AIC Attachment 3. Latvijas Māsu Asociācijas viedoklis par\_PPIP\_DU.pdf) This was also mentioned in the Conclusion of Licensing procedure. (AIC Attachment - Opinion DU PBSP Nursing Licensing.pdf)

It should be noted that the DU responsible persons for PBSP Nursing do not qualify clinical training as practice, but also include there practical lessons in clinical study courses, which is not appropriate, because the EU directive determines practice in the work environment, i.e. practice as work in the department team.

#### 2.2.2. Not applicable

2.2.3. The study process is ensured by following a student-centered approach, which is also determined by the DU quality policy, which was presented to the experts and is available on page 68 of SAR . The student-centered approach to the study process is ensured by involving students in the supervision of the program, conducting surveys of students about the study courses and the study program in general. The student-centered approach is ensured by the criteria for the evaluation of study courses and test papers defined and stipulated in internal regulatory enactments; the information included in the descriptions of the study courses regarding the expected results, students' independent work.

According to the DU management, the knowledge, skills and competencies acquired in the basic theoretical courses and information technology courses of the branch are tested with a test, colloquium, test, report, etc. evaluation methods. The predominant forms of programme implementation in the acquisition of professional specialization courses in the field are simulations, practical classes, clinical studies, and students' knowledge and practical skills are assessed in these study courses.

A large part of the study results requires the student not only to demonstrate knowledge, but also to practically analyze the acquired subject, linking it with everyday life and existing experience. Therefore, seminars and workshops play an important role. In practical classes during individual or group work presentations, students improve their analytical skills by expressing their opinion.

DU lecturers also use summative assessment. Summative assessment is formed in the case of intermediate examination marks. At the end of the study course, there is a test with a mark or an exam. The final test takes place orally, in writing, in the form of an achievement test.

The experts were introduced to the success criteria during the visit. In turn, students can get acquainted with the assessment conditions and binding procedures in the course descriptions of the study program, which are available in the DU e-environment. When starting to work with students in the classroom, the lecturers acquaint the students with the requirements of the study course and the knowledge and skills evaluation system.

2.2.4. The clinical practice is implemented in accordance with the study plan in the medical institution in the amount of 20 CP, as provided by the Cabinet of Ministers on 26.08.2014. regulations no. 512 "Regulations on the State Standard of the Second Level Professional Higher

Education”.

The regulations on professional qualification practice describe the aims, tasks, content and scope of the practice. Already in the licensing opinion it was indicated that the requirements for the practice manager are not defined in the regulations, for example, appropriate profession and qualification, practical work experience. No changes have been made to the regulations at this time. This is also mentioned in the Opinion of the Latvian Nursing Association - there are several practice mentors/managers with inappropriate qualifications. (AIC Attachment 3. Latvijas Māsu Asoc viedoklis par\_PPIP\_DU.pdf)

The clinical practice is organized by the director of the study program and coordinated by the teaching staff of the department. Students have an internship supervisor at the specific internship place. Internships are planned in small groups of up to 5-7 students per group for one internship supervisor. Also in this regard, the licensing opinion indicated that it is recommended to organize the Clinical Practice on the basis of the principles of mentoring and to provide each student with his / her own direct practice supervisor. During the visit, the experts made sure that the recommendations had not been taken into account.

The opinion of the Nurses' Association points to shortcomings in the document - REGULATIONS ON PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATION PRACTICE - “During the internship the student gets acquainted with the duties of a nurse (general care nurse) in various health care and other institutions and is certified independently by a certified nurse (January 25, 2022 nurses has been abolished) or under the supervision of a doctor” (the standard and basic tasks of the medical profession do not include the competence - the nursing process).

Based on Article 14, Paragraph three, Clause 3 of the Law “On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications” that clinical training includes at least half of the minimum duration of the education program (160 CP) and Article 14, Paragraph six, “clinical training of nurses is a part of the educational program, which is implemented in medical institutions that can ensure direct contact with training of sick individuals and society as a work environment in the management of qualified nurses and in cooperation with other medical practitioners in a team ”. During site visit DU management explained that DU PBSP “Nursing” clinical training consists of 80 CP, including training within the study courses - 60 CP and clinical practice - 20 CP, which is not appropriate.

#### 2.2.5. Not applicable

2.2.6. As indicated “GUIDELINES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND DEFENCE OF BACHELOR THESIS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY/DEPARTMENT OF NURSING” during the development of bachelor's theses, several tasks are being solved, which are related to the deepening of knowledge about the specific problem, development and strengthening of skills and abilities in scientific research, promotion of independent work and creative thinking. The specific document was additionally sent to the expert team. The topics of the bachelor's thesis and the scientific supervisors of the thesis are approved at the meeting of the Department of Anatomy and Physiology/Department of Nursing at the beginning of the academic year (October).

During the visit, the experts made sure that the students choose the topics of the bachelor's thesis in cooperation with the lecturers according to the topicality of the topics in a particular practice place.

On the part of employers the representative of Daugavpils Regional Hospital pointed out that as the leading medical institution in practice, students want to conduct research on problems that are important for the hospital. For example, Safety measures for the administration of medicines and their observance in nursing practice, Implementation of a holistic approach in the care of geriatric patients or Adherence to infection prevention and control measures for nurses when caring for patients.

## Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

The content of the study programme corresponds to the study direction "Health Care". The experts verified this on the basis of the submitted documents and during the visit they got acquainted with the answers to the questions and explanations provided by the management of the study programme. From the submitted information it can be concluded that the development of the study programme is in process.

In the process, the Daugavpils university performance indicators have been analyzed and taken into account, as well as risks and potential have been identified.

### Strengths

1. DU is the largest educational institution in the eastern region of Latvia that trains specialists in the field of health care (PBSP Nursing);
2. PBSP Nursing is implemented in close collaboration with industry and employers to jointly identify health issues.

### Weaknesses

1. In the list of educational literature, several sources are outdated, as well as a few literature sources on theories of the care process and nursing.
2. A relatively small number of lecturers with nursing qualifications, several lecturers with a doctor's degree, and other health care specialists develop study courses and implement study courses that are related to nursing practice.
3. Partly compliance of the PBSP with the Law "On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications" and EU directives

## Assessment of the requirement [5] (applicable only to master's or doctoral study programmes)

- 1 R5 - The study programme for obtaining a master's or doctoral degree is based on the achievements and findings of the respective field of science or field of artistic creation.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

Not applicable

## 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

### Analysis

2.3.1. During the visit, the experts got acquainted with the DU infrastructures, databases, information networks, DU research center databases listed in the DU self-assessment documents, as well as materials, services, computer applications that students and teachers can use within the study programme scientific activity. Experts acknowledge that DU is able to provide a wide range of opportunities for prospective students and teachers to improve and develop in the chosen profession.

As the study process is partly based on principles of the e-learning environment, forms and methods of study organization suitable for the e-learning environment are used. Students are offered a developed e-learning environment (Moodle), as well as direct communication (e-mail, consultations) information is available in each study course. DU full time lecturers systematically use the e-learning environment Moodle and place various study materials in it: materials for lectures, seminars and practical classes, which are support for students' independent work.

During the visit, the experts made sure that teachers and students are offered informative courses, trainings and seminars on how to use e-learning, as well as teachers to create their own e-courses.

The collections of the DU library, both from the point of view during the on-site visit and from the description, confirm that the study program has a base with study materials for the acquisition of the study program and additional newer literature will be purchased. Unfortunately, that some of the information resources used are outdated, which was also stated in the licensing opinion. For example, Brežinskis G., Lazovskis I., Siliņš Ī., un c. Iekšējīgās slimības. Zvaigzne, 1970; Social Work and Health Care in an Aging Society: Education, Policy, Practice and Research/ Editors B.Berkman, L. Harootyan - New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2003; Боголюбов В.М., Пономаренко Г.Н. Общая физиотерапия : учебник для студентов медицинских вузов. – Москва – Санкт-Петербург : СЛП, 1997; Furlong Gary T. The Conflict Resolution Toolbox : Models and Maps for Analyzing, Diagnosing, and Resolving Conflict. – Wiley, 2005.

The experts have received an additional appendix “List of literature to be purchased for the provision of Nursing study courses” sent to DU after the visit, which DU plans to purchase in addition. It should be noted that this list contains a rather outdated book, which DU wants to buy for 100.65 EUR (Handbook of Personality Disorders - Theory and Practice: Theory and Practice, J.J. Magnavita 2004).

The library also offers students a variety of scanning and copying services. The library also has an on-site electronic catalog, book ordering options can be booked and extended both on-site and remotely, and there is an automatic customer service system when a student picks up their book, registers it at the appropriate facility and removes or transfers it.

The DU network also provides access to various databases - EBSCO Publishing, PubMed, Cambridge journals, and Science Direct. Experts admit that there could be more databases related to the medical industry - Access Medicine, ClinicalKey, UpToDate. During the visit, the head of the library informed that regular statistics are compiled and evaluated, and databases are used more often by students. Purchases of new books are also made every year by replenishing and renewing the collection, while obsolete items and obsolete literature are excluded from the collection.

Both the DU management and the teaching staff emphasized that they are making great efforts to renew and improve the infrastructure and the provision of the material and technical base by attracting project funding. Experts were convinced of this during the visit, as there is a lot of variety available for students technology and teaching tools.

Students and teachers have access to a modern and various material and technical base. DU has thought about students with special needs, both in the description and during the visit. In study classrooms and existing practical skills rooms, the simulation center is accessible to people in wheelchairs, as well as information is available to visually impaired, hard of hearing people. Most of the hallway signs are in Braille. In addition, students with children have been considered, as children's rooms and playrooms have been set up while the parent is studying.

### 2.3.2. Not applicable

2.3.3. The source of funding for the study field “Health Care” and also for the study programme “Nursing” is the state budget funding for studies (grant) and tuition fees. DU management indicated that the tuition fee for the Nursing Programme for foreign students is 5,500 euros per year. Cost calculation is shown in the Annex III\_3.3.3\_Cost calculation\_Nursing\_new.pdf.

During the visit, the DU management indicated to the experts that 80 budget places were financed by the Ministry of Health, but the experts did not have the opportunity to verify this. The total number of budget places in the study program "Nursing" is 400 places per year, the distribution of students as of 07.06.2022: in the 1st study year - 137 students; In the 2nd study year - 31 students, in the 3rd study year - 39 students, in the 4th study year 171 students. A total of 378 students indicate that not all budget positions have been filled and suggest how they will be filled next year.

## Conclusions on this set of criteria, by specifying strengths and weaknesses

Experts acknowledge that the material and technical base and its provision is available to both students and teachers, organized in accordance with the specifics and level of the study programme. The study programme has a base with study materials for learning the study programme, but some of the information resources used are outdated.

There is no certainty about the clear funding available for the study programme and the use of funding that ensures the implementation of the study process. The study program has a minimum number of students to ensure the profitability of the study programme.

#### Strengths

1. Students have access to several libraries, thus more rooms and more methodological materials, databases and other services to be used to study the study program.

#### Weaknesses

1. In the list of study literature, several sources are outdated and there is a lack of overall literature on nursing and especially on theories of the care process.

### Assessment of the requirement [6]

- 1 R6 - Compliance of the study provision, science provision (if applicable), informative provision (including library), material and technical provision and financial provision with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and ensuring the achievement of learning outcomes

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study provision, informative provision, material and technical provision, and financial provision comply with the conditions for ensuring the implementation of the study programme and achievement of study results, which is confirmed by the submitted documents and the interview with the university. However, there is a lack of overall literature on health care incl. nursing.

## 2.4. Teaching Staff

### Analysis

2.4.1. One of the most important quality assurance factors in PBSP "Nursing" is the teaching staff. The level of qualification of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the program is important in the provision of the program. PBSP "Nursing" is provided by 71 lecturers (see Table 1). For 25 lecturers, the main place of election is DU, 46 are guest lecturers. 36 lecturers represent the professional environment of health care in Latvia, 21 of them are doctors and 12 are nurses with a master's degree. 22 lecturers (31%) have a doctoral degree and 4 are doctoral candidates. Taking into account the aforementioned study courses in a specific program are mostly implemented with specialists from another field and nurses are not enough involved. Analysing the lecturers implementing the study courses, it can be noted that many study courses related to the nursing are implemented by doctors which is not appropriate

The knowledge of the state language of the academic staff of PBSP "Nursing" complies with the regulations on the amount of knowledge of the state language and the procedure for testing the state language proficiency for professional and official duties, respectively, they allow full teaching of the course in the state language. The publications of the PBSP "Nursing" teachers in the last 6 years (2015–2021) are summarized in Appendix II\_2.4.4\_publications last 6 years). However it should be mentioned that there is no publication about nursing. According to the collected data, DU lecturers and guest lecturers purposefully and regularly participate in various professional development activities in the fields corresponding to their scientific interests both in DU and in foreign universities. In addition to academic work at the university, teachers have practical



experience in health care projects. These types of activities promote a comprehensive understanding of the specifics of nursing education, thus ensuring a direct unity of theory and practice in the study process. The research directions of the academic staff involved in the program are oriented towards the successful development of the DU and in most cases are related to the specialization of the lecturers within the program. Lecturers prepare scientific articles, including in internationally peer-reviewed journals, participate in conferences and workshops, training, internships and various scientific events, publish textbooks and develop methodological materials, participate in international and national research projects. The research covers both the theoretical aspects and the topicalities and novelties of the fields, which are used in the study courses of the lecturers, thus promoting the interaction of the research and study process and significantly improving the quality of the study process. Students' participation in scientific and practical conferences and seminars is also constantly stimulated as a listener.

Still for the implementation of the study program more nurses with master's degrees and permanent contracts are needed and the nurses involved in research and international projects.

2.4.2. The composition of the teaching staff has not changed since the licensing of PBSP "Nursing" (18.08.2021).

2.4.3. Not applicable

2.4.4. Analyzing the annex II\_2.3.7\_basic information on teaching staff.xlsx and Scientific publications in the last six years (full-time employed academic staff in the field of health care) it can be noticed that 27 academic staff members have been involved in publishing articles or conference proceedings. Mainly the publications are published by PhD-s, no publications were found published by nurses. Taking into account the above, it can be concluded that the number of publications of academic personnel in the field of health care in relation to nursing.

Academic staff of the PBSP "Nursing" are with sufficient practical experience, five or more years.

2.4.5. The existence of the study programme and the achievement of its goals, objectives and expected results is possible only if a team of professionals operates in the programme, who are united by an understanding of the nature, principles, goals and ways of achieving health science and studies. By regularly discussing the effectiveness of the programme, the teaching staff involved in teaching the programme coordinates the content of the taught study courses, seminars and discussions so that the information is not repeated and that the examination of problematic issues from various aspects is ensured. The implementation of PBSP "Nursing" is ensured by the teaching staff, who regularly cooperate to improve the study process, considering the interests of students. Thus, student-centered studies are implemented, where special importance is given to the improvement of interdisciplinarity and internationalization aspects. At the time of submitting the self-assessment report, the ratio of students to teaching staff within the study program is 1: 5.6, which provides a great deal of attention to students on the part of lecturers and guarantees an individual approach. It is important to note that in the course of the cooperation process, the representatives of the partner structural units participate in the development of the program (in the relevant field of competence), in the improvement of the study content and process, and in the provision of the study process.

## **Conclusions on this set of criteria, by indicating strengths and weaknesses**

The qualification of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the study

programme complies with the requirements for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set forth in the regulatory enactments, and it enables the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study programme and the relevant study courses. Still for the implementation of the study program more nurses with master's degrees and permanent contracts are needed and the nurses involvement in research and international projects.

All academic staff members in the last six years have not published in peer-reviewed editions, including international editions. Mainly the publications are published by PhD-s, no publications were found published by nurses.

A mechanism for mutual cooperation of the teaching staff in the implementation of the study programme has been established, it ensures the achievement of the aims of the study programme and the interconnection of study courses within the study programme.

#### Strengths

1. Qualified teaching staff

#### Weaknesses

1. Few nurses with master's degrees and permanent contracts
2. Lacking publications published by nurses
3. Lacking publications concerning nursing

### Assessment of the requirement [7]

- 1 R7 - Compliance of the qualification of the academic staff and visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers and visiting assistants with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the requirements set out in the respective regulatory enactments.

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Study courses concerning nursing are implemented by inappropriate academic staff, not enough nurses with master's degrees with permanent contracts are involved in a study process. Nurses are not involved in the research process and there is no publications published by nurses and concerning nursing.

## 2.5. Assessment of the Compliance

### Requirements

- 1 1 - The study programme complies with the State Academic Education Standard or the Professional Higher Education Standard

#### **Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

PBSP "Nursing" is in line with binding norms, regulations and legal documents such as the Education Law, the Law on Higher Education Institutions and the regulations of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia and others (<https://likumi.lv/ta/id/268761-noteikumi-par-otralimena-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitiba-valsts-standartu>): The volume of the bachelor's study program in full-time studies is 160 credit points. The duration of full-time studies is eight semesters. General education study courses have at least 20 CP. Branch theoretical (professional activity) theoretical courses and information technology courses have at least 36 CP. Branch (professional activity) professional specialization courses have at least 60 CP ( the given program include 66 CP) . Development of a bachelor's thesis has at least 12 CP. It should noted that civil and environmental protection courses are also

included, respectively " Civil Protection and Disaster Management 1 CP and Environmental protection, labor protection and fire safety 2CP. The plan of the study programme (according to the report Appendix III\_3.2.1\_Plan of the study Nursing) was made on the basis of 48 theoretical and practical competencies, which are interrelated.

- 2 2 - The study programme complies with a valid professional standard or the requirements for the professional qualification (if there is no professional standard required for the relevant occupation) provided if the completion of the study programme leads to a professional qualification (if applicable)

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The degree and qualification acquired as a result of complete mastering of the study program is in accordance with the existing Classification of Occupations (visible in the attached documentation Annex III\_3.2.1\_compatibility of the nurse's qualification with the professional standard - professional standard "MĀSAS (VISPĀRĒJĀS APRŪPES MĀSAS) PROFESIJAS STANDARTS " concerted 12.08.2020.) By mastering the module, students master theoretical knowledge and practical skills in patient care in all areas of healthcare and situations.

In the development of program content and plan the basic principles concerning study subjects ( not concerning practice in clinical setting) are integrated according the European Parliament and Council Directive 2005/36 /EC (7 September, 2005) on the recognition of professional qualifications

(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32005L0036&from=EN>) and Directive 2013/55/EC (20 November, 2013) amending Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications

(<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/LV/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013L0055&from=en>).

The volume of the bachelor's study program in full-time studies is 160 credit points. The duration of full-time studies is eight semesters. General education study courses have at least 20 CP. Branch theoretical (professional activity) theoretical courses and information technology courses have at least 36 CP. Branch (professional activity) professional specialization courses have at least 60 CP ( the given program include 66 CP. Development of a bachelor's thesis has at least 12 CP. It should noted that civil and environmental protection courses are also included, respectively " Civil Protection and Disaster Management 1 CP and Environmental protection, labor protection and fire safety 2CP. The knowledge required to perform the basic tasks of the professional activity is harmonized with the standard of the nursing profession.

- 3 3 - 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 561 , Paragraph two and Section 562 , Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The nursing study programme now is conducted in Latvian, but DU plan to implement it in English as well. Study materials are made in both languages and the library partly meets the requirements of studying with its content. A study course descriptions are created and structured in clear way for the study program, they are transparent. Study course descriptions determines the study outcomes (knowledge, skills and competence) to be achieved as a result of studying the study course as well as study course calendar. Terminology concerning nursing for several study courses is outdated and does not correspond to the current situation in Nursing. Some study literature mentioned in the study course descriptions are out of date and do not meet the academic requirements.

It is necessary to expand the library in English so that the possibility of mastering studies is transparent to all students, foreign and domestic.

- 4 4 - The sample of the diploma to be issued for the acquisition of the study programme complies with the procedure according to which state recognised documents of higher education are issued.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The content of the diploma of study, which is issued to students by the higher education institution, after the completion of studies is according to the study program and the conditions adopted in accordance with the Law and contains all necessary information. The aforementioned addition to the diploma follows the model developed by the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO/CEPES). The purpose of the supplement is to provide sufficient independent data and to ensure academic and professional recognition of qualifications (diplomas, degrees, certificates, etc.). It is designed to provide a description of the nature, level, context and status of studies undertaken and successfully completed by an individual appointed to the original qualification to which this supplement is attached. A sample of the diploma and its supplement is in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers 16.04.2013. to Regulation No. 202 "Procedures for Issuing State-Recognized Higher Education Certificates" <https://likumi.lv/doc.php?id=256157/>

- 5 5 - 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 Higher Education Institutions.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 6 6 - 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 Higher Education Institutions.

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 7 7 - 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 (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 8 8 - 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

Knowledge of the official language of the teaching staff involved in the performance of the professional bachelor's degree program "Nursing" (42723) in accordance with the "Regulations on the scope of knowledge of the official language and the procedure for checking the knowledge of the official language" for the performance of their professional duties.

- 9 9 - 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 (if applicable).

**Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

Based on the submitted documentation STATEMENT OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT of the Rector and the Excel table of teachers with achieved levels of foreign language (knowledge of English) organized course of the University, it can be seen that the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study program in the Latvian language know the official language. Also, the rector's statement in the Statement of recognition based on European language assessment levels states that the teaching staff knows the language at a minimum level of B2 to C2 level of knowledge. However, based on discussions with the teaching staff, the panel concludes that the entire academic staff does not have sufficient knowledge of the English language to engage in scientific work and potential study program implementation in English.

- 10 10 - The sample of the study agreement complies with the mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

The sample contract for studying at the University of Daugavpils in the physiotherapy study program describes the mandatory provisions that are in accordance with the program requirements and in accordance with the DU study process that regulates normative acts. The study contract sample determines the essential elements of the study contract concluded between the University and the student during the study cycle, as well as other issues of importance for the regulation of mutual rights and obligations between the student and the University of DU. The sample contract for studying complies with the requirements of Cabinet Regulation No. 70 of 23 January 2007 "Mandatory provisions to be included in the study agreement".

- 11 11 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution or college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

According to the agreement between DU and the student, point 7.4, it is clearly stated that the student is familiar with the information and that students will be provided with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.

DU has concluded agreement with Rīga Stradiņš University (RSU), which confirms that in case of discontinuation of the DU study programme, RSU will matriculate students of the DU study programme in the RSU Second Level Professional Study Programme "Nursing".

- 12 12 - The higher education institution / college has provided confirmation that students are guaranteed compensation for losses if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme's license is revoked due to the actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

**Assessment of compliance:** Fully compliant

According to the agreement, item 2.13, which clearly states that if the institution loses the accreditation or closes during the validity of the study program referred to in paragraph 2.1, the institution undertakes to allow the student to continue his studies in another study program with which the institution has a contract. In this case, the tuition fee is determined by the higher education institution where the student continues his / her studies.

Statement hereby confirm that Daugavpils University (DU) guarantees compensation for

damages caused to the student if, due to DU conduct (act or omission), the study direction "Health Care" is not accredited or the licenses of the study programmes belonging to the study direction are withdrawn and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.

(<https://eplatforma.aika.lv/index.php?r=expert%2Fannex%2Fdownload&id=1473&key=59&suffix=English> ).

- 13 13 - The joint study programmes comply with the requirements prescribed in Section 55.(1), Paragraphs one, two, and seven of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)

**Assessment of compliance:** Not relevant

- 14 14 - Compliance with the requirements specified in other regulatory enactments that apply to the study programme being assessed (if applicable)

**Assessment of compliance:** Non-compliant

PBSP "Nursing" adheres to the Regulation of the Cab.Ministers No. 268 entitled "Regulation on ability and theoretical-practical knowledge of healthcare workers and students of the first or second level of higher professional medical education. Competencies needed to perform basic tasks were successfully realized by the study of Nursing with appropriate study subjects that achieve theoretical knowledge and skills necessary for the performance of the basic tasks of the professional activity.

According to the Article 33, point 2 of the "Medical Treatment Law" the lists of medical persons who have the right to lead training of trainees in Nursing in medical institutions according to their competence should be approved by the Latvian Nurses Association. On the other hand, the Association of Latvian Nurses in accordance with the Association procedure No. 5 The "Procedure for awarding the status of medical practitioners entitled to training" grants this right. Evaluating the list of DU's academic staff involved in the Nursing education program, it should be concluded that most of academic staff involved in the teaching of nursing subjects have not been assigned this status (as was indicated in the opinion of the Nursing Association on DU's PBSP Nursing).

The study programme "Nursing" mostly do not complies with the Law "On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications" and EU directives, in the respect of the amount of clinical practice- there is a lack of necessary amount of Clinical practice (around of 40 KP).

According to the EU directive 2005/36/EC the meaning of clinical training: "Clinical training is that part of nurse training in which trainee nurses learn, as part of a team and in direct contact with a healthy or sick individual and/or community, to organize, dispense and evaluate the required comprehensive nursing care, on the basis of the knowledge and skills which they have acquired. The trainee nurse shall learn not only how to work in a team, but also how to lead a team and organize overall nursing care, including health education for individuals and small groups, within the health institute or in the community. " (Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, Article 31 point 5.) According to the above description DU PBSP "Nursing" has 20 KP of clinical practice (Annex III\_3.2.1\_Study plan Nursing.xlsx), taking into account the above mentioned, it can be concluded that the study program lacks around 40 KP of clinical practice, which is implemented in clinical setting as part of a team and in direct contact with a healthy or sick individual and/or community, to organize, dispense and evaluate the required comprehensive nursing care. The DU's mentioned 60 KP in PBSP "Nursing" clinical training consist of practical lessons within the study courses in clinical subjects that are not applicable to clinical practice.

## Assessment of the requirement [8]

- 1 R8 - Compliance of the study programme with the requirements set forth in the Law on Higher Education Institutions and other regulatory enactments.

### **Assessment of compliance:** Partially compliant

The study programme is harmonized with the prescribed Law on Higher Education Institutions, but partly not comply with the the Law "On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications" and EU directives which is confirmed by the submitted documents and the interview with the higher education institution.

## **General conclusions about the study programme, indicating the most important strengths and weaknesses of the study programme**

The study programme is in high demand in the Latgale region. PBSP "Nursing" is brand new at DU, licensed only a year ago. From the submitted documents and from the discussions with DU representatives, the expert team gets the impression that the program development still is in process. The quality assurance system is currently average. However, further growth would require a higher degree of formalization. The human resource situation should be improved for the nursing field. External associates should be mentored more intensively. The on-site visit has shown very consistently the commitment of management and employee representatives required for such an orientation. Fields of the future are in particular personnel development (in nursing with special attention to the recruitment of new, qualified teachers in a foreseeable time frame), the development of sufficient prerequisites for internationalization, the preparation for intensified applied research activities, further amendment of the lifelong learning activities and the concretization of ethical questions regarding the specific concerns that new medical and engineering technologies raise for patients, users, technical developers and other affected stakeholders. It should be mentioned that there is low participation of nursing academic staff in the research process and creation of publications. The general objectives of the nursing study program are in line with the mission and strategic goals of Daugavpils University and the demands of the labor market. The content of the program mainly corresponds to the legal acts, except the amount of the clinical practice - the study program lacks around 40 KP of clinical practice, which is implemented in a clinical setting as part of a team and in direct contact with a healthy or sick individual and/or community, to organize, dispense and evaluate the required comprehensive nursing care to be in compliance with the Law "On Regulated Professions and Recognition of Professional Qualifications" and EU directives.

### Strengths

1. When planning and proposing the study programme, the analysis of the justification of its launch in relation to social/economic needs was taken into account.
2. When planning and launching the study programme, the analysis of the necessary resources and compliance with the mission and strategic goals were taken into account.
3. Enrolment quotas are in line with the needs of the labour market and the capacities of higher education institutions and are part of systematic strategic thinking.
4. The content of the study programme (curriculum) is coherent and enables students to progress unhindered through their studies and achieve all the intended learning outcomes.

### Weaknesses

1. It is necessary to regularly evaluate the knowledge of a foreign language (English) of teachers since DU has a plan to open study program in a foreign language.
2. More full-time teachers - nurses need to be included in the nursing study program.

3. There is no publications about nursing and there is no publications developed by nurses.
4. Insufficient amount of the clinical practice in the programme.

## Evaluation of the study programme "Nursing"

Evaluation of the study programme:

Average

## 2.6. Recommendations for the Study Programme "Nursing"

### Short-term recommendations

- |  |
|--|
| 1. To ensure compliance of PBSP with the law "On regulated professions and recognition of professional qualifications" and EU directives in the respect of clinical practice |
| 2. To ensure regular evaluation of the acquired knowledge of the academic staff is needed in order for the knowledge of a foreign language to be up to date.                 |

### Long-term recommendations

- |  |
|--|
| 1. To ensure that the mechanisms for periodical monitoring and continuous improvement of the quality of the PBSP "Nursing": rules, order, procedure, etc. would be followed accordingly.   |
| 2. To strengthen the role of the "Healthcare" study direction council in the PBSP "Nursing" quality assurance system.  |
| 3. To evolve and enrich the list of study literature incl. research and evidence-based practice literature in nursing.   |
| 4. To ensure that academic staff include the latest research, trends and knowledge from the labor market in the teaching process.  |
| 5. To involve more nurses with the permanent contract in the implementation and improvement of the study program, specifying the composition of the teaching staff involved in the field of specialization so that study courses in nursing are led by nurses. |
| 6. To provide sufficient full-time employed academic staff in the field of nursing.  |
| 7. To develop research projects incl. Applied in the field of Nursing.   |
| 8. To encourage the development of publications by nurses.   |
| 9. To promote the improvement of the sufficient English language skills of academic staff in the field of nursing.   |
| 10. To develop cooperation with other domestic and international higher education and scientific institutions enables university teachers and scientists to use databases to which they have access through their IP addresses.                                |
| 11. Provide investment in the acquisition of more medical databases (eg Access medicine, ClinicalKey, UpToDate, and others).   |
| 12. To expand cooperation with foreign medical universities within the framework of mobility.  |
| 13. To develop the mobility of students ( incoming as well as outgoing) in clinical practice.  |



### 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
R1 - Pursuant to Section 5, Paragraph 2.1 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing its internal quality assurance system:		Partially compliant	The DU quality assurance policy is not available publicly on the website. It was not listed as a separate document that could be reviewed. There lacks clearance on submission of complaints and suggestions electronically. They are not accessible on the website of the university. It is also not clear where students or graduates, employers receive a summary of feedback of the results of the surveys they have participated in.
R2 - Compliance of scientific research and artistic creation with the level of development of scientific research and artistic creation (if applicable)		Partially compliant	Scientific research should be visible and commonly understood, therefore common research strategy is needed. Guest lecturers should be more involved in the research activities. For developing research the needs of employees should be taken into account and therefore applied research projects would be beneficial. Also research projects with other universities.
R3 - The cooperation implemented within the study field with various Latvian and foreign organizations ensures the achievement of the aims of the study field.		Partially compliant	There are too few contracts with European universities. In order to develop study field representatives from universities abroad in the Study direction council would be beneficial. For international cooperation and study field development, permanent contracts with foreign lecturers and increasing in incoming teachers and students is needed.

Requirements	Requirement Evaluation			Comment
R4 - Elimination of deficiencies and shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study field, if any, or implementation of the recommendations provided.		Partially compliant		The shortcomings identified in the previous assessment of the study area of physiotherapy are fully met. The given recommendations are mostly fulfilled. Those that are not, are planned in the long run. The recommendation was made about the opening of a study program in a related field to physiotherapy, and a new program in the healthcare field was licensed - PBSP Nursing.

#### 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	Physiotherapy (42722)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Good
2	Nursing (42723)	Not relevant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Partially compliant	Average

#### The Dissenting Opinions of the Experts

No different opinions are found.