APPLICATION

Study field "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes" for assessment

Study field	*Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes*
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Self-evaluation report

Study field "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes"

Ventspils University College

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1. Information on the Higher Education Institution/College

1.1. Basic information on the higher education institution/ college and its strategic development fields,.

Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (hereinafter referred to as “VUAS”) is an accredited state institution of higher education and scientific institution whose main activities are higher education, scientific activities, commercialization of knowledge and lifelong learning. VUAS has been registered as a scientific institution in the Register of Scientific Institutions since May 20, 2013. VUAS was founded on July 23, 1997, by the order of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia (hereinafter referred to as “The Cabinet”) No. 384 “On the Establishment of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”. As a state-founded higher education institution, VUAS is under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia but directs its activities and development by taking into account the development guidelines of the Kurzeme region and Ventspils city, thus contributing to the polycentric development of the state. In its activities, VUAS complies with the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the Law on Scientific Activity, Education Law, the VUAS Constitution and other development planning documents and regulatory enactments at international, national and regional levels.

In accordance with The Cabinet order No. 449 of 21 June 2022 “On Strategic Specialization of State Institutions of Higher Education”, VUAS has established a strategic specialization in the following scientific areas:

1. natural sciences (thematic field of education – physical sciences, computer science, and education programme group electronics and automatics);
2. social sciences (thematic field of education – business studies and administration);
3. humanities and arts (thematic field of education – humanities).

The mission defined in the VUAS Strategy 2021-2027 is to provide modern, adapted to the changing conditions of the labour market, research-based education accessible to everyone and to become a platform for educational excellence and innovation, where young specialists discover their talents and where knowledge is disseminated by professionals. Whereas, the vision of the VUAS is a digitally open and accessible European-level university, which is internationally recognized and makes a significant contribution to the development of the economy and science.

According to the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the main decision-making bodies of VUAS are:

1. Constitutional Assembly;
2. Council;
3. Senate.

The following principle of representation of the staff of VUAS is followed in determining the number of members of the Constituent Assembly of the VUAS:

1. Academic staff - 60 percent (18 representatives);
2. students - 20 percent (6 representatives);
3. general university staff - 20 percent (6 representatives).

The Senate of the VUAS shall be elected by the Constitutional Assembly for a term of three years from among the academic and general staff of the VUAS. The Senate consists of not less than 75

percent of academic staff representatives, not less than 20 percent of student representatives and the rector according to the position held. The Senate has 20 senators: 15 representatives of academic staff, 4 representatives of students and the rector. Student representatives in the VUAS Senate shall be elected by the VUAS Student Council in accordance with the procedure established by it, so that, as far as possible, the representation of students is ensured at all study levels of the VUAS. The main collegiate decision-making body of theFaculty of Translation Studies is the Faculty Council. According to VUAS Faculty of Translation Studies Council 2021./2022 academic year, it shall be elected for three years by secret ballot from the academic staff, students and general staff.

In accordance with paragraph 1.2 of the above-mentioned Regulations, the Faculty of Translation Studies Council consists of 10 members, of whom:

1. Faculty of Translation Studies elected academic staff is 70 percent (7 representatives);
2. Faculty of Translation Studiesgeneral staff is 10 percent (1 representative);
3. students are 20 percent (2 representatives).

The VUAS has three faculties: The Faculty of Economics and Management (hereinafter referred to as “FEM”), the FTS (hereinafter referred to as “FTS” and The Faculty of Information Technology (hereinafter referred to as “FIT”). There are four fields of study with 17 study programmes, five of which are at FoTS.

Study directions at the VUAS:

1. Management, Administration and Real-estate Management;
2. Translation;
3. Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes;
4. Information technologies, computer engineering, electronics, telecommunication, computer management and computer science.

Values defined in the VUAS Strategy 2021-2027 for the period from year 2021 to 2027:

1. excellence;
2. collegiality;
3. team;
4. flexibility;
5. creativity;
6. academic integrity;
7. scientific achievements.

For the period 2021-2027, VUAS has defined three strategic development objectives, complemented by four horizontal or cross-cutting objectives. The objectives set are related to the four strategic development directions of the VUAS: S – studies, Z – science, P – management and M – lifelong learning.

Development goals of VUAS:

1. A1. Modernization and digitalization of the educational offer in order to train specialists who are in demand in the labour market today and in the future, with relevant skills of the 21st century in priority areas of study;
2. A2. Excellence in science and knowledge transfer in the national economy, as well as increasing the innovation capacity, knowledge and research social and economic values in cooperation with external, including international partners;
3. A3. Developing a modern, needs-based lifelong learning offering and promoting a culture of lifelong learning.

Horizontal goals of VUAS:

1. H1. Development of a systematic framework for cooperation with external partners (industry, social partners, networks, and other educational and scientific institutions) at national and international level;
2. H2. Internationalization of VUAS and formation of international reputation and environment for effective cooperation in education, science and development;
3. H3. Development and effective management of VUAS resources, including human resources, technology, management and financial efficiency;
4. H4. Social responsibility for sustainable growth of the national economy.

The dynamics of the number of students in the VUAS FoTS are shown in Table 1.1. below, choosing as the basis three criteria for the number of students characterizing the dynamics – the number of students enrolled, the total number of students and the number of graduates. When analyzing the data on the dynamics of the number of students, it should be noted that there are two significant deviations in the number of students enrolled from the total upward direction – 2020/2021 academic year (sharp drop) and 2021/2022 academic year (rapid rise). 2020The sharp drop in the academic year 2020/2021 can be explained by the fact that the academic master's study program “Languages and Cultural Environment” was no longer implemented at the FoTS, but no students were enrolled in the doctoral study program “Linguistics”. The drop is also partly due to uncertainty about the state of emergency and related restrictions (potential students who did not want to be vaccinated against COVID-19 were not able to participate in the face-to-face study process in the first two months of the study year). 2021The rise in the academic year 2021/2022 is partly explained by the rapid development of digital communication and the digitalization of the multicultural environment. For this reason, the increase in students can be seen not only in the FoTS but also in the FIT students. The COVID-19 pandemic restrictions had a significant impact on admission results during the period, as during this time most students had to be vaccinated due to work as well as other outside the studies activities.

Table 1.1.

Dynamics of the number of students at VUAS 2017/2018 – 2022/2023 academic year*

Year	Number of enrolled students in VUAS	Total number of students in VUAS	Number of VUAS graduates
2017/2018	238	787	160
2018/2019	230	794	139
2019/2020	269	725	150
2020/2021	301	769	151
2021/2022	239	743	130
2022/2023	267	723	126

* data recorded on 1st October of the reporting year and available in the State Education Information System (hereinafter referred to as “VIIS”).

The summary of the VUAS Strategy 2021-2027 in Latvian is available here:

https://www.venta.lv/augstskola , in English: https://en.venta.lv/university

1.2. Description of the management structure of the higher education institution/ college, the main institutions involved in the decision-making process, their composition (percentage depending on the position, for instance, the academic staff, administrative staff members, students), and the powers of these institutions.

The structure of the VUAS has been formed in a unified hierarchical system to ensure the functioning of the VUAS in the public interest, following the principles of good governance, which includes openness, data protection, fair procedures within a reasonable time. It is designed to implement the VUAS mission, vision and goals effectively, based on the decision-making process and responsibilities arising from the functions established by the collegiate decision-making bodies and decision-making bodies provided for in the Law on Higher Education Institutions.

According to the Constitution of the VUAS, the main decision-making bodies of the VUAS are:

1. VUAS Constitutional Assembly – an institution representing the academic, general staff and students of the University;
2. The VUAS Council – the highest decision-making body of the collegiate VUAS, which is responsible for the sustainable development, strategic and financial supervision of the VUAS, as well as ensures the functioning of the VUAS following the objectives set out in its development strategy. The VUAS Council protects the autonomy of the VUAS, as well as respects the academic freedom of academic staff and students and promotes its implementation;
3. The VUAS Senate – a collegial VUAS personnel management and decision-making body responsible for the excellence, development and compliance of VUAS education, research, and creative activities with internationally recognized quality standards. The Senate of the VUAS regulates the academic, creative and scientific activities of the VUAS, except for those transferred to the Constitutional Assembly of the VUAS;
4. Rector of the VUAS – the highest official exercising the general administrative management of the VUAS and representing VUAS without special authorisation;
5. VUAS Academic Arbitrage – is responsible for the restrictions or violations of academic freedoms and rights established in the VUAS Constitution, as well as for the settlement of disputes between officials and structural units.

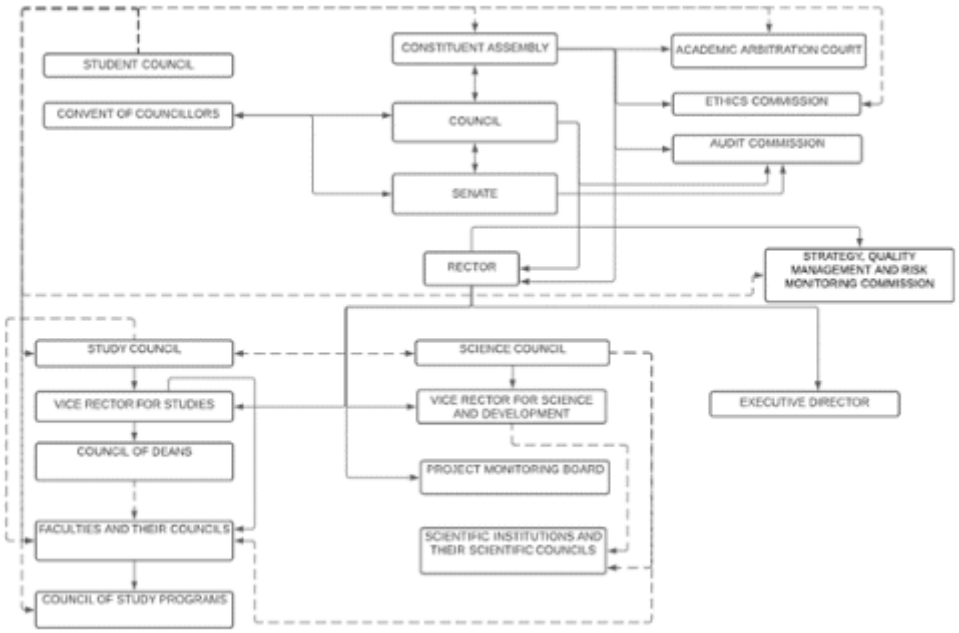
The VUAS Constitution is available here (available only in Latvian) : https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/VeA_Satversme_saskanosanai_IZM%20%281%29.pdf

VUAS has a Student Council, which is the highest student self-government institution. The Student Council of VUAS is an elected, independent institution representing the rights and interests of students, which defends and represents the interests of students in issues of academic, material and cultural life at the University and other state institutions.

To ensure an effective decision-making process, collegial consultative and decision-making bodies have been established at the VUAS:

1. VUAS Audit Commission;
2. VUAS Convent of Councillors;
3. VUAS Ethics Commission;

4. Procurement Commission;
5. VUAS Study Council;
6. VUAS Science Council;
7. VUAS faculty councils;
8. Scientific councils of VUAS scientific institutes;
9. VUAS study programmes' councils;
10. VUAS Strategy, Quality Management, and Risk Monitoring Commission;
11. VUAS Project Supervision Board;
12. VUAS Management Working Group;
13. VUAS Council of Deans.



1.1. Img. Structural scheme for strategic, operational, and functional management of VUAS

The details of this section are available in the attached annexes:

1. Annex No. 1.1.: List of the main internal laws and regulations and other regulations;
2. Annex No. 1.2.: Organisational chart of the VUAS;
3. Annex No. 1.3.: Characteristics of the main institutions involved in decision-making, their composition and powers.

1.3. Description of the mechanism for the implementation of the quality policy and the procedures for the assurance of the quality of higher education. Description of the stakeholders involved in the development and improvement of the quality assurance system and their role in these processes.

The quality assurance of the VUAS is aimed at the unified operation and development of the VUAS in the areas of strategic specialization in accordance with the priorities of the policy planning cycle for the development of the economy and society, specified in the policy planning documents. The quality management system of the VUAS is implemented under the excellence model of the European Quality Management Fund Excellence Model (EFQM Excellence Model), following the

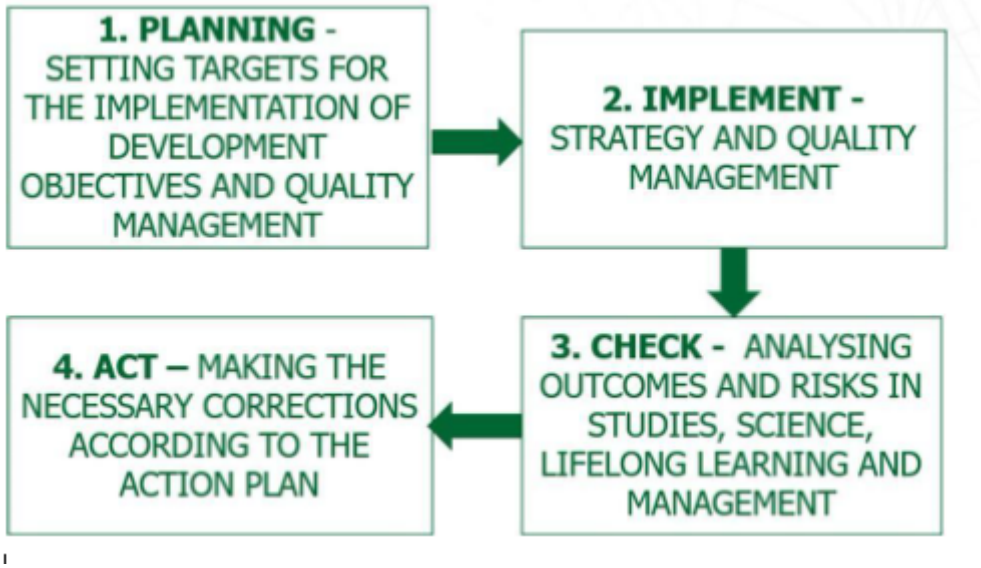
development strategy of the VUAS, as well as the quality criteria set by the European Union and the Republic of Latvia.

VUAS quality management system is designed to improve the quality of study acquisition, which in accordance with the requirements of the labour market provides the human resources necessary for the development of the economy, the state and society for future needs, promoting the opportunity to dynamically adapt to changes in the external environment.

To strengthen the quality assurance of education and the capacity of management, the quality management policy of the VUAS is aimed at:

1. cooperation with stakeholders;
2. strategic approach and leadership;
3. staff involvement;
4. process management and its improvement;
5. consistency;
6. data approach to decision-making;
7. continuous improvement.

The VUAS quality management system and its assurance processes are structured according to the following cycle: plan – do – check – act (PDCA).



1.2. Img. Quality assurance cycle scheme

The VUAS quality management system is designed as a three-tier system:

1. VUAS DIRECTION, which consists of VUAS Strategy, setting clear, relevant and measurable goals, tasks and achievable criteria;
2. VUAS ACTION consists of the implementation of higher education, scientific activity and lifelong learning through the processes of management, provision of core activities and support, and implementing procedures to ensure the achievement of goals and tasks;
3. MONITORING OF VUAS RESULTS, overseen and evaluated by the decision-making bodies of the VUAS.

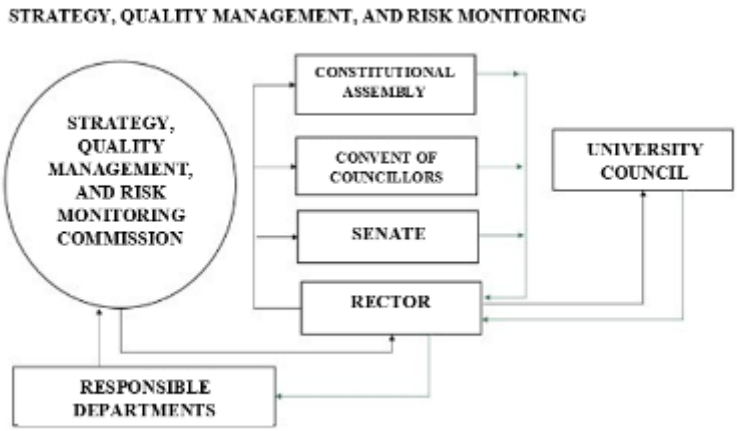
The implementation of the VUAS Strategy and the review of the included measures is based on a regular annual analysis of performance at least once a year, at the beginning of each year. Within the framework of performance assessment of the goals set by the VUAS, all goals set in the VUAS Strategy – both non-financial and financial goals – are evaluated and a report is prepared. For the preparation of the annual assessment report on the implementation of the VUAS strategic

indicators, all the necessary data (according to the VUAS Strategy – the source and methods of data collection) are collected, including, if necessary, a detailed explanation of the justification of deviations from the planned and data-based proposals for the necessary corrective actions, risk assessment and improvement of the quality management system processes. The responsible parties for the fulfilment of tasks and the achievement of indicators and data collection are specified in the VUAS Strategy Action Plan for the implementation of the strategy.

The Rector is responsible for achieving the goals set out in the VUAS Strategy for studies, science, lifelong learning and management. To identify timely actions, the Rector of the VUAS once a month reports to the VUAS Council on the activities carried out in relation to the progress of the implementation of the VUAS Strategy.

In accordance with the order issued by the Rector of the VUAS, a permanent VUAS Strategy, Quality Management and Risk Monitoring Commission has been established, which ensures the representation of all stakeholders: Rector, Vice-Rectors, Executive Director, Faculties, Lifelong Learning Center, Scientific Institutes, Student Council, Heads of Support Units. The competence of the VUAS Strategy, Quality Management and Risk Monitoring Commission is to ensure the annual assessment of the performance of VUAS strategic indicators, which includes: the analysis of the dynamics of the indicators to be achieved; the assessment of deviations and the provision of proposals for possible changes; the assessment of risks and the assessment of the activities to be performed; the improvement of the related processes of the quality management system.

The VUAS Council ensures the approval of the VUAS Strategy and the monitoring of the progress of its implementation. At the same time, the monitoring of the implementation of the VUAS Strategy is carried out by the VUAS Constitutional Assembly, the VUAS Senate and the Convention of VUAS Councillors. Within the framework of the involvement of the VUAS Councilors' Convention, the integration of the opinions of external stakeholders (employers, representatives of industry associations, representatives of regional municipalities, representatives of scientific organizations, cooperation partners, etc.) for the implementation and improvement of the strategy is ensured. Visualization of strategy, quality management and risk monitoring is shown in Image No 1.3.



1.3. Img. VUAS Strategy, Quality Management and Risk Monitoring

Within all three levels of the system, the following mechanisms and procedures are applied to ensure the quality of VUAS higher education:

1. licensing and accreditation of study direction and study programs;
2. compliance of the aims and objectives of the study programmes, content with the development strategy of the VUAS and development trends on an international, national and regional scale;

3. comparison of the international and national competitiveness of study programs with other programs of state-recognized universities of the European Union;
4. annual self-assessment of study programmes, assessment of the weaknesses and strengths of study programmes, changes, development opportunities and programme improvement;
5. provision and digitization of study program resources;
6. assessment of the student-centred approach;
7. assessment and management of students' performance;
8. assessment of students' involvement in research;
9. assessment of student satisfaction;
10. evaluation of graduates' performance and positioning in the work and business environment;
11. assessment of academic staff's annual professional development;
12. analysis and improvement of processes and documentation;
13. analysis of the opinions of industry associations and employers and the development of cooperation;
14. VUAS strategy, quality management and risk monitoring.

The VUAS Quality Management Manual (which also contains the VUAS Quality Management Policy), as well as other binding internal regulatory enactments, are published on the VUAS website and are available to VUAS staff, students, cooperation partners and other stakeholders (available noly in Latvian, at: https://www.venta.lv/augstskola/parskati-un-zinojumi).

The VUAS Quality Management Manual is available only in Latvian here: https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/VeA_Kvalitates_vadibas_rokasgramata.pdf

The processes of the VUAS quality management system and related information, as well as related internal regulatory enactments of the VUAS are available in the VUAS e-learning environment *Moodle*.

1.4. Fill in the table on the compliance of the internal quality assurance system of the higher education institution/ college with the provisions of Section 5, Paragraph 2(1) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions by providing a justification for the given statement. In addition, it is also possible to refer to the respective chapter of the Self-Assessment Report, where the provided information serves as justification.

1.	The higher education institution/ college has established a policy and procedures for assuring the quality of higher education.	The VUAS has implemented and maintained a quality management system with a developed quality manual, disfigured processes and responsibilities in accordance with external and internal regulatory enactments. VUAS quality policy available: in Latvian: https://www.venta.lv/augstskola/kvalit%C4% 81tes-politika , as well as in English: https://en.venta.lv/augstskola/quality-assurance Additional information on quality management processes (including process diagrams), their administration responsibilities and related regulatory enactments is available to VUAS staff in the e-learning environment Moodle.

2.	A mechanism for the creation 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.	The procedure for the development and improvement of the study program and its further promotion for licensing at the VUAS is laid down in the Regulation “On the Procedure for the Development, Licensing and Improvement of Study Programmes at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”(available only in Latvian) approved by the VUAS Senate on January 25, 2023, available on the VUAS website, in the section “Documents”: https://www.venta.lv/augstskola/parskati-un-zinojumi (available only in Latvian) For detailed information on monitoring and periodic verification of the study programme performance, see Chapter 2.2.2 of the self-evaluation report.
3.	The criteria, conditions, and procedures for the evaluation of students’ results, which enable reassurance of the achievement of the intended learning outcomes, have been developed and made public.	The evaluation criteria, conditions and procedure are determined by the “Regulations on the Procedure for the Organization of Tests and the Assessment of Student Knowledge at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences” (available only in Latvian) approved by the Senate on January 15, 2020, the “Regulations on the Study Procedure at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”(available only in Latvian) approved by the Senate on December 20, 2022, the “Regulations on the Evaluation and Recognition of the Volume and Content of the Study Course at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”(available only in Latvian) approved by the Senate on August 11, 2021, the “Regulations on the General Requirements for the Formation and Implementation of the Study Course at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”(available only in Latvian) approved by the Senate on December 20, 2022. Within the framework of each study program, the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the program are determined by the VUAS, which are coordinated with the learning outcomes of the study course and the knowledge, skills and competence assessment criteria in the study course descriptions. Guidance on the publicity and accessibility of regulatory documents can be found in Annex No. 1-1-a “Main internal regulatory enactments and regulations of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”. For details, see the self-assessment report Chapter 2.1.5.

4.	Internal procedures and mechanisms for assuring the qualifications of the academic staff and the work quality have been developed.	In order to achieve the development of human resources and effective management of the VUAS, the action direction “Human Resource Development” has been established, which is related to the promotion of the renewal and ensuring the succession of academic and general staff. The implementation of the mentioned future intentions of the VUAS is carried out in accordance with the Human Resources Management Policy and Development Plan for 2021-2027 developed and approved by the VUAS, which operates in close contact with the VUAS gender equality policy. The assessment of the academic staff qualification and quality of work is carried out in accordance with the VUAS Regulations on a Unified Remuneration System, Cabinet of Ministers Regulations of 25 February 2021 No. 129 “Procedures for Evaluating the Scientific and Teaching Qualifications or Results of Artistic Creation Work of an Applicant for the Position of Professor or Associate Professor and of a Professor or Associate Professor Holding the Position”, by the Regulations of the Council of Science, approved by the Senate of the VUAS on October 26, 2022, determining the assessment of the scientific and pedagogical qualification of a Professor or Associate Professor, and the VUAS Regulations “Procedure for the Selection of Academic Staff of the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences” (available only in Latvian) approved by the Senate of the VUAS on August 31, 2021. The professional development of the lecturers is assessed under the Regulation “On the Professional Development of the Elected Academic Staff and its Recording at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”(available only in Latvian) approved by the VUAS Senate on February 22, 2023. Guidance on the publicity and accessibility of regulatory documents can be found in Annex No. 1-1 “Main internal regulatory enactments and regulations of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”. For more information, see the self-assessment report Chapter 2.3.5.

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.	The VUAS ensures that information is collected and analyzed: on the students' achievements in accordance with the Regulations approved by the Senate on 15 January 2020 “Regulations on the Procedure for Organization of Tests and Assessment of Students' Knowledge at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences” (available only in Latvian) ; on the employment of graduates, student satisfaction with the study program and the effectiveness of the work of academic staff by the Regulation “Regulations on Student, Graduate and Employer Surveys for the Assessment and Improvement of the Study Process” approved by the VUAS Senate on 13 February 2019; on the available study materials and their costs, essential indicators of the University's activities in accordance with the analysis of the implementation of strategic indicators in accordance with the VUAS Strategy for 2021-2027 and the Regulation “Regulations on the Principles of Budget Development of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”(available only in Latvian) approved by the VUAS Council Decision of 26 August 2022. Guidance on the publicity and accessibility of regulatory documents can be found in Annex No. 1-1. “Main internal laws and regulations of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”. For more information, see Chapter 2.2.4 of the self-assessment report.
6.	The higher education institution/ college shall ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field whilst implementing their quality assurance systems.	According to the information provided in the annual self-assessment report of the study direction, the VUAS Senate evaluates and decides on the study direction, the activities and development of study programs in accordance with the strategic development directions of the VUAS. The procedure for the preparation and submission of the annual self-assessment report of the study direction is regulated by the Regulations “Regulations on the Procedure for the Preparation and Submission of the Annual Self-assessment Report of the Study Direction at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”(available only in Latvian) approved by the VUAS Senate on 25th January 2023, available in the e-learning environment Moodle, reads “Study Program Directors”. At the level of the Faculty and the study direction, the internal quality, control and development are ensured by the Faculty Council, the Faculty Study Program Council, the Dean of the Faculty, the Study Program Directors. At the level of the study program, internal quality and development is ensured by the study program director. Internal quality control at the level of the study program is performed by the Dean of the Faculty. At the level of the study course, quality and development are ensured by the academic staff implementing the study program and control is carried out by the study program director. For details, see points 2.1 and 2.2 of the self-assessment report.

2.1. Management of the Study Field

2.1.1. Aims of the study field and their compliance with the scope of activities of the higher education institution/ college, the strategic development fields, as well as the development needs of the society and the national economy. The assessment of the interrelation of the study field and the study programmes included in it.

Higher education study direction “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes” (hereinafter referred to as “study direction”) at VUAS was established by the VUAS and Ventspils city development strategy and is implemented in accordance with the VUAS strategy for 2021-2027 (hereinafter referred to as “the Strategy”) (see: https://irp.cdn-website.com/9945ff8b/files/uploaded/VENTSPILS%20UNIVERSITY%20OF%20APPLIED%20SCIENCE_STRATEGY_2021-2027.pdf). The study direction fits into the strategic specialization direction of the humanities and art sciences mentioned in the Strategy (word and text in comparison, contact and translation, lexicography and terminology, translation and society) and is implemented by the VUAS FoTS.

The study direction corresponds to the mission defined in the VUAS Strategy: “to provide a modern, adapted to the changing conditions of the labour market, research-based, accessible to everyone, and to become a platform for educational excellence and innovation, where young professionals discover their talents and knowledge is disseminated by professionals” and is in line with the vision of the VUAS, namely, the VUAS as a “digitally open and accessible European-level university that is internationally recognized and makes a significant contribution to the development of the economy and science”.

The study direction aims to prepare highly qualified specialists and European-level researchers in literary science, linguistics and translation with knowledge and skills that would provide them with the opportunity to use the acquired knowledge and skills in the current changing labour market conditions, to prepare students for educational programs of the next levels, as well as for scientific activities in the relevant field, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia.

The study direction fulfils the goals of the VUAS Strategy development:

1. A1. Modernization and digitalization of the educational offer in order to train specialists who are in demand on the labour market today and in the future, with relevant skills of the 21st century in priority areas of study. In order to achieve this goal, the digitalization of study courses is being implemented in the study direction, as a result of making significant changes in two of the three study programs covered in this report, new study courses have also been created. In their implementation, industry specialists are involved, who participate in both the implementation of study courses and their renewal and improvement.

The main activities of the study direction to achieve this goal:

Digitization of study courses in the study direction, development of new study courses, involvement of industry specialists in both teaching the study courses and updating and improving the content of the courses.

1. A2. Excellence in science and knowledge transfer in the national economy, as well as increasing the innovation capacity, knowledge and research social and economic values in cooperation with external, including international partners. In order to achieve this goal, in the study direction, the topics of the final thesis are selected in accordance with the current

events in the industry recommended by various companies. Final thesis supervisors are also attracted from these companies and institutions.

The main activities of the study direction to achieve this goal:

Topics and supervisors of the final thesis are attracted from companies, scientific institutions (both in Latvia and abroad), and student participation in projects. Specific examples of cooperation with companies, scientific institutions and student involvement in projects are described in Chapter 2.4.5. “Involvement of students in scientific and/ or applied research and/ or artistic creativity”, 2.4.6. “A brief description and assessment of the forms of innovation applied in the activities of the University/ College, mainly in the study direction to be assessed, providing examples and evaluating their impact on the study process” and 2.5. “Cooperation and internationalization”.

1. *A3. Developing a modern, needs-based lifelong learning offering and promoting a culture of lifelong learning

* The above-mentioned goal is partially fulfilled, with the academic staff employed in the Study Direction trying to engage in the classes implemented by the VUAS Lifelong Learning Center, however, due to the heavy workload, this is not always possible. Several lecturers involved in the study direction are involved in the “School of Young Translators” organized by the VUAS and the Ventspils Education Board, which provides students in grades 9-12 with an insight into the work of an interpreter/translator, as well as introduces the role of communication and intercultural communication in this profession.

The study direction also fulfils the horizontal objectives of the VUAS, namely:

1. H1. Development of a systematic framework for cooperation with external partners (industry, social partners, networks, and other educational and scientific institutions) at national and international level.The main activities of the study direction to achieve this goal: cooperation with industry representatives, for example, planned student internships, involvement in projects, and involvement of employer representatives in the improvement of study programs.
2. H2. Internationalization of VUAS and formation of international reputation and environment for effective cooperation in education, science and development. In order to achieve this goal, students are informed about the opportunities provided by ERASMUS+ studies and internship opportunities abroad – and are encouraged to use them both for gaining experience and for international representation of the VUAS. Students from foreign higher education institutions are admitted to the VUAS as both interns and students. Within the framework of the Erasmus+ project activities, mobility of pedagogical staff and attraction of guest staff, improvement of professional experience and transfer of good practices from foreign partners are also ensured.
3. H3. Development and effective management of VUAS resources, including human resources, technology, management and financial efficiency. In order to achieve this goal, the systematization and automation of administrative documents are implemented (for example, to calculate the cost of individual study programs, the calculation of the average annual workloads of lecturers employed by the VUAS FoTS and other works), the introduction and implementation of interdisciplinary courses among all VUAS faculties, centralized administrative management and the use of VUAS resources, including the introduction and use of laboratories among several study programs and faculties. FoTS human resource development is implemented by inviting lecturers to study in doctoral study programs, as well as by involving the most talented graduates and students in work at the faculty.
4. H4. Social responsibility for sustainable growth of the national economy. In order to achieve this goal, the education system corresponding to the requirements of the modern labour

market and the development trends of the sectors of the national economy is being developed: professional study programs of the study direction are developed in accordance with the standards of professions and their requirements, often the recommendations and proposals of employers are also supported by including them in the content of study courses. Close cooperation is formed between students and employers when students go through the internship provided for in the study plans, as well as in the development and defence of final works, often continuing cooperation in the establishment of employment legal relations.

The need for study direction programs and socio-economic justification, as well as the needs of society and economic development can be found in the following government economic policy, as well as national, regional and city-level policy development planning documents:

1. Sustainable Development Strategy of Latvia 2030;
2. The National Development Plan 2021-2027;
3. Guidelines for the Development of Education for 2021-2027 “Future Skills for the Future Society”;
4. OECD National Skills Strategy project;
5. Guidelines for Science, Technology Development and Innovation for 2021-2027;
6. National Industrial Policy Guidelines for 2021-2027;
7. Summary of knowledge areas ecosystems: Smart Specialization Strategy;
8. Digital Transformation Guidelines 2021-2027;
9. Regional Policy Guidelines 2021-2027;
10. Conceptual report “On the change of the internal management model of universities”;
11. Kurzeme Planning Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2030;
12. Ventspils State Municipality and Ventspils Municipality Joint Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 –Action Plan;
13. Ventspils' development program 2021-2027.

Table 2.1.

The study programs included in the study direction and their linking, compliance with the strategic goals of the VUAS development.

No.	Study program	Continuation of studies connection to others study programmes	Study process connection to other study programmes	Corresponding to VUAS developmental strategy goals

1.	Bachelor's study programme “Intercultural Communication”	After graduating the study programme it is possible to start studies in master’s study programme “Strategic intercultural communication”.	Part of the study courses are implemented together with bachelor's study programme “Business Management” and “Translation and Language Technology”	A1,A2,H1,H2,H4
	Mastr’s study programme “Strategic intercultural communication”	After graduating the study programme it is possible to start studies in doctoral study programme “Language and literature studies”. It is possible to study in doctoral study programme in other universities.	Study courses are being implemented with VUAS FEM students.	A1,A2,H1,H2,H4

	Joint doctoral study programme “Language and literature studies”	The doctoral study programme is a transitional stage between studies and independent research. Upon completion of their studies, doctoral students will be able to carry out their own research projects, formulating relevant problems and questions, analysing, processing and systematising data, as well as comparing them with previous scientific results.	Thestudy courses “Internal Mobility” and “External Mobility” provide a link between the doctoral study process and the bachelor and/or master study programmes, encouraging students' ability to publicly present findings from their research topic and developing their skills in academic lecturing.	A1,A2,H1,H2,H4

In addition to being in line with the overall strategic goals of the VUAS, the study programmes are logically interlinked, providing a gradual path from professional studies to integration into academia through research. The Bachelor's degree programme "Intercultural Communication" provides a foundation of knowledge, skills and competences in the field of intercultural communication, including linguistic, intercultural and business aspects. The Master's programme in Strategic Intercultural Communication develops the presence of intercultural aspects in the fields of business management, financial management, social sustainability, by focusing in depth on the above-mentioned areas. All the above-mentioned knowledge, skills and competences create the prerequisites for independent scientific research in the doctoral cycle, where in the joint doctoral programme "Languages and Literature Studies" the VUAS is responsible for translation studies. The role of translation in intercultural communication has already been emphasised in previous educational cycles, therefore the focus on this relatively under-researched area in Latvian science can be considered as VUAS contribution to Latvian translatology science.

2.1.2. SWOT analysis of the study field with regard to the set aims by providing explanations on how the higher education institution/ college expects to eliminate/

improve weaknesses, prevent threats, and avail themselves of the given opportunities, etc. The assessment of the plan for the development of the study field for the next six years and the procedure of the elaboration thereof. In case there is no development plan elaborated or the aims/ objectives are set for a shorter period of time, information on the elaboration of the plan for the development of the study field for the next assessment period shall be provided.

Strengths:

1. high student satisfaction with VUAS FoTS and its provided studies;
2. high-quality studies that provide industry-relevant and relevant knowledge, as well as develop competencies that allow graduates to be in demand and competitive in the labor market (also due to significant changes in study programs during the reporting period);
3. studies are appropriate to the European level – tools have been introduced to promote the understanding of qualifications and study levels, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and the coherent European Diploma Supplement;
4. internship opportunities in industry companies both in Latvia and abroad (incl. Ventspils Freeport Authority, Ventspils Municipality, KB "Basaful", Baltic Media Ltd, Latvian SOS Children's Villages Association, Ascari S.R.O., The Living Art Museum, Exterion Media Spain);
5. modern audience and technical support that promotes effective and high-quality implementation of study programs;
6. provision of courses in the e-environment, as well as appropriate technical distance learning equipment that promotes independent acquisition of the course content in a manner accessible to students;
7. highly qualified academic staff, which provides students with the necessary research skills, theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and competence acquisition – guest lecturers include not only employees in higher education, but also industry professionals, whose involvement in the implementation of the study program allows students to gain knowledge also from representatives of the labour market;
8. the small size of the university allows to establish direct and collegial contacts between lecturers and students;
9. cooperation with industry companies and employers, cooperation agreements have been concluded;
10. cooperation with Latvian and foreign higher education institutions;
11. organized information campaigns for attracting students, informing students about study opportunities and career development opportunities, promoting the study direction;
12. student-centred approach: students participate not only in the study process, but in related processes - in the meetings of the Study Council, the Senate, the Constitutional Assembly, the FoTS Council, the monthly meetings of the representatives of courses with the Dean; an opportunity to meet with the director of the study program, the Dean as necessary; students with feedback influence the improvement of the study process;
13. relatively small groups of students, which create a precondition for the successful development of academic communication between students and lecturers and ensure more effective and timely resolution of problem situations, as well as promote an individual approach of the academic staff to each student, helping to acquire the study material;
14. access to a high-quality, modern student dormitory for all students is ensured;
15. the support of Ventspils State City Municipality is available.

Weaknesses:

1. improvable internationalization within the study direction and FoTS:
2. insufficient attraction of foreign guest lecturers;
3. insufficient attraction of foreign students;
4. insufficient exchange of students with foreign universities;
5. insufficient internship of lecturers in foreign universities;
6. gradual decrease in the number of students in the Master's study programmes;
7. evening or extracurricular study programs are not provided, which reduces the possibility to attract potential interested persons who work full-time;
8. slow renewal of professors and associate professors;
9. impact of the pandemic on the situation:
10. during the pandemic, staff burnout has occurred and ilness cases have also increased;
11. support for the further education and professional development of lecturers, especially participation in international conferences has decreased;
12. the number of students due to the pandemic has decreased, especially the number of foreign and exchange students.

Opportunities:

1. purposefully identify and attract EU funding for the improvement of infrastructure and material and technical base, improvement of study programmes and content, strengthening of human resources capacity and qualification;
2. to create and develop the provision of Europe-level higher education study programmes that integrate the latest methods, technologies, modern environment and approaches;
3. to improve the content of the existing study programmes in close cooperation with the industry participants and cooperation partners, which would meet the needs of students and market demand (for example, to invite guest lecturers, as well as to send and receive students – interns);
4. to attract internationally recognized academic staff and professionals working in the field, thus promoting the quality and recognition of study programs;
5. to implement various formal and informal, local and international informational activities in order to promote awareness of potential students about study opportunities and to promote their attraction from neighboring counties and other regions of Latvia;
6. to include more distance and online courses in the study process, thus also attracting students from remote places and other regions to the study process;
7. to develop joint study programs in cooperation with other higher education institutions both in Latvia and abroad in accordance with the demand;
8. to promote mobility and the organisation of experience exchange events not only at the national but also at the transnational level, thus strengthening the lecturers' competences and opportunities to adopt good practices;
9. to attract foreign students from low-risk countries, as well as students of Erasmus exchange programs;
10. initiate the development of new support mechanisms at the university level to ensure a competitive remuneration policy and an attractive working environment for attracting highly qualified academic staff.

Threats:

1. demographic decline, shrinking of the young population, emigration and outflow of human capital at the level of the country's region and city, which contributes to a decrease in the number of potential students and teaching staff;
2. the choice of young people from the city of Ventspils and the county to continue higher-level studies elsewhere in Latvia;

3. low level of preparedness of the applicants;
4. uncertainties about the knowledge of the graduates of the School2030 Secondary School programme;
5. low material security of students (many students, in parallel with their studies, work in paid jobs outside the university);
6. disinterested attitude of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs of the Republic of Latvia in refusing study visas to potential students from abroad;
7. insufficiency in ensuring the succession of academic staff;
8. insufficient public funding for higher education and science;
9. full and timely implementation of sudden and significant changes in external laws and regulations in the study process, without significantly affecting the quality of the study process and content.

Preventing/improving weaknesses and linking them to the goals of the VUAS development strategy:

1. objectives A1, A2, H1 and H2;
2. A1, A3 and H4 objectives, work is being done to make the offer of education more accessible to working people;
3. H1, H2 and H3 objectives, work is being done to create motivation for associate professors to become professors and associate professors;
4. individual communication with the staff (open pronunciation), human-oriented management style in contact with the lecturers, together with the Study Department, we balance the workload of the lecturers as much as possible.

Avoiding threats:

1.-2. H1, Together with employers we create the study content that is the most appropriate for the labour market;

3.-4. Working with high school students, visits to schools;

5. Different types of scholarships are available at the University, the students are regularly informed about the possibilities provided by the Study Department;
6. Colleagues from the Study Department conduct negotiations and explain the need for visas;
7. H4, redirecting our graduates and students to further careers in pedagogy to reduce this demand and less affect our own teaching staff;
8. We strive to obtain funding by participating in various projects.

Currently, most human resources are engaged in working on the prevention of weaknesses and avoidance of threats, so the section on the use of opportunities is not given due attention. However, work is also being done on updating this section and harnessing its potential at the university level.

The study direction development plan for the next six years was created in 2021 -2022 in accordance with the development strategy of the VUAS and the development plans of the other study directions. Directors of study programs and the Dean of the faculty were involved in its development. The study direction development plan has been discussed with the deans of other faculties and the Vice-Rector for Studies, discussed and approved at the FoTS Council meeting. The study direction development plan was revised and updated in the 2023/2024 academic year in accordance with the review and re-approval of the VUAS strategy.

VUAS Strategy 2021-2027 has defined four strategic directions for VUAS development: studies, science, management and lifelong learning. The following tasks have been formulated for the implementation of the study direction:

1. S1 – To offer modern, high-quality, research-based higher education;
2. To prepare skilled specialists who can successfully integrate into the labour market and flexibly adapt to changes;
3. Introduce new study forms and approaches;
4. Implement various forms of cooperation to improve the quality of studies;
5. Promote the exportability of study programmes.

Measureable performance indicators suitable for the tasks:

1. number of students;
2. number of study programs;
3. satisfaction of stakeholders;
4. number of collaborations;
5. employment of graduates.

The activities and indicators to be achieved in the study direction development plan are related to the tasks set for the study direction.

Annex No. 2.1. study development plan of the VUAS (incl. on the study direction “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes” in the sections marked “FoTS”).

2.1.3. The structure of the management of the study field and the relevant study programmes, and the analysis and assessment of the efficiency thereof, including the assessment of the role of the head of the study field and the heads of the study programmes, their responsibilities, and the cooperation with other heads of the study programmes, as well as the assessment of the support by the administrative and technical staff of the higher education institution/ college provided within the study field.

The management of the study direction is based on the organizational structure of the VUAS, and following its direction “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes” is led by the FoTS Dean, but the activities of the direction are supervised by the Vice-Rector for Studies. Study programs of the study direction are managed by the study program directors. The activities of the study direction, current events and development perspectives, as well as the current events of the study programs are regularly monitored and improved at the meetings of the FoTS Council, as well as, if necessary, at the meetings of the study program council. The study process is provided on a daily basis by the Faculty's Administrative Assistant, Study Methodologist and Study Department staff.

The Vice-Rector for Studies coordinates and manages the issues of study content, organization and planning, and supervises the work of the Study Department.

The Dean of the Faculty, in accordance with the regulations of the VUAS FTS, ensures the operational administration of the Faculty.

The Dean shall be responsible for:

1. the compliance of the activities of the faculty, its structural units, the directors and staff of the study programmes implemented at the faculty with internal and external laws and regulations;
2. organization and quality of studies and scientific work;

3. staffing of the faculty;
4. the implementation of the decisions and orders of the Faculty Council and the VUAS administration on issues affecting the activities of the Faculty;
5. handling of economic and financial issues within the competence of the Faculty;
6. issuing orders binding on the faculty staff within the scope of their competence;
7. performance of other duties in accordance with the job description.

The duties of the Dean include coordination of the activities of the Faculty with other universities, scientific institutions and other institutions in matters within the competence of the faculty. The Dean represents the faculty in VUAS institutions, in relations with other natural and legal persons. The Dean determines the duties of the faculty Administrative Assistant and Study Methodologist and controls their execution, supervises the activities of the faculty structural units and faculty staff.

The Study Program Director is responsible for the quality of the content and implementation of the study program. The Study Program Director:

1. organizes the development of the study program in accordance with the current requirements of the science sector and ensures its systematic improvement during the implementation of the program;
2. be responsible for the development of the study programme description;
3. be responsible for the development of study course descriptions in the study program;
4. participates in the development of advertising information (annotations, descriptions, leaflets, etc.) and in the promotion of the study program;
5. take care of the intellectual and material provision of the study program;
6. be responsible for the implementation of the study programme in accordance with the regulatory enactments governing the study process;
7. inform students and lecturers about mobility opportunities;
8. organise cooperation with potential employers;
9. follow the progress of studies, evaluate and analyze students' performance;
10. determine the compliance of the volume, content and evaluation of the study courses previously acquired at the VUAS or other higher education institutions with the study programme;
11. organizes the preparation of the study program for self-evaluation, expertise, accreditation;
12. prepare reports on the implementation of the study program, submit them upon request to the Dean of the Faculty, the Head of the Study Department, the Vice-Rector for Studies;
13. develop and submit to the Dean of the Faculty the study program study plan;
14. supervise students'internships;
15. annually provide the Dean of the Faculty with all the necessary information for the preparation of the report on the activities performed for the improvement of the study direction.

The Administrative Assistant is aware and handles the records of the Faculty, helps the Dean to implement the decisions of the Faculty Council, is involved in ensuring the organization of the study process.

The Study Methodologist coordinates the study process of the faculty, cooperates with the study program directors and faculty lecturers, as well as develops the documentation necessary to ensure the study process of the faculty. This is necessary so that, as the university grows, faculties can qualitatively separate coordination, administrative and planning work.

The Faculty has one joint study program council for both the study direction “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes” and the study direction “Translation”

(approved by the FoTS Council on March 15, 2022, updated on September 29, 2023).

FoTS Council

The highest decision-making body of the Faculty is the Faculty Council (hereinafter referred to as "The Council"). The Council shall decide on the academic, scientific and economic activities of the faculty. Both the academic staff and representatives of the faculty administration, as well as students' representatives participate in The Council (student representatives are elected by the Student Council of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, and they are approved by the faculty council). The Council includes the most active students of each faculty who want to have a direct impact on their studies.

Analysis of the effectiveness of the management structure

Each of the programs has its own goal, which jointly covers the goal of the entire study direction. Directors of study programs, in cooperation with each other, come to proposals for improving the efficiency of the implementation of study programs, discuss them with the Dean of the faculty and they are further advanced in the study program councils or the faculty council depending on the specifics of the issues. Initiatives of study program directors can be implemented expeditiously if the proposals are justified and feasible within the framework of the existing budget. Problem situations can be identified and discussed quite quickly, which is also based on weekly meetings at the FoTS Dean's Office, where it is possible to raise an issue in an informal atmosphere. Often, the Administrative Assistant is the first person the students turn to when they are not sure who to address a question to, but it is quickly handed over to the relevant employee or the student is explained how to deal with their situation in another way.

The University's administrative and technical staff, in accordance with their responsibilities, provide the necessary support for the implementation of the study process in the faculty. A stable system for the management and improvement of study programs has been established at the VUAS. Proposals for changes in study programs are prepared by the study program director, based on academic staff recommendations, employer feedback, student surveys, the latest trends in the national economy and the labour market. Proposals are discussed with the Dean of the Faculty and the Vice-Rector for Studies and submitted to the study program council for evaluation. After that, the issue is assessed and, in case of positive decisions, approved at the FTS Council meeting. Substantial changes in the study program are directed to the Senate of the VUAS for approval, and further – to the Study Quality Commission of the Academic Information Center. Technical support of the study direction and programs is provided by the Faculty Administrative Assistant, the Study Department, as well as the Infrastructure Department.

The structural scheme of the study direction management is attached to Annex No. 2.2.

2.1.4. Description and assessment of the requirements and the system for the admission of students by specifying, inter alia, the regulatory framework of the admission procedures and requirements. The assessment of options for the students to have their study period, professional experience, and the previously acquired formal and non-formal education recognised within the study field by providing specific examples of the application of these procedures.

The admission procedure is supervised by the Admission Commission established by the Rector's order, which consists of the Head of the Study Department, the Study Program Directors and other

persons involved in the admission process. Admission to the basic study programs is organized through the portal www.latvija.lv e-service Unified Admission to the basic study programs, but study applications for master's and doctoral study programs are accepted in person or remotely through the internal information technology resources of the VUAS. For foreign student admission an application system “The DreamApply” is used.

Every year, “Admission rules and matriculation procedure in VUAS 202X/202X academic year” (only in Latvian) and “ Regulations for the Admission of Foreign Students and Matriculation Procedures at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences 202X/202X academic year”, which sets the framework for the admission of students, are published on the VUAS website.

Up-to-date admission rules are available at https://irp.cdn-website.com/9945ff8b/files/uploaded/Uznemsanas_noteikumi_arzemniekiem_ENG_2024-25.pdf

Recognition of students' previous education and professional experience is regulated by

“Regulations on Recognition of Competences Acquired Outside of Formal Education or Professional Experience and Learning Outcomes Achieved in Prior Education”, available here: https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/14_Par_profesionalas%20pieredzes%20atzisanu_nolikums.pdf (only in Latvian).

The regulations determine the procedure by which the study program director must evaluate the previously acquired study courses and how the recognition protocol must be formulated. The recognition protocol and the student's individual study plan included in it are an annex to the order of the Vice-Rector for Studies on the recognition of the learning outcomes achieved in the previous education. At VUAS, this procedure is the same for all 4 fields of study. In accordance with the pricelist of paid services established by the VUAS, a fee of EUR 5.00 is charged for the service to students who wish to recognize study courses previously completed by the VUAS. The VUAS pricelist of paid services is available in the e-learning environment *Moodle*.

In order to carry out the recognition of the knowledge gained from professional experience, a Rector's order is issued on the composition of the Study Outcomes Recognition Commission of the VUAS in a specific study direction. Upon the decision of the commission, a protocol for the recognition of a specific form is created and an individual study plan is established, which is approved by the order of the Vice-Rector for Studies. According to the price list of paid services established by the VUAS, this service costs EUR 100.00.

Information about the requirements and documents are publicly available, the links in the section lead to the documents on the VeA public website (available only in Latvain) – https://www.venta.lv/, as well as on the VUAS *Moodle* platform – https://moodle.venta.lv/moodle/my/.

During the reporting period (since academic year 2013/2014), no recognition of competences acquired outside formal education was carried out, as there were no such applications from students. The most common way of equating study results has been equating study results obtained in Erasmus+ mobility according to the model of the Regulations on the Recognition of Courses Taken in the Framework of Erasmus+ Programme in the Higher Education Sector Study Mobility at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (https://moodle.venta.lv/moodle/my/) and the Regulations on Evaluation and Recognition of the Scope and Content of Study Courses at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, Appendix 1. During this period 22 students from the Bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication" and 5 students from the Master's study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" have participated in Erasmus+ mobility. All study results (in ECTS credits) obtained during Erasmus+ mobility are aligned with the VUAS credit system.

2.1.5. Assessment of the methods and procedures for the evaluation of students' achievements, as well as the principles of their selection and the analysis of the compliance of the evaluation methods and procedures with the aims of the study programmes and the needs of the students.

The criteria, conditions and binding procedures for evaluating success are set out in the regulations approved by the VUAS Senate:

1. Regulations on the procedure for organizing tests and assessing students' knowledge at the VUAS (available: https://en.venta.lv/university/documents);
2. Regulations on the study procedure at the VUAS (available: https://en.venta.lv/university/documents).

The learning outcomes to be achieved in the study program are evaluated according to two criteria:

1. qualitative criterion – a rating in a 10-point system or a credited rating;
2. quantitative criterion – the amount of the study subject in credit points, obtaining a successful assessment of the acquisition of the mandatory content of the study course.

The amount of credits to be earned in each semester is specified in the study plan. The completed work is quantified every semester and study year, thus controlling the compliance of the amount of work performed by the student with the study plan.

The tests assess students' knowledge, skills and competencies, which are determined in the study program and in each individual study course. In accordance with the provisions of the VUAS "Regulations on Test Organization Procedures and Student Knowledge Assessment at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences", the main types of tests are defined:

1. Study course tests – at the end of each study course, students must pass a study course test, which assesses the degree of achievement of study results in a given study course. The examination forms of the study course may be an examination, a test, a study paper, in exceptional cases a combined examination, for internship – a defense.
2. Intermediate tests – during the implementation of the study course, students must pass intermediate tests. Intermediate tests can be laboratory work, practical work, quizzes, homework, tests, presentations, reports, essays, and other types of tests according to the specifics of the study program.
3. Final or State examination – at the end of the study program, the student passes the final or state examination for obtaining a professional qualification and/ or a degree. The Final examination may be a qualification exam, a qualification paper, a bachelor's thesis, or a master's thesis. The number, frequency, forms and types of intermediate examinations shall be determined by the study course lecturer in accordance with the study course description. Each study course may have several intermediate examinations. The students' assessments obtained during the intermediate examinations may be taken into account during the evaluation of the final examination of the study course. Each study course has only one final examination of the study course.

Different types of examination are used in the assessment of study results and they are evaluated on a 10-point scale or with a rating of "pass/fail". The degree of achievement of the learning outcomes within the framework of the final examination of the study course of the compulsory part of the study program with the assessment "pass/fail" may be evaluated if the amount of the study

course does not exceed 3 credit points. Ratings from “almost satisfactory” (4) to “with distinction” (10) and a rating “pass” are considered successful.

The course is considered to be successful if the requirements set out in the course plan are met in accordance with the lecturer's description of the course until the end of the examination period, unless otherwise specified (for example, an extension of the deadline for taking the examination has been received).

The teaching and knowledge assessment methods of the VUAS are objective and are consistently used in pedagogical activities, they comply with the requirements of the Cabinet regulations and are based on the following principles:

1. the principle of openness of evaluation – in accordance with the goals and objectives of the study program, as well as the goals of the study courses , VUAS has established a set of requirements for the evaluation of study results;
2. mandatory assessment – the need to obtain a positive assessment for the acquisition of the content of the program, i.e. for each study course planned for the acquisition of the program;
3. the variety of test types used in the assessment, using credits and exams as the basic forms;
4. assessment review option principle – the student can turn to the lecturer or the program director if he/she believes that the assessment is not appropriate;
5. appropriateness of the assessment – during the tests students are given the opportunity to prove their analytical, creative and research abilities, the acquired knowledge and the ability to use scientific knowledge;
6. openness and clarity of requirements – when starting studies, the student is informed about the content, requirements and assessment procedure of the appropriate study course.

For each study course, a detailed description of the course has been developed, which defines the aim of the study course, provides the study results of the study course, their connection with the learning outcomes to be achieved by the study program, describes the type of independent work organization of the students and the evaluation of the study results, defines the content of the study course and the calendar plan of the study course, as well as the literature used. Lecturers choose teaching and assessment methods based on the aims of the study program and study courses. Evaluation of study results is objective and is documented. The evaluation of students' seminar papers, projects, internships and final thesis is regulated by the VUAS documents.

The State examination, of which the preparation and defence of the qualification paper, bachelor's thesis or master's thesis is a part, shall be evaluated by the State Examination Commission, where the chairperson and composition of which shall be approved by the Rector by issuing an order for the relevant academic year.

The Final examination, the part of which is the development and defence of a bachelor's thesis or master's thesis, is evaluated by the Final Examination Commission, the chairperson and composition of which are approved by the Rector by issuing an order for the relevant academic year.

The conformity of assessment methods and procedures to the achievement of program goals and the needs of students is assessed in a continuous process, both in consultation with the course representatives, to conclude whether the assessment methods are appropriate, both in informal discussions with emploers and graduates, and in regular surveys of students, graduates and employers.

2.1.6. Description and assessment of the academic integrity principles, the mechanisms

for compliance with these principles, and the way in which the stakeholders are informed. Specify the plagiarism detection tools used by providing examples of the use of these tools and mechanisms.

Academic integrity is one of the core values mentioned in the VUAS development strategy for the period from year 2021 to 2027. This means adherence to the highest standards of professionalism and accuracy, impartiality and truthfulness, moral and ethical principles, and honesty.

In order to inform and help students to observe academic integrity, there have been developed regulations such as “Test organization procedure and student knowledge assessment in Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”, “Regulations on academic integrity in Ventspils University of Applied Sciences” and the methodological instructions for the presentation and defence of final thesis published on the VUAS website in the section “Academic integrity” https://en.venta.lv/university/documents):

Students' course, bachelor's and master's theses, after their submission to the Dean's Office, are placed and processed in the Unified Computerized Plagiarism Control System (PLAG3) for plagiarism control purposes. All cases of coincidence with the work of another author shall be evaluated by the Head of the Study Department and the Dean of the Faculty, determining the severity of the violation in accordance with the regulations on academic integrity. In the event of a serious violation, a commission is convened to consider the issue and decide on the imposition of sanctions on the student. In the study process, in subjects where reports are to be created, the good academic style and culture of reference formation are discussed. The introduction of the control system has fostered students' interest in the correct methodology for citing others and the work itself. Students are informed about what plagiarism is and how to avoid it in the first year, in the process of creating final works, as well as in various subjects where a larger amount of writing work should be done. In case of detection of significant plagiarism violations, students are prevented from defending the work.

No data on plagiarism in the reporting period until 2015. Starting from 2015, when VUAS joined the plagiarism detection system PLAG3 developed by the University of Latvia, 4 cases were detected in the Bachelor cycle of higher education, 0 cases in the Master cycle. In these 4 cases, two cases showed 17% matches with a VUAS paper and another HEI paper, 9% with a VUAS paper and 22% with another HEI paper, while the other two cases showed artificially increased volume of work with non-existent words. The amount of overlap allowed by VUAS is up to 15%. Within this range, the shortcomings of the work can be corrected - possible grammatical errors, reference gaps, etc. If the 15% threshold is exceeded, the student is not allowed to defend the thesis, it is returned for revision or writing another thesis, and is defended the following year. So far, there have been no cases where a thesis has been returned to the student for a complete revision.

2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System

2.2.1. Assessment of the efficiency of the internal quality assurance system within the study field by specifying the measures undertaken to achieve the aims and outcomes of the study programmes and to ensure continuous improvement, development, and efficient performance of the study field and the relevant study programmes.

For the management of the study program, the developed Quality Management System (available to VUAS staff and students in the section "Quality Management System" of the e-learning platform *Moodle*) approved by the VUAS Senate is used, which includes quality assurance of the study process. Its characteristics are given in Part I, point 1.3 of the self-assessment report.

The assessment of the internal quality efficiency of the study directions is carried out:

1. general analysis of the study direction – faculty working groups and discussions, faculty Council meetings;
2. analysis of the content of study programs – meetings with representatives of the industry and employers, associations and associations, comparison with other higher education institutions, meetings with representatives of general secondary and secondary vocational education institutions;
3. regular identification of students', graduates' and employers' opinions – meetings with graduates, meetings with employers and other cooperation partners, regular semesterly student surveys, analysis of survey data, review of Final examination commosion (hereinafter as to "FEC") and State examination commussion (hereinafter as to "SEC") reports and assessment Study program management opinion in the Faculty Council once a year;
4. assessment of students' performance – regular assessment of knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the quantitative and qualitative criteria to be achieved in the study program;
5. cooperation with student self-government (VUAS Student Council) – meetings with the Student Council, study course representatives, and individual meetings with students;
6. financial and resource planning of the study direction – when planning the budget for the calendar year, the budget of the Faculty at the level of study programs and at the level of the Faculty is evaluated and coordinated.

The course descriptions of the study programs determine the aim of the study course and the results to be achieved in accordance with the results to be achieved by the study program. The quality of studies is ensured by analyzing FEC and SEC reports, student feedback and comments in various forms, as well as talking with employers and accordingly improving and developing study programs and study courses. The study quality assurance work is organized by the responsible lecturers of the relevant subjects, the study program directors, the FoTS Dean, the Study Department and the Vice-Rector for Studies. More detailed quality assurance activities are described in paragraphs 2.2.2 to 2.2.5 of this chapter.

Feedback from students on the content of study programmes is obtained directly at different levels:

1. assessment of student satisfaction in the survey twice a year (once a semester) in accordance with the regulations “Regulations on Student, Graduate and Employer Surveys for the Assessment and Improvement of the Study Process” (Available only in Latvian: https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/Nolikums%20par%20stud%C4%93jo%C5%A1o%2Cabsolventu%2Cdarba%20dev%C4%93ju%20aptauj%C4%81m.pdf);
2. meetings of the representatives of each course of each program with the Dean of the Faculty;
3. at meetings of study program directors with students;
4. participation of student representatives in the Faculty Council;
5. participation of student representatives in the study program councils of the Faculty;

Representation of students' interests at the administrative level also takes place by actively participating in the daily work of institutions and commissions of different levels:

1. The Senate;
2. The Constitutional Assembly;
3. The Study Council;
4. The Scholarship Commission;
5. The Academic Court of Arbitration;
6. various other interest groups.

Each VUAS study program has a study program director who is responsible for the quality of the content and implementation of this program. The study programs are regularly reviewed – both by receiving the results of the student survey (once a semester), creating study plans for a new semester (once a year), preparing and reviewing a self-assessment report (once a year), and at the meeting of the Faculty Council reviewing the results of the work of the State Examination Commission and the Final Examination Commission (once a year). In addition to the study program director, the Dean of the Faculty and the Vice-Rector for Studies are also involved in the evaluation of the study program. The evaluation of the program and the necessary changes are reviewed by the faculty study program councils and the Faculty Council.

To obtain quantitative feedback from students, graduates and employers, the surveys described in paragraph 2.2.4 are used.

The regulatory documents included in the VUAS Quality Management System (hereinafter referred to as "QMS"), which determine the quality analysis of the study process, the analysis of the results of the study programs, the review of the study programs and the development of new programs, are as follows:

1. Regulations on Study Procedures at VUAS (available: https://en.venta.lv/university/documents)
2. Regulations on Testing Procedure and Student Knowledge Assessment at VUAS (available: https://en.venta.lv/university/documents);
3. Regulations on surveys of students, graduates and employers (available only in Latvian) https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/Nolikums%20par%20stud%C4%93jo%C5%A1o%2Cabsolventu%2Cdarba%20dev%C4%93ju%20aptauj%C4%81m.pdf
4. Regulations on the competition for VUAS study places financed from budget funding (available only in Latvian) https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/12_Nolikums%20par%20rotaciju_2020.pdf
5. VUAS Study Council Regulations (available only in Latvian) https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/Studiju-padomes-nolikums.pdf
6. Regulations on general requirements for the creation and implementation of study courses at VUAS (available to VUAS staff in the section "Study Program Directors" of the e-learning environment *Moodle* , only in Latvian);
7. Regulations on the Procedure for Development, Licensing and Improvement of Study Programmes at the VUAS (available only in Latvian) (https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/Nolikums_Studiju-programmu-izstrades-licencesanas-pilnveides-kartiba.pdf)
8. Regulations of the Study Program Council (available to VUAS staff in the *Moodle* section of the e-learning environment "Study Program Directors").
9. Regulations on the Procedure for Organizing Extracurricular and Distance Education Studies at VUAS https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/11_VeA_nolikums_neklatiene_talmaciba.pdf

The procedure for the implementation of the above-mentioned regulations is described by the VUAS QMS processes:

1. assessment of student satisfaction;
2. improvement of the study program;
3. development and licensing of study programs;
4. cooperation with employers, industry associations.

2.2.2. Analysis and assessment of the system and the procedures for the development and review of the study programmes by providing specific examples of the review of the study programmes, the aims, and regularity, as well as the stakeholders and their responsibilities. If, during the reporting period, new study programmes have been developed within the study field, describe the procedures of their development (including the process of the approval of study programmes).

The procedure for the development and further promotion of a new study program for licensing at the VUAS is determined by the regulations "Regulations on the Procedure for the Development, Licensing and Improvement of Study Programmes at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences" approved by the Senate on 25 January 2023 (available only in Latvian)(https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/Nolikums_Studiju-programmu-izstrades-licencesanas-pilnveides-kartiba.pdf).

In accordance with the above-mentioned regulations, the Dean of the relevant faculty is responsible for the supervision of the development of the study program, but the director of the study program approved by the Faculty Council is responsible for the preparation of the study program and the submission of related documents for approval. The licensing documents of the new study program are reviewed and approved by the faculty study program councils, the faculty council and the VUAS Senate.

The content of the study program is reviewed in the study program council of the respective direction, which is also attended by representatives of students, graduates and employers, who express their criticism and recommendations, which are discussed in the council and then in the Faculty council meeting if the desired changes require the approval of the Faculty council.

During the reporting period in 2021, significant changes were made to the academic bachelor's programme "Languages and Intercultural Communication". These changes were discussed with stakeholders and were based on the reports of the Final Examination Commission and the State Examination Commission on the results of the graduates survey, where graduates and students expressed a desire to increase the proportion of practical applications in the programme and an interest in obtaining professional qualifications, the view expressed by career counsellors at schools in the Kurzeme region that a study programme leading to a professional qualification is more attractive and useful to young people, and the view expressed by employers that graduates should meet the changing requirements of today's labour market.

The preparation of the justification for the significant changes in the program, application to the AIKA Study Program Licensing Commission, evaluation and implementation took place in accordance with the procedure established by the VUAS regulatory documents. During the implementation and development of study programs, the principles of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) are respected.

During the reporting period in VUAS FTS, the Faculty of Humanities (hereinafter referred to as “FH”) of Daugavpils University (hereinafter referred to as “DU”) and the Faculty of Humanities and Arts (hereinafter referred to as “FHSA”) of Liepaja University (hereinafter referred to as “LiepU”) have developed a joint doctoral study programme (JDSP) “Languages and Literature Studies”. The JDSP “Language and literature studies” was developed within the framework of ESF project No.8.2.1.0/18/A/019 “Reduction of fragmentation of study programmes and strengthening of resource sharing at Daugavpils University”.

The scholarly environment in the Latvian humanities is a unified mechanism where a constant process of exchange of news takes place between scholars. Over time, research topics/research profiles offered by inter-university DSPs have gradually crystallised and research areas relevant to Latvian linguistics, underrepresented in other Latvian universities, have developed. Previously, three doctoral study programmes were implemented at partner universities: “Linguistics” (VUAS and LiepU), “Literary Studies” (DU) and “Linguistics” (DU). In order to reduce the fragmentation of the study programmes, the JDSP “Language and literature studies” was developed with three research sub-programmes under the responsibility of the partner universities: translation studies (VUAS), literature studies (DU) and linguistics (LiepU). This was possible thanks to the long-standing cooperation between the three partner universities in the fields of translation studies, literary studies and linguistics.

The main prerequisites for setting up a programme:

1. the trend towards interdisciplinarity in the field of humanities is becoming more acute, as evidenced by the classification of degrees approved in Latvia (Doctor of Humanities in Linguistics and Literary Studies);
2. the cooperation of the three universities in the implementation of the programme will contribute to the competitiveness of the programme in Latvia and abroad;
3. each partner university has its own unique developments, which will productively complement each other (VUAS –applied linguistics and translation studies; DU – school of literary studies, contrastive approach in linguistics; LiepU – regional studies in linguistics and literary studies, comparative and comparative linguistics, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics);
4. modern technological developments allow to address mobility and exchange issues in a timely manner;
5. since 2020, the Linguistics and Literary Studies Promotion Council, composed of LiepU and VUAS Latvian Council of Science experts, has been functioning at DU. Since 2020, the Linguistics and Literary Studies Promotion Council (formerly the Linguistics Promotion Council) has been functioning at LiepU, which is composed of LiepU and VUAS experts in the field of Linguistics and Literary Studies.

The VUAS, DU and LiepU have signed a tripartite cooperation agreement, on the basis of which a joint doctoral study programme “Philology” (the updated title is “Language and literature studies”) has been established. The development of the JDSP “Language and literature studies” was based on the strategic documents of the partner universities and the Latvian regions: *the Strategy of VUAS 2021-2027, the Strategy of the Liepaja University 2016-2020* (see: https://www.liepu.lv/uploads/files/LiepU_strategija_2020_majas%20lapai.pdf. On the basis of a letter from the Ministry of Education and Science No. 4-10e/21/99 (11.01.2021) “On Institutional Development Strategies” by the resolution of the Liepaja University Senate (25.01.2021) the development strategy was extended until 31 December 2023), *Daugavpils University Development Strategy 2015-2020* (https://du.lv/wp[1]content/uploads/2021/12/DU_attistibas_strategija_25.01.2021.-converted.pdf DU Senate Resolution No.6/1 of 25 January 2021 Extension of the Daugavpils University Development Strategy 2015-2020 until the launch of a new approved strategy), as well as the *Kurzeme Planning*

Region Sustainable Development Strategy 2015-2030 (https://www.kurzemesregions.lv/wp[1]content/uploads/2018/11/Kurzeme-2030.pdf). These strategic documents are part of the implementation of the strategy for the development of a polycentric state, providing for the active participation of higher education institutions in building intellectual potential, offering a diverse range of study programmes at different levels and ensuring time-appropriate higher education and research.

The development of the JDSP "Language and literature studies" was carried out by a working group established in October 2020. It was composed of the VUAS FoTS, DU FH and LiepU FHSA, which have experience in implementing relevant doctoral programmes. The members of the working group met regularly and discussed programme development issues such as programme concept, content and design, development of new innovative courses, admission requirements, planned cooperation mechanism and quality assurance.

During the development of the programme, the European and international experience in the development of similar programmes was studied, and the conceptual report on the introduction of a new doctoral model in Latvia was taken into account. Representatives of partner universities presented their experience in doctoral activities in a specific field: VUAS – in the field of translation studies, DU – in the field of literary studies and linguistics (comparative and comparative linguistics), LiepU –in the field of linguistics (Baltic studies, applied linguistics). The partners' expertise was integrated into the new interdisciplinary model.

Key steps in the programme development process:

1. developing the programme concept (structure, content, layout, deliverables);
2. development of course descriptions;
3. discussion and agreement on the basic principles of the programme mechanism;
4. preparation and submission of the licensing report to the Academic Information Centre (AIC);
5. Resolution No 2022/27-L of the AIC Study Quality Commission of 4 October 2022 on the licensing of the study programme.

Employer involvement

The labour market for doctoral programmes in the humanities is primarily oriented towards academia. Jobs are related to literary studies, linguistics, translation studies, cultural studies in Latvian higher education institutions: VUAS, University of Latvia, Daugavpils University, Liepaja University, Rezekne Academy of Technologies, Latvian Academy of Culture and others; scientific institutes (UL Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, UL Institute of Latvian Language, LiepU Institute of Kurzeme Humanities), higher education institutions abroad, museums and libraries. These institutions have close and systematic cooperation with the departments of the VUAS, DU and LiepU in scientific projects, scientific conferences, preparation and implementation of science communication tools. Some of the lecturers and doctoral students involved cooperate with Latvian and international professional organisations in the field of linguistics, translation, terminology, publishing, as well as have been founders of these organisations themselves and serve on their boards (e.g. Latvian Society of Translators and Interpreters, Latvian Germanists Association, Latvian Association of Applied Linguistics, Latvian Academy of Sciences Terminology Commission and sub-commissions).

Involvement of students and graduates

Regular surveys of doctoral students of existing doctoral programmes were taken into account in the development of the programme concept. In addition to the above, a specially targeted student survey was developed as part of the design process of the new doctoral programme, which included two parts: a written survey and oral interviews (each partner university conducted its own survey

separately, after which the results were summarised). The students highlighted the following desires: strapdisciplinarity, the opportunity to get acquainted with the experience of doctoral programmes at other Latvian universities, the opportunity to communicate more with doctoral students and degree candidates, more opportunities to get involved in the real research process (projects, publications, conferences).

Involvement of teaching staff

Teaching staff from all three partner universities participated in the development of the study programme: professors and associate professors, senior researchers, assistant professors, mainly those involved in doctoral programmes. The analysis of positive aspects and shortcomings of the existing doctoral study programmes (LiepU and VUAS "Linguistics", DU "Literary Studies", "Linguistics") was carried out, noting the significant success of the programmes in training young scholars. As a result, new practical and theoretical courses have been developed and are currently being implemented, which focus on student-centred learning, skills and competence development, and include interdisciplinary aspects. Taking into account the new trends in the development of doctoral studies in Latvia, a new section on "Internationalisation and research validation" has been developed.

2.2.3. Description of the procedures and/or systems according to which the students are expected to submit complaints and proposals (except for the surveys to be conducted among the students). Specify whether and how the students have access to the information on the possibilities to submit complaints and proposals and how the outcomes of the examination of the complaints and proposals and the improvements of the study field and the relevant study programmes are communicated by providing the respective examples.

At the beginning of each study year, the staff involved in the study process – the Rector, the Vice-Rector of Studies, the Dean, the director of the study program, the representative of the study department, the chairperson of the Student Council – and other invited persons meet with the students and provide answers to the questions of interest.

Suggestions and complaints can be submitted by students in writing or orally. Written complaints shall be submitted in accordance with the document "Regulations for the Submission and Examination of Student Proposals and Complaints at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences" (Available:https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Firp.cdn-website.com%2F9945ff8b%2Ffiles%2Fuploaded%2FNolikums%2520par%2520stud%25C4%2593jo%25C5%25A1o%2520s%25C5%25ABdz%25C4%25ABbu%2520un%2520priek%25C5%25A1likumu%2520izskat%25C4%25AB%25C5%25A1anas%2520k%25C4%2581rt%25C4%25ABbu%2520Ventspils%2520Augstskol%25C4%2581.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK).

Paragraph 2.9 of the Regulations states that "If the Applicant wishes to withhold the facts mentioned in the Application and/or the identity of the Applicant, he shall indicate this in the Application. If the Application does not contain a prohibition to disclose the facts mentioned therein, the VUC is entitled to disclose them in compliance with the requirements of laws and regulations, including the VUC Personal Data Processing Policy. In most cases, queries and student complaints are resolved promptly. Once a month, a meeting is held between the course supervisors and the programme directors and the dean to resolve a potential conflict situation without the need to submit a written complaint. Students mostly complain about what they consider to be unreasonable

demands in the course, too many independent assignments, their lack of relevance to the course description, the scheduling of tests in several courses at the same time, etc. Such issues are dealt with by the relevant teaching staff.

The following questions shall be addressed with the relevant teachers in order to find a solution as soon as possible. In summary, the issues and student complaints are resolved expeditiously. Complaints and enquiries are handled and decided on the action and necessary action to address them. Students are provided with an individual approach from both academic and administrative staff and management, for example, the Dean, the Vice- Rector for Studies and the Rector are available to every student.

In order to ensure prompt resolution of issues related to the study process, students nominate a representative of the course, which is added to the internal communication platform of the VUAS FTS (for example, WhatsApp, Telegram, etc.), which also includes the Dean of the faculty and the Administrative Assistant. In case of questions, the internal communication platform discusses who students should turn to with the specific problem – the lecturer, the study program director, the Study Department or the Faculty. Students from the senior year often answer the questions in the group. Students also have the opportunity to approach the faculty personally with uncertainty and be directed to the responsible party in order to comply with the hierarchy of subordination and good process management (explaining to the student why such steps are necessary).

Claims regarding the assessments received in the tests may be submitted by students in accordance with the Regulations “Regulations on the Procedure for Organizing Tests and Assessment of Student Knowledge”.

Within three working days after announcing the results of the examination (both oral and written), the student may challenge the lecturer's given grade by writing an application to the Dean of the Faculty, who shall organize the examination of the appeal within three working days. The first time the student's performance is re-evaluated by the study course lecturer. If the student does not agree with the assessment of the lecturer, no later than within three working days after the announcement of the test results, he may again challenge the assessment of the lecturer by writing an application to the Dean of the Faculty, who shall organize the examination of the appeal within the next three working days. By order of the Dean, a commission of 3 lecturers is appointed, among which there is no lecturer of the study course who has evaluated the student's work. The Commission evaluates the performance of the student's study results and within 3 working days prepares an opinion and submits it to the Dean of the Faculty, who informs the student about the decision made. A more detailed description of the procedure is provided in the above-mentioned regulations.

2.2.4. Provide information on the mechanism for collecting the statistical data, as developed by the higher education institution/ college. Specify the type of data to be collected, the regularity of collection, and the way the information is used to improve the study field. Describe the mechanism for obtaining and providing feedback, including with regard to the work with the students, graduates, and employers.

The most important statistical indicators are collected and compiled in the study administration information system, released or manually through Google forms and data analysis tools.

Table 2.2

Statistical data collection mechanisms at VUAS

Statistical data type	Aggregation frequency	Using the results in the study direction	Responsible for data extraction
Student responses results when filling in the “Student Survey of the study process evaluation and improvement”	Once a semester	The results are reviewed and taken into account, planning the next semester study plans when creating a self-assessment report and general monitoring quality of education in the direction of studies.	Study Methodologist
Student responses results when filling in the “Graduate survey obtained for the evaluation of education”	Once a year	The results are reviewed and taken into account, planning the next semester study plan, creating a self-assessment report, analysing the employment of VUAS graduates indicators and general monitoring quality of education in the direction of studies.	Study Methodologist
Student exmatriculation number of cases and causes	Once a semester	Exmatriculation dynamics are closely viewed with exmatriculation surveys where the reasons are given, suggestions and complaints. These results are viewed by the study program director and the Dean of the Faculty to reduce the number of cases that depend on the VUAS.	Study Methodologist
Student enrollment results	Once a year	Takes into account when planning the lecture schedule and lecturer workloads to ensure efficient use of resources and the best approach to new VUAS students.	Study Department, Study Methodologist
Student grades	Once a semester	Student grades are basic criterion in the competition for the nationally funded study place distribution or rotation at the end of each semester. Grades are also taken into account in the national minimum scholarship distribution. Likewise, these results determine whether it will be necessary to change number of groups for the next semester.	Faculty administrator

Number of graduates	Once a year	Takes into account when planning the development of the study direction and cooperation with the industry	Study Department
E-learning environment Moodle usage activity	Once a semester	Reviewing and analyzing whether all the necessary study materials are available to students and whether they meet regulation of internal laws and regulations.	Study Methodologist
Employer’s survey results	Once a year or three years	Professional and academic study programs, planning the study program content and aligning the skills required by VUAS graduates and competencies for today's labour market.	Study Methodologist

Each year, a self-assessment report of the faculty's study directions is prepared, as part of which the process of improving the study programs at the VUAS is described. At the end of each semester, a student survey is conducted, the aim of which is to regularly obtain information from students about the quality of the study process implemented by the VUAS. The students' survey must be completed electronically for each study course that was taught in the current semester, including questions about the evaluation of the course content and the lecturer's work. The survey asks questions about how students assess the need for the course in the growth of their qualification, the need for the course in their practical activities, the level of the organization of the course, and the level of the lecturer's scientific and pedagogical qualification. Completing the survey is a mandatory condition for registering for the next semester's study courses. The results of the survey are summarized, analyzed and included in the annual self-assessment report. If there are any significantly worse indicators in the data of the quality survey, the program director or Dean shall discuss this with the particular representative of the course individually in order to understand the qualitative picture. However, usually, such problems crystallize during the semester and are discussed during the meeting of the study course representatives with the Dean of the faculty.

At the end of each academic year, a survey of graduates who have graduated from Ventspils University of Applied Sciences in the current academic year is conducted to find out their assessment of the quality of the education received, the evaluation of the study methods used and the evaluation of the study program as a whole. The mentioned surveys are carried out in accordance with the regulation “Regulations on Student, Graduate and Employer Surveys for the Assessment and Improvement of the Study Process” (available to VUAS staff in the section “Study Program Directors” of the e-learning platform *Moodle*) and their results and recommendations for the improvement of the study process are discussed at the meetings of the FoTS Council, study program councils and the VUAS Senate.

Although no formal quantitative survey of employers has been conducted for the past two years, qualitative feedback is provided on a regular basis – by meeting with employers and discussing the nuances of internships and other cooperation models, feedback on our graduates is also discussed and, if any changes are recommended, they are discussed during a coffee break (once a week) with

faculty members and at a meeting of the Faculty council, which also includes student representatives. For a more detailed summary of the surveys, see Annex No. 2.6.

The classes of lecturers (especially before the election or new lecturers) are hospitalized to assess the lecturer's teaching style and its relevance, as well as the material used. It is carried out by the Dean, the program director or experts appointed by the Council (in case of election of the lecturer).

Informal meetings are organized to provide faculty organizations and feedback in the form of coffee breaks. All faculty lecturers are invited to coffee breaks at the faculty Dean's office once a week during the lunch break. It's a common moment when you can identify and discuss current news and issues.

Student representatives have been elected to both study program councils, where issues regarding the implementation and further development of study programs are discussed.

Potential improvements:

The time of pandemic showed the importance of transparent communication with course lecturers and that they can be an important support in overall quality control, so in the near future it is also planned to introduce an informal but regular survey of lecturers to receive information about their situation vision, the good and still improving components of the faculty work process.

Although information and feedback is collected from employers and graduates, it would be advisable to introduce a system through which graduates and employers would receive information about the results of surveys and planned changes.

2.2.5. Specify the websites (e.g., the homepage) on which the information on the study field and the relevant study programmes is published (in all languages in which the study programmes are implemented) by indicating the persons responsible for the compliance of the information available on the website with the information published in the official registers (State Education Information System (VIIS), E-platform).

Information about the study direction and its study programs in Latvian and English is published on the VUAS website https://www.venta.lv/faculty/tulkosanas-studiju-fakultate. The Marketing and Public Relations Department is responsible for placing information on the website in Latvian and English. Information is prepared and transferred to the Marketing and Public Relations Department by the faculty administration and study program directors in coordination with the faculty. The compliance of the information published on the website with the official registers, VIIS and e-platform, the available information is monitored by the Study Department and the Vice-Rector for Studies. The entry of information into VIIS is carried out by the study specialist of the Study Department.

2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field

2.3.1. Provide information on the system developed by the higher education institution/ college for determining and redistribution of the financial resources required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. Provide data on the

available funding for the scientific research and/or artistic creation activities, its sources and its use for the development of the study field.

The structure of the funding sources of the study process at VUAS FoTS consists of the state budget grant, municipal budget funds, revenue from the tuition fee and other revenue from paid services related to the VUAS FoTS.

The main source of funding for the study direction is the state budget grant for the implementation of accredited and licensed study programs and student scholarships. Each year, an agreement is concluded with the Ministry of Education and Science on the financing of a certain number of study places.

From the moment of its establishment, the VUAS has received significant financial support from the Ventspils State City Municipality Council (hereinafter referred to as "the municipality"). The municipality finances bonuses for lecturers and researchers with doctoral degrees. In addition to the state budget funding, the VUAS attracts financial resources through the implementation of international and local projects, including:

1. Scientific and infrastructure projects co-financed by the EU Structural Funds, which are implemented through the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia, the Ministry of Environmental Protection and Regional Development, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economy and other ministries and their subordinate agencies (CFLA, VIAA, VRAA, LIAA, etc.);
2. Scientific and infrastructure projects co-financed by the EU Structural Funds, which are implemented within the framework of the European Commission's Horizon 2020 programme;
3. Research projects funded by grants of the Latvian Council of Science.

In the autumn semester of 2023, the total number of students in the FoTS was 221, of which 41 – for the funds of natural or legal persons and 180 for the funds of the state budget (both the number of students and the proportion between the "budget" and "personal funding" students change within the study semester).

The funds available for the implementation of study programs are planned taking into account the forecasted income of the faculty, which mainly consists of a state budget grant, funding of the science base and income from the tuition fee.

For the study programmes implemented by VUAS FoTS, an indicative cost calculation is made, adding to the costs:

directly affecting costs (this would not have been the case if the programme had not been implemented):

1. remuneration of lecturers for teaching courses;
2. remuneration of the faculty's general and administrative staff;
3. remuneration of programme directors;
4. costs for the final examination processes;
5. costs of student scholarships.

indirectly influencing (the number of students and study programs affects these costs):

1. acquisition of fixed assets for the needs of the FoTS;
2. purchase of books and materials;
3. goods and services for the operation of the FoTS;

4. costs of purchase and modernization of equipment;
5. software license costs.

However, it should be noted that the elements in the cost calculation cannot be used without the surrounding context (for example, the costs of student scholarships are directly linked to the number of budget places allocated by the State).

Each year, VUAS performance funding and 25% of the revenues of any unit go to utilities, infrastructure maintenance and administration functions directly related to these works.

Lecturers' wages by the Cabinet regulations No. 445 of July 5, 2016 “Regulations Regarding Remuneration of Teachers” are determined following the VUAS Regulations on a Unified Remuneration System and in accordance with the VUAS budget, which is approved at the VUAS Council meeting, which is based on the academic loads reviewed and approved by the VUAS collegial decision-making bodies – the FoTS Council meeting and the VUAS Senate meeting – in the study programs.

The remuneration of the study program directors is determined in accordance with the VUAS regulations on a unified remuneration system and in accordance with the VUAS budget, which is approved by the VUAS Council meeting, taking into account the criteria attached to the indicators of each study program.

The amount of remuneration of the general and administrative staff of the Faculty is known precisely and, when calculating the costs of the study program, is divided among the study programs in proportion to the number of students in each study program.

Student scholarships are taken into account in the calculation in accordance with the data provided by the Ministry of Finance on the state grants for studies.

Expenses for the acquisition of fixed assets include costs related to the activities of the FoTS, including the acquisition of fixed assets necessary to ensure the study process.

The costs of goods and services include expenses directly made for the needs of the FoTS (and approved by the Dean of the Faculty) in accordance with the approved budget of the VUAS. On the basis of the amount of VUAS infrastructure necessary for the provision of the FoTS study process, the ratio of the FoTS to the total maintenance costs of the VUAS is calculated. The calculated proportion of FoTS is applied to each study program, taking into account the proportion of the number of students in each program to the total number of FoTS students.

As other additional costs for the activities of the FoTS, specific costs related to the activities and study process of the FoTS are listed, for example, related to the missions of the pedagogical staff, such tax expenses as non-labour taxes (for example, VAT or fees related to the processing of documents for foreign students), as well as health insurance expenses of the employees of the FoTS study process. These FoTS costs are distributed in proportion to the number of students studying in each study program.

Traditionally, the largest part of the expenditure of study programs consists of remuneration (remuneration and employer's MSSIC) for lecturers – about 75%. Other expense items consist of the above-mentioned utilities and maintenance services, book purchase expenses, business trip expenses, and other services.

The allocation of funding for the research activities of the academic staff is determined by the following regulations (internal circulation documents of the VUAS, available to venta domain users on the University's server):

1. VUAS regulations on a unified remuneration system (approved by VUAS Senate Resolution

No. 18-98 of 21.11.2018);
2. Regulation on additional remuneration for VUAS employees (approved by the VUAS Senate on 11.01.2012, Resolution No. 12-02);
3. Regulations on the procedure for granting funding for business trips to participate in conferences (approved by the VUAS Senate on 24.05.2017, Resolution No. 17-83);
4. Regulations on the granting of funding for the publishing of educational materials, scientific monographs and collections of scientific articles (approved by the VUAS Senate on 21.06.2017, Resolution No. 17-104);
5. Regulations of the competition "Development of scientific activity at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences" (approved by the VUAS Senate on 24.05.2017, Resolution No. 17-86).

The planning and use of the financial resources planned for the study direction is supervised by the Dean of the Faculty, controlled by the Finance Department and the Executive Director.

2.3.2. Provide information on the infrastructure and the material and technical provisions required for the implementation of the study field and the relevant study programmes. Specify whether the required provision is available to the higher education institution/ college, available to the students, and the teaching staff.

To ensure the study process in the study direction, the VUAS material, technical and informative base is used. Classes are held at VUAS premises in Ventspils, Inženieru iela 101 and 101a. Study provision consists of modern classrooms and laboratories, and Ventspils Library branch VUAS, high-level study provision technical equipment (projectors, interactive whiteboards, monitors), several computer classes, two modern amphitheatre classrooms with 190 and 140 seats equipped with multimedia audiovisual equipment, as well as lecturers' work offices with computerized workplaces.

For the provision of theoretical and practical training in the study direction 2023/2024 academic year, there are 6 computer classes with 25-31 computer workstations each, and three with 16-24 workstations, as well as 3 laboratories with 10-13 computer workstations each. All audiences are equipped with computers and projectors, in many places there has already been a transition from projectors to interactive whiteboards, both because of image quality and energy savings. The total number of computers in the university network for the learning process is about 300. All the University's computers are connected in a single network. In addition, a wireless network, as well as an EDUROAM network, are available in the premises of the university and also in the dormitory.

Several projects were implemented and continued to strengthen the infrastructure, of which the projects of the Latvian Academic Network and "Strengthening Excellence and Capacity of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences as a Scientific Institution" played a significant role in the modernization of the IT infrastructure. In VUAS 2018 - 2021, the project "Modernization of stem curricula of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences" was implemented within the framework of ESF SAM 8.1.1. Within the framework of the project, repairs were carried out in nine auditoriums, a modern interior was created in them and they were furnished with new ergonomic auditorium furniture. The auditoriums are equipped with modern interactive whiteboards and other technology equipment, ensuring the availability of the technologies necessary for study programs. Information and communication technology solutions necessary for the University have been implemented and modernization of computer equipment has been carried out. Thanks to this project, the VUAS has ensured the quality of studies necessary for a modern study process and meeting the requirements of the labour market, allowing students to work with the latest technologies and acquire as many

practical skills as possible, VUAS attracts a larger number of students from Ventspils, Kurzeme region, all Latvia and other countries. In addition, within the framework of this project, access for people with reduced mobility has been improved, an elevator in building “A” has been installed, a diagonal lift has been installed, which allows people with reduced mobility to move between the “A” and “B” buildings. By implementing the project, it is ensured that all VUAS enclosures are fully accessible to people with reduced mobility. In 2015, VUAS has joined the Latvian academic network with 10 Gbps band. The VUAS “Campus” network has been upgraded, where its core network operates at a minimum of 10 Gbps and terminal equipment can operate at a minimum of 1 Gbps. Also, part of the wireless network equipment has been upgraded, and the 802.11ac standard wireless network is available in the VUAS. Acquired and updated software for scientific research work. Computers in computer classrooms and for staff as far as possible are changed so that their age does not exceed 5 years.

In the data centre of the University, all servers are virtualized and deployed in a cluster that works with “*ProxMox*”. For service solutions, open-source products are the main choice. For example, VUAS was one of the first universities in Latvia that introduced the open-source e-learning system “*Moodle*”, which is now widely used by other universities. The VUAS uses “*Google Apps for Education*” as an email system.

Since 2012, the University of Latvia has implemented the University of Latvia Information System (LAIS), which includes part of the University of Latvia Information System (LUIS) functionality adapted to the needs of universities. The University of Latvia provides VUAS with access to the UL server resources that it needs for using LAIS at VUAS. The University of Latvia ensures the implementation, consultation and access to the functions introduced or newly created by the VUAS in the following LAIS software subsystems: administration, student register, student orders, student payments, employee registration, course registration, study plan, student success, student contracts, diploma and diploma supplement preparation.

The VUAS participates in several programs – “*Microsoft Education 365 A3*”, “*Azure Developer Tools for Education*”, “*Oracle Academy*” and “*Cisco Networking Academy*”. These programs offer software, training courses and other resources that teachers and students can use both in the study process and for self-study and in-service training.

Maintenance of the VUAS material and technical support is carried out by the Infrastructure Department. In addition to the maintenance of computers, servers, computer networks, audio-visual equipment and other material engineering equipment, the Infrastructure Department also provides various services –“*Moodle*”, “*VeA Forum*”, “*Wiki*”, etc.

Student lounge room D0: On the basement floor of building “D” there is a large, renovated student lounge room where any student can relax, study or meet other students. Often, this is the space where events, meetings, or simply arranged meetings are held. The room has a pool table, a football and tennis table, sofas, a small stage for presentations, and a large table where you can easily study, play games, or have tea. During the session time (both in June and January), it is open 24 hours a day. From September to December: 06:00-03:00 and from February to May: 06:00-03:00. But from 22:00 to 06:00 in the lounge room, students have agreed to observe silence so that during this period everyone can perform the necessary work for studies without interruption, as the choice has been made to do it during the dark hours of the day.

Lecturers' co-creation room D101: in the academic year 2023/2024, a co-creation space for lecturers was created on the first floor of the VUAS “D” building at the main entrance of the university with the aim of providing a comfortable, freely accessible space for any VUAS lecturer to stay in between breaks, free hours and other times outside classes. The room is equipped with computer equipment and office equipment for work, a small kitchen corner for basic needs

(refrigerator, kettle, sink, dishes, etc.), a round table for meetings and basic work, sofas and a TV screen for recreation. The room is open every day from 7:00 to 20:00, but outside this time any lecturer can receive a key to the room for individual use from VUAS person on duty at building “D” on the first floor.

All of the above infrastructure and material and technical support necessary for the instructors is available to them, including work offices, computer classrooms, computers, dormitory, software, as well as internal and external electronic systems.

2.3.3. Provide information on the system and procedures for the improvement and purchase of the methodological and informative provision. Description and assessment of the availability of the library and the databases to the students (including in digital environment) and their compliance with the needs of the study field by specifying whether the opening times of the library are appropriate for the students, as well as the number/ area of the premises, their suitability for individual studies and research work, the services provided by the library, the available literature for the implementation of the study field, the databases available for the students in the respective field, the statistical data on their use, the procedures for the replenishment of the library stock, as well as the procedures and possibilities for the subscription to the databases.

Students and lecturers use the services of the VUAS and the Ventspils City Library to ensure the learning process. The VUAS Library is located on two floors with a wide department of teaching literature, periodicals and also fiction. The reading room offers both the latest dictionaries from different fields, as well as audio and audiovisual materials, an e-book reader, the latest books and periodicals. The library of the University has a collection of books ~ 32,600 volumes and ~800 audiovisual materials (CDs, DVDs, CD-ROMs, audio and video cassettes) in mathematics, physics, computer science, electronics, management, economics, law, philosophy, psychology, linguistics, translatology, literary science, etc.).

Thanks to the bright and spacious premises, the University's library is suitable for carrying out various group work. It is also possible to use the muted reading room, which is currently located in the media library premises. Five open-access computers with internet connection are available in the library for work and study purposes. From all the stationary computers in the library premises, all the databases subscribed to by the VUAS library are available free of charge.

VUAS students and lecturers also have access to an extensive fund of fiction, humanities, technical and other scientific publications, which is located in the central building of the city library in Ventspils, Akmeņu iela 2. All publications in the library are recorded in a single electronic catalogue (https://ventspils.biblioteka.lv), and reader service is automated. The automation of all spheres of activity of the library is provided by the ALICE system, including the possibility of publishing library catalogues on the Internet, as well as accessing the catalogues of other libraries through the network. There is also an interlibrary subscription available – both locally between the structural units of the Ventspils library, as well as with other academic libraries of major universities and the National Library of Latvia.

The following databases are available free of charge to users of the VUAS computer network:

1. LETA;
2. Letonika;

3. Lursoft – newspaper library; business database;
4. EBSCO;
5. Britannica Online Academic Edition;
6. Filmas.lv;
7. Periodika.lv;
8. LNB Digital Library;
9. Scopus;
10. Science Direct;
11. Web of Science.
12. Within the framework of the project “Creation of a single Latvian academic core network of national significance for ensuring scientific activity”, access to the “*Science Direct*”, “*Scopus*” and “*Web of Knowledge*” databases has been provided.

Since the EBSCO database (where a wide range of electronic books is available) contains a full set of additional materials necessary to ensure the study process, VUAS lecturers and students use the databases directly for information, so the library does not need to purchase printed materials in large numbers. “Science Direct”, “Scopus” and “Web of Knowledge” databases also provide a sufficiently rich range of scientific publications for scientific research purposes.

The library also performs the functions of the archive of bachelor's and master's theses developed by VUAS students and lecture materials of lecturers.

Library working hours:

1. Monday to Thursday – from 9:00 to 20:00;
2. Friday, Saturday – from 11:00 to 18:00;
3. Sunday – closed.

The working hours of the library as a whole are suitable for the needs of students, the possibility of resuming library work on Sundays (which was interrupted during the pandemic) is considered.

Services offered by the VUAS library:

1. subscribed databases;
2. CD-ROM databases;
3. computers with an internet connection;
4. group and individual information literacy classes;
5. use of an e-book reader in the library premises;
6. reservation of expenses, extension of the deadline for transfer;
7. a muted reading room equipped with the necessary equipment for conducting private lessons (audio and video equipment and a computer with an internet connection);
8. copying, computer printing;
9. Kurzeme virtual catalogue;
10. a media library;
11. periodicals (newspapers, magazines, etc.);
12. scanning,
13. interlibrary subscription;
14. inquiries, consultations;
15. 100 reader seats.

Ventspils University of Applied Sciences also provides students and employees of the University with remote access to resources through the University's proxy server. Thus, it is possible to access

the resources available to the University outside the University's network by authenticating with the University's username and password.

Resource renewal:

Each year, in coordination with the library, the faculty purchases the necessary books, refreshing the library's offer. In 2023, 1000 EUR were allocated to supplement the textbooks necessary for the study direction in the FoTS budget. Over the last three years, the range of industry books has been supplemented with an average of 10 books. Most of the current resources on the topic are first available electronically and often, once published, have already partially lost their relevance. Therefore, more emphasis is placed on electronic resources and databases. In order to apply for a new electronic database, a cost determination is carried out by contacting the Cultural Information Systems Center. Then, you should ask the Ventspils City Library to add the specific database and understand whether it will be able to be financed from the faculty budget (accordingly, it should be included in your budget plan for the next year), or ask to find an opportunity to finance it from the library's financial resources.

Statistics on the use of electronic databases:

The number of views of electronic databases has grown over the years, in 2020 they were 721 views (609 unique views), in 2021 - 763 (653 unique views), and in 2022 - 826 (690 unique views). At the moment, unfortunately, there are no tools available to more accurately determine exactly which databases were viewed, how long the individual visit session was and the like. However, quantitative statistics indicate that electronic databases are increasingly used in VUAS.

Potential improvements:

Currently, the existing system is rather informal to the wishes of lecturers for new materials, so it is planned to systematize and formalize it (most likely by introducing an official Google Forms template to be filled out by lecturers, discussed in the faculty and sent to the library, for example, every two months) over the next two years.

2.3.4. Provide a description and assessment of information and communication technology solutions used in the study process (e.g., MOODLE). If the study programmes within the study field are implemented in distance learning, the tools specially adapted for this form of study must also be indicated.

Information and communication technologies (hereinafter referred to as “ICT”) at the disposal of the teaching staff and students of VUAS are systematically used and developed to ensure transparency and efficiency of learning processes. Table 2.3 below shows the name and status of the solutions and provides a brief description of the ICT system.

Table 2.3

ICT solutions used in the study process

No	ICT system	Status	A brief description of the functions used by the system
1.	Moodle	Active	The main place for study course materials, public information for students from the dean's office, recordings of seminars given by teaching staff, etc.
2.	BigBlueButton	Active	Open-source online conference system hosted on VUAS servers. It was actively used during the period of COVID-19 pandemic restrictions and is used when it is necessary for teaching staff to connect remotely at any stage of the teaching process.
3.	Google Workspace	Active	Gmail - for the active receipt and delivery of information to students; Drive - for delivery of materials with a bigger file size; Meet - an alternative back-up solution for providing lectures in remote mode; Sites - for more interactive placement of individual subject materials; Classroom - solutions for submitting and testing work in individual subjects; Presentations, forms, calendar - depending on the situation and requirements.
4.	VUAS Notice Board	Active	Internal information notification system (parallel to email): events, study information, scholarships and competitions, student council, advertisements.

5.	LAIS	Active	Information system of Latvian institutions of higher education, where the study process is administered (student grade assessments, orders, registration for study courses, etc.).
6.	VeApp	Developed, in the process of implementation	A modern and up-to-date information reference and reporting system, along with a list of class planners and classes, with the capability to publish current changes.
7.	VUAS server infrastructure	Active	Student profiles are maintained so that students and teaching staff can store the materials required for the study process and their work on their profiles.
8.	GitLab	Active	Version control system for submitting homework and storing personal work.
9.	Office365	Active	Available to make use of the functionality available in Microsoft Office.
10.	Namejs	Active	Document management information system, which ensures uniform, transparent and controllable registration, processing and control of the implementation of received, sent and the university's internal documents throughout the university, in conformity with the State regulatory requirements for circulation of documents in regard to both electronic and paper documents.
11.	VUAS proxy server	Active	Used to also provide students and teaching staff with access to the library resources at the disposal of the university (Chapter 2.3.3) outside VUAS premises.
12.	VUAS Virtual Private Network	Active	Used to provide students and teaching staff with access to university network infrastructure outside VUAS facilities.
13.	VUAS Web Print Service	Active	A common system by means of which teaching staff and students can use all publicly available printing equipment on the VUAS network.

Example of the real scenario of the tools used in the learning process:

Students are enrolled in the LAIS system, where they can see their studied subjects and posted final grades. In the infrastructure of VUAS servers, students are issued with a username and password that allows them to access the e-learning environment *Moodle*, Google services (with a Google account of username@venta.lv), as well as the VeA Forum and other internal services. *Moodle* courses are divided into study programs and years, so you can connect and find the appropriate courses. If a separate lecture of the course is conducted online, the *Moodle* course provides a *BigBlueButton* link for lectures and consultations, which is used in accordance with the lesson plan posted on *Moodle*. The learning process uses *Office365*, *GitLab*, Google *Workspace*, *Moodle*, as well as a VUAS proxy and a virtual private server. Study course instructors can foresee the use of alternative tools, systems or databases freely available in classrooms and laboratories on

computers. After full implementation, VeApp will be used as a planning and information tool for more convenient, faster and more effective communication, organization and control of the course of classes and attendance, as well as other processes. Currently, the functions provided for VeApp are partially fulfilled by the VeA Forum, as well as they are implemented by electronic mail communication.

Analysis of the use of technology in the learning process:

The system is not too fragmented and flexible enough to be used with minor modifications to ensure the teaching of all faculty courses.

Taking into account the specifics of individual study courses, the technologies used to implement the courses differ and are periodically upgraded or changed. The study programs implemented by the Faculty during the reporting period have been modernized, introducing significant changes, as well as the learning processes have been digitized within the framework, in 2023 more than 90% of the study materials are acquired with the help of technology to some extent, including the course of classes (online, remote lessons), the acquisition of theoretical content, the performance of practical work, the performance of tests, the performance and submission of homework or others. Most ICT resources are administered and maintained by the VUAS Infrastructure Department, ensuring their safety, availability and renewal, but systems subscribed from third parties, such as LAIS and Namejs, are maintained by back-office providers and administered by VUAS trained staff. While some systems are subscribed from external service providers, there is limited interlinking and automation of processes in information, which in some cases means double operations in each system individually or manual data processing and transfer. The technologies used in the study process are aligned, providing convenient, freely accessible access with the VUAS user to any personnel representative. Training in the use of new or existing technologies is organized periodically for both the pedagogical and administrative staff of the VUAS and the students, ensuring their efficiency and full learning. In the event of the introduction of new technologies or digital tools and systems or significant changes to existing technologies or digital tools and systems, training of all personnel is always organized, introducing the changes made or the procedure for use, as well as informative study materials for their use are provided as far as possible.

Potential improvements:

Automation of processes and information transfer between the systems used by the VUAS would be required. This improvement is being worked on.

Making information accessible and transparent

For each FoTS study course at the beginning of the semester, a course of its own is created on the VUAS *Moodle* website, where general information about the course requirements, course progress and content is available. The employees of the Study Department are assigned the role of “Site Manager”, so they have the opportunity to access each course, conduct an evaluation as necessary. For example, whether the *Moodle* page contains all the basic elements, lists the topics of the training, and inserts the materials. A similar role is played by the Dean and Study Methodologist of each faculty so that they can access and browse study courses within the faculty. *Moodle* roles are assigned by the Moodle administrator. Currently, most lecturers already use the *Moodle* site for placement of materials, placement of tests and input of ratings.

The quality management system of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences is included in the content of the e-learning environment *Moodle*, where any VUAS domain holder with its personal user has access to the most up-to-date regulatory enactments, the management structural chart and the list of regulatory enactments under the responsibility of the structural units, as well as

visualized internal process diagrams, where the procedures, deadlines and responsible persons for the implementation of the processes are indicated. The minutes, decisions and viewed materials of the main decision-making bodies of the VUAS are stored on the public disk of the VUAS server, which can be accessed by any person with a user of the VUAS domain. The content and publication of the minutes shall be the responsibility of the minutes of the meeting, the person without the right to vote, and the chairperson of the relevant institution or commission, ensuring the availability and transparency of information.

Each personnel representative, including administrative, pedagogical, general personnel representatives and students, is aware of the support staff, which can be contacted in the case of VUAS questions, including for students and pedagogical staff – faculty administrative staff and Study Department, for research staff – Head of the unit and Vice-Rector of Science and Development, for general staff – Head of the Infrastructure Department and Executive director, for vice-rectors – rector and the like. It is the responsibility of the heads of departments and units to provide information and support to colleagues upon request within the scope of their competence.

Improvements in progress:

Currently, ways to place materials in the *Moodle* environment as interactively and conveniently as possible are being explored, as well as alternative technologies (such as *Google Classroom*) are being explored. There are periodic professional development courses for lecturers on these technologies and discussions to understand the potential advantages and disadvantages of introducing one of the solutions as a mandatory standard for all study courses. With the development of technologies, the systems used for the learning process are modernized to ensure that students are introduced to current technologies used in the industry, as well as alternative teaching methods are introduced, including the execution of digital independent works, such as the creation of advertising videos using the resources available in the VUAS video studio.

Use of technology in communication

For information and communication between faculty and students, an email system based on the University's Google Workspace ecosystem is used, as well as an internal VeA Forum. Students can also ask a question to the lecturer within their course in the *Moodle* environment by using the correspondence option. Similarly, the lecturer can assign a task to the students. As needed, a *WhatsApp/Telegram* group, *Discord* server, or other solution that best suits the specifics of the course can be created for very fast messaging for a specific course of study. It is organized by the lecturer and the students themselves.

The course representatives have a joint *WhatsApp* group with the Faculty Dean, where topical issues can be discussed and where meetings are organized regularly (especially during the pandemic) to discuss current events and direct the course elders to the right persons to sort out specific issues.

In the process of implementing each study program, a limited amount of classes can be implemented remotely online. In these cases, video conferencing platforms *BigBlueButton* or *Google Meet* available at the VUAS are used, as well as an e-learning environment for the mutual exchange of *Moodle* materials and documents (study materials, homework) between lecturers and students.

Next development steps:

Start using the developed information enquiry and notification management solution “VeApp”, which includes separate sections on important and up-to-date information for students, lecturers, including scholarships and internships, ERASMUS+ and others. The VeApp solution also includes a

blog section with experience articles from students and lecturers. A very important part of VeApp is the lesson planner and also the lesson list. All this together can be called “The University in Your Pocket”. Students and lecturers can see the lesson plan on their smartphone, lecturers can record changes, students receive a pop-up notification (if activated in the settings), ensuring timely and full notification of changes to all parties involved.

The VeApp solution is designed for both the desktop version and the Android and iOS operating systems of smartphones. The desktop version provides convenient and practically effective lesson planning, replacing the traditional, currently used method in Excel spreadsheets.

In parallel with the introduction of VeApp, it is important to update the VeA Forum and the contact section there so that students can more easily communicate with course lecturers, update and regularly familiarize students with the planning of the VUAS by creating a map of the VUAs, fully implement a quality monitoring system where the student can submit questions.

It is essential to work on the activities, contributing to the better use of the communication opportunities and functions provided by *Moodle* for the implementation of the classes.

Study materials

Lecturers themselves choose the most suitable solutions for study materials, however, we try not to saturate study programs with too many different technologies and solutions. The VUAS requires the material to be available in the relevant *Moodle* course as uploaded files or as a hyperlink. In previous years, the VUAS has actively supported lecturers in learning new technologies. Improvement workshops are held regularly and instructions and other support materials are available, including the creation of video lectures, the creation of interactive content with H5P and various *Moodle* functions, as well as other alternatives.

The requirement of obilience is the availability of the mandatory literature included in the description of each study course to students free of charge. The lecturers ensure the availability of these materials in the Ventspils Library VUAS branch, in the *Moodle* environment, by sending via e-mail or handing them out in paper format. In compliance with the copyright and intellectual property protection norms, the lecturers have the right to reproduce the study materials in their property or library by making copies of the students, provided that the materials are used in the learning process and are not profitable.

Next development steps:

Continue to support lecturers in the creation of modern study materials by organizing seminars and practical workshops, taking into account each lecturer's digital skills. Such training can be organized by skill level, achieving equal proportion and strengthening digital literacy in the long run.

VUAS Digital Transformation Strategy 2021-2027 provides for the development of the digital competencies of the VUAS staff by the end of the reporting period with an assessment of 7 (seven) points.

Study process

Providing the study process in person and remotely is based on two main pillars:

1. Study material is placed on the *Moodle* platform, tasks are provided, tests are organized and feedback is received;
2. Remote communication uses the online conference solution BigBlueButtoninstalled on VUAS

servers (otherwise also *Zoom* or *Google Hangouts*, if for some reason it is decided to use alternative platforms);
3. *Google Workspace* also plays an important role in the learning process, including cloud storage, creating shared documents, spreadsheets, and presentations on Google Drive, and creating questionnaires on Google Forms.

Lecturers actively use a range of other technologies, including online surveys and subject-specific solutions. The University supports these efforts by promoting the exchange of experience between lecturers and compiling good practices.

Next development steps:

Providing closer links between *Moodle* and *BigBlueButton*, reworking support materials, informing lecturers and other processes; and further developing guidelines, instructions and pedagogical development proposals for the effective use of educational technologies in the learning process.

2.3.5. Provide information on the procedures for attracting and/or employing the teaching staff (including the call for vacancies, employment, election procedure, etc.), and the assessment of their transparency.

Attraction and employment of lecturers take place in accordance with the requirements of regulatory enactments and the principles of best practice in corporate management, which include transparency and openness of human resource management processes. Election to academic positions is governed by the Cabinet of Ministers Regulations of 25 February 2021 No. 129 "Procedures for Evaluation of Scientific and Pedagogical Qualifications or Artistic Creation Work Results of a Candidate for the Position of a Professor or Associate Professor and the Position of a Professor or Associate Professor" and the Procedure "Procedures for Selection of Academic Staff of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences" approved by the VUAS Senate on 31 August 2021 (available only in Latvian): https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/Noteikumi_akademiska_person_atlases_kartiba.pdf

In order to promote the development of higher education and science in accordance with the needs of the national economy and the interests of the economic development of Latvia, and to direct the activities of the VUAS to a competitive European level university that makes a significant contribution to the development of education and science at the international level, creating preconditions for balancing and competitiveness in determining remuneration for attracting and retaining highly professional human capital at the VUAS, there have been developed and approved by the VUAS Senate "Ventspils University of Applied Sciences rules on a unified remuneration system". Available vacancies are indicated on the VUAS website, in the section University: Vacancies: https://en.venta.lv/university/vacancies .

In order to ensure the attraction of a quality instructor, in parallel with the announcement of vacancies in the faculty, the most suitable and appropriate candidates are discussed and identified, who are individually addressed and invited to apply for the specific vacancy.

Attraction of teaching staff over four years (2018 – 2022) was supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) project "To strengthen the academic staff of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences in the areas of strategic specialization" (No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/009). One of the activities in the project was the involvement of doctoral students in academic work, strengthening the capacity of the VUAS

academic staff and promoting its renewal. The second important direction of activities was related to the involvement of foreign academic staff in academic work, the aim of which was to increase the competitiveness of VUAS study programs and improve the content of study courses. In the study direction programs, cooperation has been established with 2 foreign lecturers from Turkey, with whom cooperation is continued as guest lecturers after the end of the European Social Fund support. All the lecturers were attracted to the project through open advertisements in the EURAXESS database, in the “Latvijas Vēstnesis” and on the websites of the VUAS and the Ministry of Education and Science (IZM).

2.3.6. Specify whether there are common procedures for ensuring the qualification of the academic staff members and the work quality in place and provide the respective assessment thereof. Specify the options for all teaching staff members to improve their qualifications (including the information on the involvement of the teaching staff in different activities, the incentives for their involvement, etc.). Provide the respective examples and specify the way the added value of the possibilities used for the implementation of the study process and the improvement of the study quality is evaluated.

The professional development of the academic staff includes the acquisition of appropriate professional development programs, as well as the exchange of experience and participation in conferences and seminars, as evidenced by the documents issued at the end.

In accordance with the regulation on the procedure for granting academic leave to VUAS lecturers for scientific research or scientific work outside the place of work (VUAS internal circulation document, available to venta domain users on the University's server), academic staff are entitled to paid academic leave of six calendar months every six years for scientific work outside their place of work.

The procedure for assessing and listing the professional development of the lecturers elected by the VUAS in accordance with the necessary professional qualification of a pedagogue of a higher education level is determined by the “Regulations on the Pedagogical Professional Development of the Lecturers of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences and its Recording”, approved by the VUAS Senate on 20.09.2017, Resolution No. 17-125. (VUAS internal circulation document, available to venta domain users on the University's server), developed in accordance with the Cabinet provisions of the Republic of Latvia of 28 October 2014 No. 662 “Provisions on the education required for educators and improvement of professional qualifications and professional qualifications of educators”.

The lecturers elected by the VUAS can obtain a qualification appropriate for professional development by acquiring a professional development program on innovations in the higher education system, didactics of higher education institutions or management of educational work, or by implementing the measures listed in Clause 3.2 of the Regulations for the purpose of professional development.

Each lecturer is responsible for his/her own professional development. VUAS lecturers must complete a professional development program of 160 hours (including at least 60 contact hours) by the end of the election period. The lecturer of the VUAS once a year submits a report on professional development with the attached attestations. The faculty Study Methodology summarizes the reports on the acquisition of professional development in the framework of the

preparation of the annual self-assessment report.

VUAS lecturers are regularly offered the opportunity to take a variety of professional development courses on-site at VUAS premises. In 2020/2021 academic year in connection with the spread of the COVID-19 virus, the number of professional development courses organized for lecturers was small. In 2020/2021, 2021/2022 and 2022/2023 academic years, the following courses were held, including within the framework of the project “Strengthening Excellence and Capacity of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences as a Scientific Institution” (No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/009):

1. Electronic documents and signatures – where to start?;
2. Anxiety control during public speaking, in front of the camera;
3. Minimum requirements for the use of Moodle (funded by the project “Next Generation Europe small towns” (hereinafter referred to as “NextGen”));
4. Moodle course building guide (funded by NextGen project);
5. Moodle tests and surveys (funded by the NextGen project);
6. Creation and management of H5P activities (funded by NextGen project);
7. “Introduction to Power BI”;
8. “Leadership – Emotional Intelligence”;
9. “Leadership – Manager as a Leader”;
10. “Leadership – Team Management”;
11. “Leadership – Self and Speaking Skills In Front of the Audience”;
12. “Training videos: from content to recording”;
13. Harnessing the capabilities and tools of artificial intelligence;
14. Application of Web of Science in practice: from study design to evaluation of results;
15. Digital assessment models in higher education;
16. Training sessions in video recording;
17. ADHD in adults: how it affects teaching, learning, and the learning process in general.

From February 2021, the ESF project “To strengthen the academic staff of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences in the areas of strategic specialization” (Project No. 8.2.2.0/18/A/009), the lecturers were able to start an internship with merchants in Latvia. The aim of the project is the targeted development of VUAS academic staff in order to improve the quality of the study process, ensure the development and renewal of academic staff competencies, as well as strengthen cooperation with external partners. Direction lecturers used this opportunity and there were active internships in various companies, such as AS “Cits Medijs”, SIA “Ventas Balss”, which not only raised staff knowledge about professional processes in the industry, but also strengthened the company and faculty active communication about study processes.

In general, from the listed offer, the lecturers involved in the study programme have used both the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences Lifelong Learning Centre and external opportunities - conferences, seminars, mobility of lecturers, etc. For example, the block of lessons dedicated to the Moodle platform has contributed to the improvement of the quality of the lesson materials posted on the platform, helped to master the creation of tests and assignments, thus relieving the work of lecturers, checking and correcting students' home assignments. The Leadership block has strengthened the confidence of lecturers and has been transferred to students' classes in the Public Speaking course. Video recording of the training sessions has helped to create a distance learning lesson block "Localisation of computer games", which can be used as a free elective course for all students interested in the study programme.

The pedagogical, scientific, as well as organizational work of the academic staff is assessed by reviewing the self-assessment report of the study direction at the meeting of the Faculty Council and by reviewing the report on the implemented professional development. The individual

assessment of pedagogical staff is carried out in accordance with the rules of the VUAS on a unified remuneration system at the VUAS, taking into account the complexity of work, mental effort, cooperation, management function, responsibility for work results, responsibility for decisions, contribution of pedagogical, organizational and scientific work, education and professional experience necessary for the performance of the duties of the position, as well as additional annual review of individual maps of the results achieved by the academic staff with a doctoral degree. The municipality provides an additional bonus for lecturers with a doctoral degree. Students have the opportunity to express their opinion about the lecturer and his/her taught study course by participating in surveys on LAIS.

2.3.7. Provide information on the number of the teaching staff members involved in the implementation of the relevant study programmes of the study field, as well as the analysis and assessment of the academic, administrative (if applicable) and research workload.

Implementation of the study direction in the 2023/2024 academic year is provided by 33 lecturers, of which 9 have been elected to the FoTS. The alignment of the academic, administrative and research workload of the academic staff takes place in cooperation between the deans of the faculties, the Human Resources Department and the Science and Development Department. In order for the academic load not to be too high, adversely affecting the quality of the work performed, if it exceeds 1.2 (pedagogical load), the approval of the load requires a separate decision by the Faculty Council and the VUA Senate.

In general, the pedagogical load on the lecturers is quite high, especially for the elected staff, which also leads to a lower number of teaching staff mobility. We are working on regrowth, and in the short term, we bring in guest lecturers (who help with both the transfer of industry knowledge to students and load balancing).

In the attachment:

1. basic information on the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study direction (Annex No. 2.8.);
2. biographies of instructors (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format) (Annex No. 2.9.);
3. confirmation that the knowledge of the official language of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programs corresponding to the study direction complies with the provisions on the scope of knowledge of the official language and the procedure for testing the knowledge of the official language for the performance of professional and positional duties (Annex No. 2.10.);
4. confirmation of the relevant foreign language proficiency of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study program at least at B2 level according to the levels of the European Language Proficiency Assessment (Annex No. 2.11).

2.3.8. Assessment of the support available for the students, including the support provided during the study process, as well as career and psychological support by specifying the support to be provided to specific student groups (for instance, students from abroad, part-time students, distance-learning students, students with special needs, etc.).

Support for students in the study process is mainly provided by the faculty Administrative Assistant, who ensures the provision of information about the study process and related events and the arrangement of record keeping. On certain issues, students may turn to the specialists of the Study Department, the director of the study program, the Dean of the faculty. Support for foreign students is provided by the specialists of the Study Department in external relations.

Students can also turn to the heads of the relevant directions of the VUAS Student Council for support, for example, in academic matters, they can turn to the Head of the Academic Direction. Information and support for foreign students in visa processing, as well as in various household issues is provided by the Study Department specialists in external relations, as well as representatives of the Student Council, which supports students in solving various household and emotional situations.

In career development, students are helped by the annual Career Days organized by the Student Council, where students have the opportunity to meet companies and institutions that offer workplaces for young professionals. Directors of study programs, as well as specialists of companies and institutions – guest lecturers, who inform students about opportunities to work in their represented companies and institutions, also help to establish contacts with employers' representatives.

Regulations “Regulations on Study Procedures at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences” provide all VUAS students with the opportunity to receive professional psychological or career support on study-related issues, as necessary, in cooperation with the Ventspils Education Administration. The student may apply for a consultation with a psychologist or career counselor by applying to the Study Department with a written application or in person. When assessing the student's application, the specialist of the Study Department may refer the student to a specialist of the Ventspils Education Administration or, if possible, to solve the situation in his/her competence.

Regulations can be viewed in the “Documents” section of the VUAS website (available only in Latvian): https://irp.cdn-website.com/f6b5d556/files/uploaded/Nolikums%20par%20studiju%20k%C4%81rt%C4%ABbu%20Ventspils%20Augstskol%C4%81-eb343320.pdf.

2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation

2.4.1. Description and assessment of the fields of scientific research and/or artistic creation in the study field, their compliance with the aims of the higher education institution/ college and the study field, and the development level of scientific research and artistic creation (provide a separate description of the role of the doctoral study programmes, if applicable).

The scientific research of the study direction is carried out taking into account the goals and initiatives of the scientific development direction defined in the VUAs development strategy for the period from 2021 to 2027 (available: https://irp.cdn-website.com/9945ff8b/files/uploaded/VENTSPILS%20UNIVERSITY%20OF%20APPLIED%20SCIENCE_STRATEGY_2021-2027.pdf).

The academic staff involved in the study direction is highly qualified and competent in order to ensure the acquisition of the necessary research skills, theoretical knowledge, skills and competencies by the students. Most of the lecturers, in parallel with the study process, are also engaged in scientific research – there are elected researchers in the FoTS, thus linking the research work with the study work.

During the reporting period, VUAS participated in the implementation of several studies. One of them is the project of the Fundamental and Applied Research Programme of the Latvian Council of Science **"The Latvian Language of Science in the Intralingual Aspect"**, which took place in the period from 01.12.2018 to 01.12.2020 and aimed at conducting research on the macrostructure and microstructure of the types of Latvian primary scientific texts in various fields of science using corpus linguistic techniques, analyzing the collocations and other elements of text formation used in them, thus promoting the use of a quality Latvian language of science in the national academic environment and preparing the prerequisites for further research of scientific discourse (more about the research can be read on the VUAS website (available only in Latvian): https://www.venta.lv/zinatne/projekti/lzvia).

In the same period, from 2018 to 2021, the Erasmus + Strategic Partnership (KA2) project **"The Evolution of the Legal System and Profession: Translating into Diversity"** ("Systèmes juridiques et l'évolution d'un métier: traduire et interpréter dans la diversité") was aimed at improving the quality of higher education and compliance with labour market requirements (comparison of study programs and integration of good practices), strengthening multilingualism (French and English + national languages) and multidisciplinarity (language learning, translation, management, information and communication technologies), promoting international cooperation in higher education institutions (with further exchanges of university teaching staff and students), promoting the introduction of innovative activities in higher education (with the offer of new modules of independent work in the online environment), exchanging good practices in the field of education, especially on the issue of cooperation with internships (more about the project can be read on the VUAS website (available only in Latvian): https://www.venta.lv/zinatne/projekti/lsti).

In addition, within the framework of the Erasmus + Strategic Partnership (KA2) program, the VUAS also participated in the project **"Distance Learning in the Work of Language Teachers"**, which, uniting partners from Finland, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Latvia, developed a methodology and maintained more than 200 tools and platforms capable of providing significant support to language teachers in the creation and implementation of online classes (more about the project can be read on the VUAs website (available only in Latvian): https://www.venta.lv/zinatne/projekti/tid).

The National Research Program project **"Latvian Language"** started in 2018 and lasted until 2021. The aim of the project was to develop human capital, expand the knowledge base in linguistics and its interface sciences on the research and development of the Latvian language and the Livonian language, digitization and analysis of language resources, ensuring the availability of research results necessary for society, as well as to contribute to education and language acquisition and to strengthen the role and functions of the state language. The project carried out research in the fields of language ontology, sociolinguistics, including the monitoring of the language situation, Latvian grammar, lexicology and lexicography (in contact with information technology specialists), research of Latvian place names and personal names, Latvian terminology, Latgalian and Livonian vocabulary and grammar, expanding the knowledge base in linguistics and its interface sciences on the research and development of the Latvian language and Livonian language; developed and tested electronic language resources (Latvian dictionaries, Livonian database, Latgalian spelling tool) that would promote the availability of Latvian language and Livonian language resources in the Internet environment; using the principles of OPEN SCIENCE and

OPEN DATA, the availability of research results necessary for society on the Internet and in Latvian and European public libraries was ensured; conducting extensive interviews and questionnaires, as well as research based on direct contact with language learners, provided proposals for the optimization of the acquisition of the Latvian language as a second language and a foreign language for responsible ministries, educational institutions, educators, parents (more about the project can be read on the website (available only in Latvian): https://lavi.lu.lv/vpp-latviesu-valoda/).

From 2018 to 2023, the project **"Improvement of the quality of the content of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences study programs, improvement of resource efficiency and ensuring better management"** is being implemented under the Operational Programme "Growth and Employment", within which competencies in various trainings have been improved for the staff, the methodology for the assessment of VUAS lecturers, the plan for the modernization of VUAS studies and other documents have been developed (more about the project can be read on the VUAS website (available only in Latvian): https://www.venta.lv/zinatne/projekti/lpn).

From 2021 to 2024, the project **"Diversity of the Latvian Language in Time and Space"** of the State Research Program "Letonika for the Development of Latvian and European Society" will be implemented, the leading partner of which is the University of Latvia (UL). The aim of this project is to study the regional and historical peculiarities of the linguistic environment in Latvia, developing it as a safe and strong basis for national identity. To achieve this, five Latvian language dimensions are studied: dialects, language types, proper nouns (place names), history and language contacts (more about the project can be read on the UL website (available only in Latvian): https://www.lu.lv/zinatne/programmas-un-projekti/nacionalas-programmas-un-projekti/letonika-latviskas-un-eiropeiskas-sabiedribas-attistibai/latviesu-valodas-daudzveidiba-laika-un-telpa/).

Another project with the involvement of representatives of the VUAS FoTS was the ERASMUS+ KA226 - Partnerships for Digital Education Readiness (Higher education) program project **"Germanic studies digitally"** from 01.05.2022 to 30.04.2023. During the project, a study material platform was created for the study of German language, literature, culture, didactics, linguistics and other subjects or Germanic studies at the university. The materials of the various study courses developed by the project partners – lectures, exercises, tasks and other, as well as methodological recommendations are posted on the platform. The study materials and methodological recommendations are developed mainly for German students. (more about the project can be read on the VUAS website (available only in Latvian): https://www.venta.lv/zinatne/projekti/%C4%A3erm%C4%81nistika-digit%C4%81li).

By the end of 2023, the project **"Smart complex of information systems of specialized biology lexis for the research and preservation of linguistic diversity"** of the grant program of the Latvian Council of Science is being implemented. It started on January 01, 2021 and aims to develop an open access interactive and multifunctional data management system (hereinafter referred to as "IMDS") with data storage, sorting and searching functions, as well as the possibility of retrieving statistical data for research and preservation of linguistic and terminological diversity (more about the project can be read on the VUAS website (available only in Latvian): https://www.venta.lv/zinatne/projekti/viedais-biolo%C4%A3ijas-speci%C4%81l%C4%81s-leksikas-inform%C4%81cijas-sist%C4%93mu-komplekss-lingvistisk%C4%81s-daudzveid%C4%ABbas-p%C4%93tniec%C4%ABbai-un-saglab%C4%81%C5%A1anai).

Currently, a project **"Digitisation Initiatives for Improving the Quality of Studies in the Areas of Strategic Specialisation of Higher Education Institutions"** is being implemented together with cooperation partners – University of Latvia, Rezekne Academy of Technologies and Daugavpils University – for the period from 01.11.2022 to 31.12.2023. The project aims to

strengthen digital capacity and implement digital initiatives in six Latvian higher education institutions in their areas of strategic specialisation by integrating technological solutions into the content and process of study courses. More information about the project can be found on the VUAS website (available only in Latvian): https://www.venta.lv/zinatne/projekti/digi.

Teaching staff present the results of their research work at the annual scientific conference of the VUAS in December, a student scientific conference (April-May) is also organized once a year, where students present the results of their research.

The lecturers also participate in conferences organized by other Latvian universities and foreign universities, write scientific articles, participate in international scientific conferences, participate in national and international research and lead it, as well as, maintain regular communication with Ventspils state and Kurzeme region entrepreneurs, promote cooperation in the field of applied research.

The establishment of a joint PhD programme in Languages and Literature Studies with Daugavpils University and the University of Liepaja in 2022 will play an important role in strengthening and developing scientific research. This study programme continues the cooperation in the field of scientific research with the University of Liepaja (joint doctoral programme "Linguistics"), as well as extends the range of scientific fields and sub-fields covered by the programme to include literary and translation studies. The aim of the joint doctoral study programme "Language and Literature Studies" is to train highly qualified specialists - literary and linguistic scholars with doctoral degrees - who are capable of raising and solving topical problems of contemporary philological science and presenting Latvian science at European and world level, participating in important research and international projects and creating innovative intellectual products. Translation Studies is a component of the VUAS, which is a vast and unexplored field of research in the Latvian cultural sphere. The establishment of such a joint doctoral study programme is part of the "Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027" action line "Science for the development of society, economic growth and security".

2.4.2. The relation between scientific research and/or artistic creation and the study process, including the description and assessment of the use of the outcomes in the study process.

The connection of research with the study process is characterized by the research work of the lecturers, the results of which are used to improve and update the content of the taught study courses, as well as to develop students' research skills. Work in scientific projects is integrated into the learning process, and participation in them expands the horizons of lecturers and raises their qualifications. The study, course, bachelor's and master's theses conducted by the lecturers are also mostly related to their field of research, as well as the results of their research are directly or indirectly used in the teaching of study courses in accordance with the study plans of the study programs implemented in the study direction, which are available as annexes to this report to the relevant sections of the study programs.

During the reporting period, several lecturers of the study direction have presented their research results international conferences abroad – senior researcher, prof. Jānis Sīlis, senior researcher, asoc.prof. Guntars Dreijers, senior researcher, asoc. prof. Jānis Veckrācis, senior researcher, asoc.prof. Astra Skrābane, senior researcher, asst. prof. Vita Balama, senior researcher, asst. prof. Egita Proveja, senior researcher, asst. prof. Silga Sviķe, asst. prof. Rafael Martin Calvo, Guest lector

Sintija Ozoliņa, senior researcher, Guest asst.prof. Agnese Dubova, senior researcher, Guest asoc. prof. Dzintra Lele-Rozentāle. Participation in such conferences helps researchers to maintain international contacts, to be informed about the latest research in science, as well as to involve master's and bachelor's students in their research, leading their master's and bachelor's theses.

Several study direction lecturers, working in industry companies, can bring not only academic but also applied research experience to the faculty, offering students internship and final thesis topics.

The lecturers elected to the TSF faculty and involved in the study programmes of the study field "Language and Culture Studies" carry out their scientific research work in several directions that are substantially related to the topics covered in the study programme courses:

1) intercultural communication research. Every two years, the VUAS organizes an international interdisciplinary conference "Bridging Languages and Cultures" (chair of the organizing committee: V. Balama). All lecturers - G. Dreijers, A. Sīle, A. Veckalne, Z.France, S.Sviķe, A. Skrābane - involved in the study programme have participated in the conference by presenting papers and chairing sections (see https://mk0ventalvkkuyfl9wdf.kinstacdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/BLC-II-conference-program-2.pdf).

V.Balama and A.Skrābane participate in international Nordic Intercultural Communication Conferences organised by NIC (Nordic Intercultural Network) (see https://va.lv/sites/default/files/Nic%202019%20Program_Print_0.pdf).

2) sociolinguistic research and projects. For example, G.Dreijers enriched study courses with material gathered for “London's linguistic capital in urban visual signs” (2016), Evolving Nature of the English Language: Studies in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics,pp. 55- 65, Dreijers, G., Linguocultural aspects of translation in published English fiction reviews (2018), Current Issues in Contact Linguistics. Ventspils University College, Collection of scientific articles after 2016 Proceedings of the International Conference "Language Contacts and Contrasts III", Participation in the international scientific conference "Translation Landscapes",13-15 October, Szczecin, Poland (see https://kjn.up.krakow.pl/wp-content/uploads/sites/48/2022/03/22.03.24-Translation-Landscapes-VI-2022-Invitation-Application.doc.pdf).

Professor Jānis Sīls is also involved in the sociolinguistics - Language and society in Latvia: an insight into sociolinguistic research directionsand Researchers' Priorities (2017), University of Latvia Journal "Academic Life", pp. 95-101.

3) exploring the language of science. This research area is particularly relevant for Masters and PhD students. Proveja E., The Language of Science: style, text, context (2021), Ventspils University College, Liepaja University. Riga: Zinātne, p.288. Proveja E., PROJECT "LANGUAGE AND STRUCTURE" - CORPUS-LINGUISTIC TECHNIQUES FOR SCIENTIFIC IN THE ANALYSIS OF TEXTS.

4) research on language learning. This was particularly relevant during the Covid-19 pandemic, when many courses were taught remotely, and this experience of remote teaching is still widely used today. Assistant Professor S.Sviķe works in this field. (Sviķe S., Using Dictionaries in Second and Third Language Learning: TheLearning Strategy) (2022), Language Learning. XVII/XVIICollection of scientific articles, Laiveniece, D. (ed.), Liepāja).

S.Sviķe participated in the project "Distance Learning in Language Teachers' Work" partner meeting (Transnational project meeting, 25-26 November, Ventspils, Latvia). During the partner meeting, for teachers from Poland, the Czech Republic, Finland and Estonia were presented the work done by VeA representatives in developing guidelines on the use and usefulness of various digital tools in

foreign language classes.

2.4.3. Description and assessment of the international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation by specifying any joint projects, researches, etc. Specify those study programmes, which benefit from this cooperation. Specify the future plans for the development of international cooperation in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation.

Some of the projects described in Chapter 2.4.1 also involve international scientific cooperation, for details of which see Chapter 2.4.1 above. All study programmes in this field of study benefit from these collaborations, as the lecturers involved in these collaborations pass on their knowledge and skills to the students, both in their studies and in their final theses, as well as by involving the students in various projects.

In the new JDSP “Language and Literature Studies”, the course “External Mobility” in the section “Internationalisation and Research Approval” ensures that doctoral students are actively involved in the academic process in academic institutions abroad. Its aim is to enhance students' ability to present publicly the findings of their research topic and to develop their skills in academic lecturing. In this way, doctoral students can present the results of their research and ensure its internationalisation and validation by teaching one lecture in a bachelor's or master's study programme in an academic institution outside Latvia. For example, Aiga Bādere, a student of VUAS JDSP “Language and Literature Studies”, gave guest lectures on her research topic (post-editing) to students of the study programme “Translation and Business Assistance” at the Polytechnic Institute of Porto in Portugal from 17 to 21 April 2023.

The concept and study plan of the JDSP “Language and Literature Studies” foresee to pay special attention to even closer cooperation of students with their thesis supervisors by jointly presenting research results at international scientific conferences in Latvia and abroad, as well as publishing them in recognised scientific journals in the field. For a detailed list of the participation of VUAS faculty members in various projects, see Chapter 3.4.4 of the study programme “Language and Literature Studies”.

Future plans for international cooperation are mainly related to the inclusion of VUAS in the international consortium COLOURS, which has acquired the status of a European university and aims at joint educational programmes in research and innovation with international teams in cooperation with local companies, thus improving the mobility of students, young researchers, lecturers and administrative staff in partner universities. Interdisciplinary projects will contribute to strengthening international research cooperation and support local and international entrepreneurs in sharing knowledge and technology.

2.4.4. Specify the way how the higher education institution/ college promotes the involvement of the teaching staff in scientific research and/or artistic creation. Provide the description and assessment of the activities carried out by the academic staff in the field of scientific research and/or artistic creation relevant to the study field by providing examples.

The involvement of lecturers in scientific research at the VUAS is promoted in several ways. In accordance with Section 27 (2) and (4), as well as Section 28 (3) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, the duties of professors and associate professors include conducting scientific research in the amount of 8-9 academic hours per week within their basic workload, if the workload of the academic staff is full-time.

The lecturers involved in the study direction have the opportunity to participate in the research projects implemented by the FoTS. The permanent, faculty-elected lecturers of the VUAS may also be elected to the positions of FoTS researchers and leading positions.

In accordance with the Regulation “On Additional Remuneration of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences Employees”, additional remuneration is determined for the academic staff elected by the VUAS with a doctoral degree who has fulfilled one of the criteria referred to in Paragraph 3 of the Regulation in the previous two academic years. In accordance with these regulations, lecturers who have acquired the status of a Latvian Council of Science expert are granted a lump sum.

In accordance with the regulations on the procedure for granting funding for missions to participate in conferences, VUAS instructors are paid to participate in international scientific conferences – transport and accommodation expenses are covered and the participation fee for the conference is paid.

The lecturers following the procedure for announcing, applying, evaluating and approving internal research projects – the Regulations “Development of Scientific Activities at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”, are granted funding for research projects initiated by the lecturers. In accordance with these regulations, projects for the competition may be submitted to the VUAS by employees of the University who have a doctoral degree. The number of project promoters must include at least one master's student and/or doctoral student or young scientist (up to five years after obtaining a doctoral degree). It is desirable to involve students in the implementation of the project.

In accordance with the regulations on the procedure for granting academic leave for VUAS lecturers for scientific research or for carrying out scientific work outside their workplace, lecturers who have worked in VUAS academic positions for at least six years and who have used this type of leave not later than six years ago and for whom VUAS is the place of election are entitled to request paid academic leave of six calendar months for carrying out research work outside the workplace.

A summary of quantitative data on scientific and/or applied research activities during the reporting period (Annex No. 2.12) and scientific publications of the academic staff related to the study program in peer-reviewed publications or research achievements and patents over the last six years (Annex No. 2.13.).

2.4.5. Specify how the involvement of the students in scientific research and/ or applied research and/or artistic creation activities is promoted. Provide the assessment and description of the involvement of the students of all-level study programmes in the relevant study field in scientific research and/ or applied research and/or artistic creation activities by giving examples of the opportunities offered to and used by the students.

Research activity is an essential part of the implementation of the study program. In order to strengthen and develop students' research knowledge and skills, each bachelor's and master's study program includes a study course on the language of science, research methods, and

methodology. All study programmes include coursework in which students gradually develop their research knowledge and skills. In all study programs in the last semester, students must write a bachelor's or master's thesis. The best research papers are put forward for local or republican or foreign student scientific conferences, which in turn promote contacts with students involved in the research of other universities and thus help to broaden the horizons of the topical issues of the industry as well as other sectors. Participation in student scientific conferences can raise the grade in the process of defending a bachelor's or master's thesis. Thus, young researchers are motivated to engage in research work throughout the study period, starting with the first years of study. Bachelor's and master's study programs carry out professional internship for at least one semester, during which the student is given the opportunity to use the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired in the study process to solve specific tasks in a practical environment, in order to promote the development of students' professional knowledge, skills and competencies in accordance with the qualification of the specific profession to be acquired.

VUAS academic personnel provides opportunities for students of different study programme levels to engage in scientific and applied research projects. For example, the project of Latvian Council of Science "*Intra-lingual Aspects of the Latvian Scientific Language*" (project No. lzp-2018/2-0131) implemented by the VUAS and the University of Liepaja involved two graduates and one PhD student of VUAS and the University of Liepaja joint doctoral study programme "Linguistics", as well as students and graduates of Master's and Bachelor's study programmes. Also, Aiga Bādere, PhD student of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies", actively participated in the scientific project "Smart complex of information systems of specialized biology lexis for the research and preservation of linguistic diversity" (project No. lzp-2020/1-0179) implemented by VUAS in cooperation with the "Institute of Horticulture". This project is particularly noteworthy for its interdisciplinary nature, as the project involved students from the Faculty of Translation Studies, the Faculty of Information Technologies (Master's and PhD programme), who were also active in research - participating in international conferences with papers and producing scientific publications.

As the involvement of students in artistic creation, the activity of Aiga Bādere, PhD student of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies", in the project "Digitalization Initiatives for Improving the Quality of Studies in the field of Strategic Specialization of Higher Education Institutions" (project No. 8.2.3.0/22/A/005), ensuring the development of study courses and digitization. The doctoral student has developed a post-editing distance learning course directly related to the research of the doctoral thesis, which will be available free of charge on the web to all interested parties (in particular – translators, proofreaders, editors, students, teaching staff of translation study programs, etc.). Alongside this, the PhD student has developed a language technology terminology platform (termini.venta.lv), thus making an invaluable contribution to the development of language technology terminology.

Since VUAS started enrolling new PhD students in the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" only in summer of 2023, currently the first-year students are actively involved in the study process and, in cooperation with their supervisors, are working on their dissertation research. Consequently, the new PhD students are not yet intensively involved in scientific/applied research projects. However, in the course of the programme, it is planned not only to involve PhD students in scientific and applied research carried out by VUAS professors (ensuring even closer cooperation between PhD students and supervisors), but also to generate ideas and project applications among the three partner universities, involving their faculty members and PhD students and thus creating research synergies between the disciplines represented and further developing and strengthening the interdisciplinary nature and approaches of contemporary research.

2.4.6. Provide a brief description and assessment of the forms of innovation (for instance, product, process, marketing, and organisational innovation) generally used in the higher education institution, especially in study field subject to the assessment, by giving the respective examples and assessing their impact on the study process.

Process innovations include a slightly modernised way of aggregating curriculum and workload information across the faculty. As a compromise between Excel tables, in which it is difficult to retrieve the necessary information and databases, which require additional maintenance time and are difficult to learn for administrative staff without additional preparation, Google Docs was chosen, where all information about the courses taught in the astronomical year, lecturers, groups and other factors is entered. From this information, it is convenient to retrieve both the cost of study programs, study plans for examination, and the workload of lecturers. This facilitates the redistribution and organisation of workloads and represents a significant improvement on the previous process.

Since 1 November 2018, VUAS has been involved in the “Next Generation Micro Cities of Europe” project. During the implementation of the project, several innovative products have been developed for the implementation and use of digital solutions in the study process. These innovative products can be used by both VUAS employees and students.

One of these products is the VeApp information system, developed as a unique tool for daily learning and activity planning, information exchange and communication for the convenience of VUAS students and employees. VeApp is available for iPhone, iPad and Android smartphone users. In the app, users can view their current learning or event calendar, find and communicate with lecturers and VUAS staff, and quickly find lecture rooms at the university.

With the in-app enrollment feature, students can easily tag themselves in lectures and events using smartphones to scan QR codes that appear on special LCD screens next to the most commonly used classes. These screens will show a list of lectures, any published changes, and QR codes required for digital registration via smartphone. In addition, the app serves as an informative platform through which important announcements about news and opportunities at the university can be shared in real time. Meanwhile, VeApp's content control system allows VeA's administrative staff to easily and securely control app sections and content in real time, allowing them to quickly and efficiently adapt to different levels of change.

Other innovative advances and improvements include the new video studio, which serves as a tool for creating new materials and upgrading existing ones. The studio provides professional filming, light and sound equipment, as well as high-end editing and recording software. The machine and software can be used for streaming and online lessons, video recording and editing for various purposes. For example, in autumn 2021, material was filmed in a video studio and two 1-credit point courses were created and offered to students as free choice courses “Fundamentals of Computer Game Development”, which not only covered issues related to translation, but also included aspects of intercultural communication and explained their importance.

2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation

2.5.1. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from Latvia (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers’ organisations,

municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study field contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners for the study field and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the cooperation partners.

The development of study programmes in this field of study at FoTS is carried out in cooperation with representatives of employers in the sector, who participate in both the development of new study programmes and the updating of existing study programmes.

Employers' representatives supervise and review bachelor's and master's theses, take part in their defence, teach study courses, provide opportunities to visit companies/institutions and get acquainted with their activities, offer internships to students. Cooperation in these areas allows to assess students' readiness for the profession (including study internships), skills and abilities in research (development and defence of bachelor and master theses), because in both cases the opinion of employers and members of the State/Final Examination Commission, after its discussion in the FoTS Council, forms the basis for the next steps in the improvement of the study programme.

The lecturers involved in the study programmes of the field of study cooperate with Latvian and international professional organisations in the field of linguistics, translation, terminology, publishing, as well as have themselves been founders of these organisations and serve on their boards (for example, the Latvian Society of Translators and Interpreters, the Latvian Germanists' Association, the Latvian Association of Applied Linguistics, the Latvian Academy of Sciences Terminology Commission and sub-commissions). Close cooperation with professional organisations helps to ensure that the study process is linked to the current developments in the labour market.

Close cooperation with employers' representatives and professional organisations helps to achieve the strategic goals of the VUAS and the goals of the study programme, such as modernisation and digitalisation of the study offer in order to prepare specialists in demand on the labour market today and in the future with 21st century skills. The European Commission is committed to providing the European workforce with skills that are relevant in the 21st century. It allows to understand labour market acuteities and to identify employers' needs at an early stage.

Doctoral students are usually already in employment and have chosen their research direction/topic at the start of their studies, which in most cases is related to current issues or needs in the local and/or international scientific ecosystem as well as in the labour market. In addition to the above, cooperation with employers in the transfer of research results is also foreseen in the study process. For example, the “Entrepreneurship Practicum” course planned for the implementation of the JDSP “Languagea and Literature Studies” will enhance doctoral students' entrepreneurial skills and understanding of the transferability or commercialisation of research results by drawing on concrete entrepreneurial experience and linking it to their research topic of potential interest to the relevant business. This not only ensures the state-of-the-art development of the field of study, but also the creation and transfer of knowledge and the strengthening of scientific potential.

Cooperation with the Ventspils City Municipality is very important for VUAS. The municipality financially supports the University by signing a cooperation agreement each year, which sets out the University's achievable performance results, and provides support for the University's marketing activities and faculty motivation, which in turn ensures a stable and favourable working and study environment.

In order to support the culture of innovation at VUAS and to promote the commercialisation of research results, cooperation has been established with business support organisations –the Investment and Development Agency of Latvia (LIAA), LIAA Business Incubator in Ventspils, Ventspils Municipality Business Support Centre, VATP Business Incubator. Within the framework of the LIAA Technology Transfer Promotion Programme, seminars have been held for the academic staff and students of the University on intellectual property protection issues, and VUAS has submitted several applications to the above-mentioned support programme. VUAS is one of the founding members of the Ventspils High Technology Park (VATP). The mission of the VATP is to promote the development of companies and products in advanced industries and to contribute to increasing competitiveness. The VATP Business Incubator is located in the premises of VUAS.

The criteria for selecting cooperation partners are based on the objectives and goals of the study programme, i.e. to educate young specialists needed in the labor market. It is therefore important to cooperate with leading companies, institutions and bodies in the sector. Given the geographical location of Ventspils, preference is given to structures of importance to the city, such as the Ventspils Freeport Authority, Ventspils City Council, information technology companies such as TestDevLab. All companies whose activities cannot be imagined without cooperation with foreign partners need intercultural communication specialists.

The mechanisms for attracting partners are based on mutual benefit - the VUAS gains direct contact with the labor market, often also sponsors for various projects, student scholarships, etc., while partners in turn provide internships for students and can use the results of student research.

Erasmus+ mobility brings together international partners through the participation of VUAS staff in conferences, trainings and visits abroad. No additional mechanisms are used to attract new partners, as there are currently cooperation agreements with 150 active partners.

The Faculty has cooperation with the Ventspils Education Board. The cooperation is implemented on the basis of service agreements, according to which students of 8-12 grades in Ventspils region have the opportunity to attend the Young Translators' School - 8 classes taught by FoTS lecturers, providing an insight into the profession of translator and interpreter, as well as the role of intercultural communication in this work, free of charge. This form of cooperation allows to attract new applicants to the field of study, who are more aware of the specifics of the upcoming studies and the results to be achieved.

VUAS has cooperation agreements with the University of Latvia and Riga Technical University. The agreements allow students from one university to study courses at the other university, in accordance with their individual study plans. This cooperation allows for an increased range of free-choice study courses.

In 2020, cooperation with the Liepaja University and Daugavpils University was launched to develop a joint doctoral programme. The programme is implemented since September 2022. The three partner universities' teaching staff (professors and associate professors, senior researchers, assistant professors, mainly those involved in doctoral programmes) collaborated in the development of the programme, with the active involvement of students from existing doctoral programmes at the time. The currently licensed doctoral programme is implemented in cooperation with the teaching staff of the partner universities. In the future, the programme foresees even more interaction between the faculty and students of the partner universities in the implementation of the different courses foreseen in the study plan, thus ensuring knowledge transfer between several academic institutions.

Cooperation also takes place during career days, seminars and conferences, other events, as well as during personal contacts between lecturers. Employers also provide financial support, both by

sponsoring events and by providing scholarships to students. As an example, the scholarship of SIA "Bucher Municipal", VUAS FEM graduates Mārtiņš Lauva created scholarship for prof. A.Klauss scholarship, SIA "HansaMatrix" scholarship, as well as Ventspils State ICT scholarship. Although these scholarships are mostly aimed at students of the FEM and FIT faculties, FST students can also be nominated for them.

Companies and institutions are selected for potential cooperation on the basis of overlapping fields of activity, i.e. one company may be eligible for cooperation with different study programmes. Often, good candidates are companies where our graduates work and where employers are satisfied with them, and experience shows that our graduates' training matches what they need. In order to establish mutual cooperation, partners need to understand whether there is potential for such cooperation and whether both sides gain from it, as well as what the short and long-term benefits are and what the opportunities for development are. Most often, such cooperation is consolidated through cooperation agreements.

2.5.2. Provide the assessment as to how the cooperation with different institutions from abroad (higher education institutions/ colleges, employers, employers' organisations, municipalities, non-governmental organisations, scientific institutes, etc.) within the study field contributes to the achievement of the aims and learning outcomes of the study field. Specify the criteria by which the cooperation partners suitable for the study field and the relevant study programmes are selected and how the cooperation is organised by describing the cooperation with employers. In addition, specify the mechanism for the attraction of the cooperation partners.

Cooperation with foreign institutions within the study field is mainly through exchange of lecturers and students. The cooperation is meaningfully designed so that its potential results are in line with the strategy of the VUAS and the aim of the study field.

The VUAS has concluded more than 50 Erasmus+ cooperation agreements with universities in about 20 countries, which provide for mobility of FoTS staff and/or students for teaching (lecturers) or learning (students) courses, as well as for internships. The list of Erasmus+ partner universities can be found in the "International Cooperation" section of the VUAS website. Each year, mobility of students and lecturers to the respective partner universities takes place. The partner universities are selected on the basis of the overlap between their fields of study and the study programmes of FoTS.

The JDSP "Language and Literature Studies" provides for the validation of students' research findings abroad in both scientific and academic environments. By participating in international conferences abroad, students develop and improve their ability to summarise the results of their research in the form of a report, develop their skills in presenting a report and improve their ability to participate in a scientific discussion in a foreign language. In the preparation of publications, doctoral students develop the ability to produce a scientific publication of international standard in accordance with the requirements of the relevant scientific journal. The course "External Mobility" under the heading "Internationalisation and Research Validation" ensures that doctoral students are actively involved in the academic process in academic institutions abroad. Its aim is to promote students' ability to present publicly the findings of their research topic and to develop their skills in academic lecturing.

The cooperation partners (foreign scientific and academic institutions) in the doctoral study process

will be selected according to the principle of student-centred approach – individual approach to the doctoral student, i.e. taking into account the chosen research topic and the progress of the research. The cooperation of students with their thesis supervisors will also play an important role in the selection of partner organisations. As a result of their research work, the VUAS staff have established contacts with a large number of foreign scientific and academic institutions and will be able to support doctoral students in the selection of suitable and recognised institutions and their events (e.g. international scientific conferences).

2.5.3. Specify the system or mechanisms, which are used to attract the students and the teaching staff from abroad. Provide the assessment of the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff in the reporting period, the mobility dynamics, and the issues which the higher education institution/ college faces with regard to the mobility of the teaching staff.

Various activities are carried out to attract foreign students:

1. attend educational exhibitions abroad;
2. information on education platforms where potential students look for opportunities to study abroad;
3. potential students are also approached via social networks and agents;
4. webinars for students and agents to promote the dissemination of truthful and complete information.

The VUAS specialists responsible for attracting international students contact potential students and agents and provide all necessary information about study opportunities at VUAS, life in Ventspils and Latvia, immigration and living issues. Students are supported not only before they start their studies, but also during their studies and often after they graduate from VUAS. VUAS has set minimum requirements for students to have their applications assessed, has signed a good practice agreement with the Ministry of Education and Science on attracting international students, and is a member of the Higher Education Export Association.

To be considered, applicants must have achieved at least 60% in their previous education and must not have a minimum pass mark in the profile subjects. Entrance examinations are organised and all students are interviewed before they are admitted. If necessary, additional requirements may be imposed in the form of documents to be submitted or a second interview.

The mechanisms for attracting foreign academic personnel are personal contacts of academic staff, participation in conferences, cooperation within projects, research, events, and advertisements. Access to infrastructure and resources is provided to the same extent as for local staff. At least 5% of the academic staff of the VUAS are foreign visiting professors, associate visiting professors, visiting assistant professors and guest lecturers who have been employed in an academic position in an accredited higher education institution of a European Union country other than Latvia in the previous five years.

During the reporting period, foreign lecturers were recruited for study programmes within the framework of exchange projects in other countries. The following persons were recruited: Zhu Huiping (UL Confucius Institute, China), Francesca Bianchi (University of Salento, Italy), Aline Remael (University of Antwerp, Belgium), Sofia Gillespie (Knox College, USA), Thomas E. Springer (SpringTime Advisory Group, LLC, USA), Yingxian Lin (Confucius Centre, China).

Some of the guest speakers during the reporting period were Wieslaw Szalaj (Philological School of Higher Education in Wroclaw, Poland), Adam Bednarek (University of Social Sciences in Poland, Poland), Mustafa Coban (Bursa Technical University, Turkey), Lidia Pokrzycka (The Maria Curie-Sklodowska University, Poland), Lisa Link (TH Koln, Germany), Konrad Schröder (Universität Augsburg/University of Augsburg, Germany), Heiko F. Marten (German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) in Riga), Laura Asarīte-Schmidt (Europa-Universität, Flensburg, Germany), Zhu Huiping (UL Confucius Institute, USA), Thomas Springer (SpringTime Advisory Group, LLC, USA), Ramazan NACAR (Bursa Technical University, Turkey), Figen TOPRAK (Bursa Technical University, Turkey), Zygmunt TECZA (Uniwersytet Rzeszowski, Poland), Dens Dimiņš (Humboldt Universitat Berlin, Latvia), Marta Boltuc (Rzesszowski University, Poland), Edyta Wielclawska (Rzesszowski University, Poland), Murat Bayrak (Bursa Technical University, Turkey), Goksel Ozturk (Bursa Technical University, Turkey), Robert Wallace Vaagan (Metropolitan University, Norway), Piotr Robert Sulikowski (University of Szczecin, Poland), Heiko F. Marten (DAAD, Germany), Emmanuèle Sandron (Consultant in Literary Translation in University of Antwerp, Belgium).

The most frequent difficulties are encountered by guest lecturers and new lecturers who have recently joined VUAS. These new lecturers do not have an established network or access to contacts with universities abroad. We try to alleviate these difficulties by offering and sharing opportunities for short-term Erasmus+ mobility experiences and International Staff Days organised by our partners. By participating in these International Staff Days, staff members have the opportunity to develop closer cooperation and new contacts.

Outgoing and incoming mobility of students in VUAS as a whole and in FoTS in the academic years 2020/2021 and 2021/2022 has decreased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The drop-out of students is due to their exmatriculation by the VUAS or of their own choice. The most frequent reasons for expulsion from the VUAS are failure to return on time from final examination status or interruption of studies, or failure to fulfill academic and financial obligations. When VUAS expels students, it does so without the consent of the students, who are informed of the fact that they are being expelled. Otherwise, students are expelled voluntarily. In these situations, students are asked to fill in an exmatriculation questionnaire. Students have changed their place of residence, they have encountered financial problems, the chosen study programme is too difficult or they have chosen to work in another field, which has led to the discontinuation of their studies. The questionnaires also indicate an inability to combine studies and work. Additionally, between 2 October 2020 and 1 October 2022, students who have been exmatriculated have interrupted their studies due to the spread of the COVID-19 virus, as they have faced challenges in their lives, both financially and emotionally, and the pandemic has had a significant impact on the willingness of existing students to go on mobility.

In the attachment:

1. statistical data on foreign students and staff (Annex 2.15);
2. statistical data on student mobility by study programme (Annex 2.16);
3. statistics on outgoing and incoming mobility of teaching staff (Annex 2.17.).

2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures

2.6.1. Assessment of the fulfilment of the plan regarding the implementation of the recommendations provided by the experts during the previous accreditation of the study

field, as well as the assessment of the impact of the given recommendations on the study quality or the improvement of the study process within the study field and the relevant study programmes.

The previous accreditation of the field of study took place in 2013, but in 2021 major changes to the Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes were submitted.

In the previous accreditation of the field of study, international experts made recommendations for the field of study “Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes” have made recommendations that affect the whole field of study, such as reducing the number of compulsory courses in the field of study programmes, ensuring students' intellectual preparation by introducing them to different disciplines (which can be chosen from a list and which are not compulsory for all), redesigning the modules included in Part B from which students can choose, changing the titles of very specific courses to more general ones to ensure a greater variety of course content, and increasing the proportion of free elective courses up to 20 credit points, which would make it possible to transfer credits from other Latvian or foreign universities for those who have studied there, and give students better opportunities to take advantage of the wide range of opportunities offered by the university.

The above expert recommendations have been taken into account and implemented as far as possible. For example, to evaluate the recommendations, the study programme plans of the field of study have been reviewed, the distribution of courses has been aligned, the organisation of courses has been reviewed and the possibilities of interdisciplinary study courses have been evaluated. As a result, by reviewing the distribution of study courses included in the content of the study programmes implemented in the field of study, the programme plans were aligned with the minimum requirements for the distribution of study courses for each study programme established by the laws and regulations of the Republic of Latvia. Study courses have also been introduced which provide students with interdisciplinary knowledge, skills and competencies of their choice.

Some of the recommendations made by the experts have not been implemented. For example, when reviewing the distribution of study courses of bachelor's and master's study programmes in accordance with the compulsory minimum course content and distribution set out in the Cabinet of Ministers Provision No. 305 “Regulations on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education” (13.06.2023), as well as the compliance of both bachelor's and master's study programmes with one professional specialisation in accordance with the professional standard, the need to set elective study courses in the professional specialisation has been excluded. The above mentioned Cabinet Provisions do not provide for the amount of free elective study courses recommended by experts in the relevant part of study programmes, therefore the recommendation was not implemented. For a detailed overview of the implementation of the recommendations, see Annex 2.18.

2.6.2. Implementation of the recommendations given by the experts during the evaluation of the changes to the study programmes in the respective study field or licensed study programmes over the reporting period or recommendations received during the procedure for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field (if applicable).

Changes during the reporting period: significant changes have been made to the bachelor's study programme “Intercultural Communication” (08.09.2021.) and the master's study programme “Strategic Intercultural Communication” (08.09.2021.), and a new joint doctoral study programme “Language and Literature Studies” has been established.

Key recommendations from evaluation experts

In the process of making significant changes to the bachelor's programme “Intercultural Communication”:

- **To organize the normative base and study materials for the implementation of distance education: to separate the current “Regulations on the Procedure for Organizing Extramural and Distance Studies at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences” into two separate regulations: “Regulations on the Organisation of Extramural Studies at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences” and “Regulations on the Organisation of Distance Learning Studies at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences”; develop a guide for distance learning students, develop methodological recommendations for teaching staff for the implementation of distance learning study forms, including video lecture recordings; develop and implement a faculty motivation system for the development of quality distance learning materials, develop distance learning internship regulations and a model internship agreement.**

Although the regulatory base necessary for the implementation of distance learning has been arranged at the VUAS (two separate regulations have been established, methodological recommendations have been developed, a system of motivation of teaching staff has been introduced, as well as internship regulations and a model internship agreement have been developed), there are currently no plans to implement distance learning studies in this study programme, therefore the recommended measures have not been taken.

- **To develop the understanding of the distance learning system in the management and teaching staff of the PBSP “Intercultural Communication”, taking into account international experience.**

Although the VUAS is working to develop faculty awareness of the distance education system, there are currently no plans to implement distance education in this study programme, so the recommended actions have not been taken.

- **Eliminate the fragmentation of study courses whose thematic plan identifies the risk of overlapping study content by integrating them into study courses with a larger number of units.**

The study programme outcomes have been revised, aligning the outcomes of each study course in the study programme mapping, and the thematic plans of the study courses have been revised, eliminating the risk of overlaps. Discussions have also been held with the lecturers involved in the study programme.

- **In order to meet the specific objectives defined by the field of study and to ensure the implementation of a second foreign language as a working language in the study programme, in those study courses where French or German terminology is offered, to supplement the course learning outcomes with the acquisition of terminology in these languages – to be completed by the meeting of the Study Quality Committee.**

The study programme has been restructured by reducing the number of foreign languages of

instruction and making English the main foreign language of instruction, which is taught in all direct translation courses of the study programme.

In the process of making significant changes to the master's programme in “Strategic Intercultural Communication”:

- **To clarify the understanding (for both students and lecturers) of the forms of examinations proposed in the course descriptions and the differences in their content and assessment principles (examinations, tests, laboratory work, practical work).**

The course descriptions have been redesigned according to the newly introduced templates, which specify the form (type) of the tests that check whether and how the learning outcomes set in the course of study are being achieved, in accordance with the mapping of the study programme. Explanatory work has also been carried out with students and lecturers involved in the study programme, defining the procedure for informing students about the content, implementation and assessment of the study course.

- **Conclude additional cooperation agreements with employers to provide internships.**

Several cooperation agreements have been concluded, including on the provision of internships. Detailed names of the organisations and companies with which these agreements have been concluded can be found in Annex 2.14.

- **To organise the regulatory framework for the implementation of distance learning and to postpone the implementation of distance learning for a year or two by presenting distance learning materials prepared separately (from the full-time study plan) in the SP change documents.**

Although the adaptation of the University's internal processes and regulatory framework for the implementation of distance learning programmes has taken place, the recommendation has not been implemented and the recommended measures have not been taken, as there are currently no plans to implement distance learning in this study programme.

For a detailed report on the implementation of the recommendations, see Annex 2.18.

Annexes

I - Information on the Higher Education Institution/ College		
Information on the implementation of the study field in the branches of the higher education institution/ college (if applicable)		
List of the governing regulatory enactments and regulations of the higher education institution/ college	1-1_appendix_Main internal acts and regulations_ENG.docx.pdf	1-1_pielikums_Saraksts ar galv ieks dok_LV.docx.pdf
The management structure of the higher education institution/ college	1-2_appendix_VeUAS Management structure_ENG.pdf	1-2_pielikums_VeA parvaldības struktura_LV.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.1. Management of the Study Field		
Plan for the development of the study field (if applicable)	2-1_appendix_Studiju attistības plans_2021-2027_ENG.pdf	2-1_pielikums_Studiju_attistības_plans_2021_2027_LV.pdf
The management structure of the study field	2-2_appendix_studiju virzienu pārvaldības shēmas-SK_SSK_VLS_EN.png	2-2_pielikums_studiju virzienu pārvaldības shēmas-SK_SSK_VLS_LV.png
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college will provide students with opportunities to continue their education in another study programme or another higher education institution/ college (agreement with another accredited higher education institution or college) if the implementation of the study programme is terminated.	2-3_appendix_agreement_ENG.pdf	2-3_pielikums_vienosanas_LV.pdf
A document certifying that the higher education institution or college guarantees compensation for losses to students if the study programme is not accredited or the study programme license is revoked due to actions (actions or omissions) of the higher education institution or college and the student does not wish to continue studies in another study programme.	2-4_appendix_Declaration_on_loss_compensation_for_students_ENG.pdf	2-4_pielikums_SK_SSK_VLS_LV-EN.edoc
Standard sample of study agreement	2-5_appendix_stud_liguma_paraugs_ENG.pdf	2-5_pielikums_stud_liguma_paraugs_LV.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.2. Efficiency of the Internal Quality Assurance System		
Analysis of the results of surveys of students, graduates and employers	2-6_appendix_Aptauju rezultātu analīze_SK_SSK_VLS_ENG.pdf	2-6_pielikums_Aptauju rezultātu analīze_SK_SSK_VLS_LV.pdf
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Field		
Basic information on the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study field	2-8_appendix_Studiju virziena mācibspēki_EN_SK_SSK_VLS.xlsx	2-8_pielikums_Studiju virziena mācībspēki_LV_SK_SSK_VLS.xlsx
Biographies of the teaching staff members (Curriculum Vitae in Europass format)	2-9_Valodas_un_kulturas_stidju_virziena_macibspeku_CV_ENG.pdf	2-9_Valodu_un_kuluras_studiju_macibspeku_CV-LV.pdf
A statement signed by the rector, director, head of the study programme or field that the knowledge of the state language of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programmes within the study field complies with the regulations on the state language knowledge and state language proficiency test for professional and official duties.	2-10_apendix_apliecinajums par valsts valodu_SK_SSK_VLS_ENG.pdf	2-10_pielikums_apliecinajums par valsts valodu_SK_SSK_VLS_LV_ENG.edoc
A statement of the higher education institution/ college on the respective foreign language skills of the teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme at least at B2 level according to the European Language Proficiency Assessment levels (level distribution is available on the website www.europass.lv, if the study programme or part thereof is implemented)	2-11_appendix_apliecinajums par anglu valodu_SK_SSK_VLS_ENG.pdf	2-11_pielikums_apliecinajums par anglu valodu_SK_SSK_VLS_LV_ENG.edoc
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.4. Scientific Research and Artistic Creation		
Summary of quantitative data on scientific and/ or applied research and / or artistic creation activities corresponding to the study field in the reporting period.	2-12_appendix_kvantitatīvie dati_SK_SSK_VLS_ENG.pdf	2-12_pielikums_kvantitatīvie dati_SK_SSK_VLS_LV.pdf
List of the publications, patents, and artistic creations of the teaching staff over the reporting period.	2-13 appendix_SK_SSK_VLS_EN.pdf	2-13 pielikums_SK_SSK_VLS_LV (papildināts) (1).docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.5. Cooperation and Internationalisation		
List of cooperation agreements, including the agreements for providing internship	2-14_Appendix_List of Cooperation Agreements_ENG.pdf	2-14_pielikums_Sadarbības līgumu saraksts_LV.pdf
Statistical data on the teaching staff and the students from abroad	2-15_appendix_Stats dati par arvalstu stud un macibspekiem_LV_Valodas_un_starpkultūrukomunikācijas_virziens.docx	2-15_pielikums_LV_Stats dati par arvalstu stud un macibspekiem_LV_Valodas_un_starpkultūrukomunikācijas_virziens.docx
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of students (by specifying the study programmes)	2-16_appendix_Stat dati par studejoso izej un ienak mobilitati_LV_SK_SSK_virziens_tulk.docx	2-16_pielikums_LV_Stat dati par studejoso izej un ienak mobilitati_LV_Valodas_un_starpkomunikācijas_virziens (1).docx
Statistical data on the incoming and outgoing mobility of the teaching staff	2-17_appendix_EN_Stat dati par macibspeku mobilitati_ENG_Valodas_un_starpkultūrukomunikācijas_virziens (1).docx	2-17_pielikums_Stat dati par macibspeku mobilitati_LV_Valodas_un_starpkultūrukomunikācijas_virziens.docx
II - Description of the Study Field - 2.6. Implementation of the Recommendations Received During the Previous Assessment Procedures		
Report on the implementation of the recommendations received both in the previous accreditation and in the licensing and/ or change assessment procedures and/ or the procedures for the inclusion of the study programme on the accreditation form of the study field.	2-18_appendix_Rekomendāciju izpildes pārskats_EN_redG.docx.pdf	2-18_pielikums_Rekomendāciju izpildes pārskats_LV_red.docx.pdf
An application for the evaluation of the study field signed with a secure electronic signature	2-19_appendix_application-for-study-field-evaluation_SK_SSK_VLS_EN.edoc	2-19_pielikums_lesniegums studiju virziena novērtēšanai_SK_SSK_VLS_LV.edoc
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme		
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme		
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)		
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules		
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		

Other annexes

Name of document	Document
1-3_pielikums_Galveno lēmējinstitūciju raksturojums_LV	1-3_pielikums_Galveno lemejinstituciju raksturojums_LV.pdf
1-3_appendix_Main decision-making institution descriptions_ENG	1-3_appendix_Characteristics of main decision making institutions_ENG.pdf
2-7_pielikums_macibspeku atbilstiba programmu rezultatiem un merkiem_LV	2-7_pielikums_stud_virziena_macibspeku_atbilstiba_SPRS_LV.pdf
2-7_appendix_teaching staff complience with the results and targets of programmes_ENG	2-7_appendix_stud_virziena_macibspeku_atbilstibas_SPSR_EN.pdf
1-1_Journal_Article_#39_242_Kreslins_Ikse_Dreijers_Vasiljeva.docx	1-1_Journal_Article_#39_242_Kreslins_Ikse_Dreijers_Vasiljeva.docx
1-2_Balama publication.pdf	1-2_Balama publication.pdf
Bakalaura un maģistra darbu tēmas.xlsx	Bakalaura un maģistra darbu tēmas.xlsx
Cimdina_Eliza_180067.pdf	Cimdina_Eliza_180067.pdf
Ievina_Inga_170071.pdf	Ievina_Inga_170071.pdf
Kushida_Momoka_22SSK0016.pdf	Kushida_Momoka_22SSK0016.pdf
Lubane_Lasma_19150003.pdf	Lubane_Lasma_19150003.pdf
Shemiakina_Anna_19150002.pdf	Shemiakina_Anna_19150002.pdf
Steinberga_Zane_16150003.pdf	Steinberga_Zane_16150003.pdf
Tokareva_Arina_19150008.pdf	Tokareva_Arina_19150008.pdf
Vaska_Anastasija_170039.pdf	Vaska_Anastasija_170039.pdf

Strategic intercultural communication (47314)

Study field	*Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes*
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	*Strategic intercultural communication*
Education classification code	*47314*
Type of the study programme	*Second-cycle (professional master's) study programme*
Name of the study programme director	*Rūta*
Surname of the study programme director	*Maltisova*
E-mail of the study programme director	*ruta.maltisova@venta.lv*
Title of the study programme director	*Mg.hrm.*
Phone of the study programme director	*26023914*
Goal of the study programme	*The main aim is to train highly qualified, creative and competitive specialists in the field of strategic intercultural communication in a multicultural society.*
Tasks of the study programme	*1. to prepare competitive strategic communication managers for professional practice in a multicultural society;* *2. to ensure the achievement of study outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences of level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework as defined in the Latvian Classification of Education;* *3. to ensure the successful acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the professional standard for strategic communication manager;* *4. to develop students' general skills and competences by promoting the development of communicative and digital skills, analytical and critical thinking, creativity, civil responsibility, the ability to successfully manage oneself and work in a team, to take responsibility for the results of performance, ensuring the development of a successful personality;* *5. to cooperate with other organisations, employers, higher education institutions, attracting highly qualified and professional teaching staff to implement the programme.*

Results of the study programme	*The achievement of the objective results in the attainment of a professional master's degree in Intercultural Communication and a professional qualification as a Strategic Communication Manager by obtaining:* *Knowledge:* *1. acquire understanding and knowledge of strategic communication management in line with intercultural communication theoretical frameworks and recent findings;* *Skills:* *1. ability to identify and provide direction and objectives for the development of intercultural communication in an organisation;* *2. ability to plan and manage effective strategic intercultural communication in an organisation;* *Competences:* *1. capability to ensure and implement the organisation's corporate communication and day-to-day communication process;* *2. capability to implement practical communication management activities and related tasks in an organisation;* *3. capability to carry out public relations analysis and evaluation.*
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	*Master's thesis*

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 2 years - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*2*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*120*
Admission requirements (in English)	*First cycle higher education (bachelor's degree) in other fields of science and no less than two years of work experience in the field of communication*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional master's degree in Intercultural Communication*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Strategic Communication Manager*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

Full time studies - 2 years - english

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*2*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*english*
Amount (CP)	*120*

Admission requirements (in English)	*First cycle higher education (bachelor’s degree) in other fields of science and no less than two years of work experience in the field of communication, English language skills at B2/C1 level.*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional master's degree in Intercultural Communication*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Strategic Communication Manager*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

Full time studies - 1 years - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*1*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*60*
Admission requirements (in English)	*First cycle higher education (bachelor’s degree) and sixth level professional qualification in languages, culture or communication*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional master's degree in Intercultural Communication*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Strategic Communication Manager*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

Full time studies - 1 years - english

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*1*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*english*
Amount (CP)	*60*
Admission requirements (in English)	*First cycle higher education (bachelor’s degree) and sixth level professional qualification in languages, culture or communication, English language skills at B2/C1 level.*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional master's degree in Intercultural Communication*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Strategic Communication Manager*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme made since the issuance of the previous accreditation form of the study field or issuance of the study programme license, if the study programme is not included on the accreditation form of the study field, including changes planned within the evaluation procedure of the study field evaluation procedure.

Changes to the study programme will be made based on changes to the Higher Education Act and recommendations made in the accreditation report, as well as feedback from graduates and employers. Significant changes in the Master's study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" are being made, firstly, in the design of the content of the study programme to provide students with the opportunity to study an individual free-choice part of their studies, as stipulated by Article 6(2)(4) of the Law on Higher Education; secondly, by making changes to the education and professional qualifications to be acquired, specifying the appropriate cycle of education and the appropriate qualification level, as stipulated by Article 57 of the Law on Higher Education; and thirdly, by making changes to the education and professional qualification to be acquired, specifying the appropriate cycle of education and the appropriate qualification level, as stipulated by Article 57(2)(4) of the Law on Higher Education. Article 57(1)(2) and in accordance with the requirements of Article 37 of Part 6 of Cabinet Regulation No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Vocational Higher Education"; thirdly, by making a transition to credit point accounting in accordance with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, as provided for in Article 57(1)(4) of the Higher Education Act. Consequently, the change in the distribution of the compulsory content of the curriculum changes the distribution of the amount of credit points obtained in the parts of the curriculum, the degree to be obtained and the level of professional qualification. The content of the study programme has been further specified, which is mainly due to changes in the sector in line with labour market requirements. The changes and clarifications of the study programme content and layout have been made in order to integrate the latest theoretical knowledge in the field of study, to provide information on current information technology tools, thus enhancing the study programme recognition and competitiveness (see Table 3.2).

Table 3.2.

Study programme content and scope

Compulsory content of the study programme	**Approved breakdown of content up to substantial changes**		**Approved breakdown of content after substantial changes**	
	Scope 120 CP	Scope 60 CP	Scope 120 CP	Scope 60 CP
1	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*

Study courses that provide up-to-date knowledge of the latest developments in theory and practice	9	9	9	9
Study courses in research work, creative work, design work and management studies	42	12	39	9
Optional study courses	0	0	3	3
Internships	9	9	9	9
Professional internship	30	0	30	0
Master’s Thesis	30	30	30	30
Total credit points	120	60	120	60

3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study programme compliance with the study field. Analysis of the interrelation between the code of the study programme, the degree, professional qualification/professional qualification requirements or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements. Description of the duration and scope of the implementation of the study programme (including different options of the study programme implementation) and evaluation of its usefulness.

The professional master’s study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" is implemented in the field of study "Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies and Language Programmes", where the title already states that the field of study provides study programmes that ensure learning of world languages and cultures of different countries, promote understanding of intercultural communication and traditions, literature and differences of different nations in a multicultural society. The relevance of the title of the professional master’s study programme - "Strategic Intercultural Communication" - to the thematic area of education is reflected in the thematic groups of education defined in the ISCED-F2013 Classification of Education and Learning Fields, where one of the groups is defined as Arts and Humanities, where the humanities are divided into several subgroups, i.e. The Humanities Sciences group is subdivided into several groups, including Languages and Interdisciplinary programmes, which cover a wide range of fields, including the study of communications and the cultural traditions of other countries. The master’s programme can be considered as an interdisciplinary programme, where the structure of the programme is based on three basic pillars: language, culture and communication. Thus, the title of the study programme does not contradict and corresponds to the chosen field of study "Language and Cultural Studies, Mother Tongue Studies and Language Programmes", in accordance with Cabinet Regulation No. 793 "Regulations on the Opening and Accreditation of Fields of Study".

The aim, objectives and study outcomes of the master’s study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" are defined in accordance with:

1. the national classification framework corresponding to the European Qualifications Framework set out in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education" - the master's study programme corresponds to LQF level 7, the study outcomes are defined according to the descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 7.
2. the requirements of the professional standard "Strategic Communication Manager", which corresponds to LQF 7 and corresponds to the seventh level of professional qualification, additionally ensuring that the content of the study programme correlates with the aims, objectives and learning outcomes defined for the study programme, which corresponds to the professional standard (Available only in Latvian: https://www.visc.gov.lv/lv/media/22983/download?attachment).
3. the balance between the general study courses, theoretical core courses and information technology courses provided for in the Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Vocational Higher Education" and the vocational specialisation courses in the field of vocational activity.

The main aim of the professional master's study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" is to train highly qualified, creative and competitive specialists in the field of strategic intercultural communication in a multicultural society. Programme objectives:

1. to prepare competitive strategic communication managers for professional practice in a multicultural society;
2. to ensure the achievement of study outcomes (knowledge, skills and competences) in accordance with the knowledge, skills and competences of level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework as defined in the Latvian Classification of Education;
3. to ensure the successful acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the professional standard for strategic communication manager;
4. to develop students' general skills and competences by promoting the development of communicative and digital skills, analytical and critical thinking, creativity, civil responsibility, the ability to successfully manage oneself and work in a team, to take responsibility for the results of performance, ensuring the development of a successful personality;
5. to cooperate with other organisations, employers, higher education institutions, attracting highly qualified and professional teaching staff to implement the programme.

The interdisciplinarity of the study programme and its compliance with the knowledge, skills and competences of level 7 of the European Qualifications Framework as defined in the Latvian Classification of Education justifies the appropriateness of the programme code 47314:

1. 47 – indicates the type and level of the educational programme – master's study programme;
2. 47 (314) – appropriately indicates the thematic field of education and the group of the educational programme – "Sociology and Cultural Studies".

This may be explained by the fact that according to the ISCED-F classification of education and training fields, Arts and Humanities provides for a group of interdisciplinary programmes (code 0228), which is not included in the Humanities division of the Latvian educational qualifications. Accordingly, the interdisciplinary aspect of the study programme is justified by the education subject area code 314, which includes cultural studies.

The learning outcomes of the study programme are in line with the stated aim and enable the student to demonstrate basic and specialised knowledge of intercultural communication in a multicultural society. The interaction of the learning outcomes is summarised in the course mapping (see Annex 3.5).

In order to provide interested students with the opportunity to obtain a second cycle higher education qualification and a level 7 professional qualification, the study programme is offered as a two-level programme, determined by the content of the programme, the amount of credit points and the duration of the programme. The study programme is designed in such a way that holders of the first cycle higher education (bachelor's degree) and professional qualification can continue their studies by completing in-depth study courses in the field, with a programme of 60 CP. On the other hand, students with first cycle higher education obtained in other thematic groups of education can obtain second cycle higher education, i.e. a master's degree and a seventh level professional qualification, by completing a programme of 120 CP. This allows students to complete the first cycle of studies and the second cycle of studies in five years, in line with the recommendations made by the European Commission and national higher education regulations. The admission results of the programme show that the proposed delivery model is justified and contributes to the competitiveness and recognition of the programme.

Analyzing the usefulness of each of the implementation options - 60 CP or 1-year studies and 120 CP or 2-year studies - it is the study plan that should be highlighted, which stipulates that students in both implementation options study all study courses that ensure the acquisition of the latest achievements in the theory and practice of the industry and fundamental research work, creative work, design work and management study courses, which are necessary to achieve the goals of the study program. In the case of both implementation options, students also go on an internship in the amount of 9 CP, thereby further strengthening the theoretical knowledge. Students who study study courses in the amount of 120 CP get additional benefit from the in-depth research work, creative work, design work and management study courses, which they have previously obtained in the other scientific field of higher education that they have graduated from, and have not had previous work experience in public relations or communication field.

In order to achieve the aims, objectives and learning outcomes of the study programme, a competition is organised for applicants for admission to the study programme. According to the content of the study programme, the admission requirements are defined:

1. Study programme with the scope of 120 CP – for matriculation in the professional master's study programme citizens of the Republic of Latvia and persons holding a non-citizen passport issued by the Republic of Latvia, as well as persons who have been issued a permanent residence permit, and foreigners are admitted, meeting the requirements of:
2. first cycle higher education (bachelor's degree) in other fields of science and not less than 2 years of experience in the field of communications.
3. Additionally, for studies in English: English language skills at B2/C1 level.
4. Study programme with the scope of 60 CP – for matriculation in the professional master's study programme citizens of the Republic of Latvia and persons holding a non-citizen passport issued by the Republic of Latvia, as well as persons who have been issued a permanent residence permit, and foreigners are admitted, meeting the requirements of:
5. first cycle higher education (bachelor's degree) and a sixth-level professional qualification in languages, culture or communications field.
6. Additionally, for studies in English: English language skills at B2/C1 level.

The result of the competition will be based on the weighted average of the grades obtained in the first cycle of higher education (bachelor's studies).

Admission requirements are governed by the VUAS "Admission Rules", which are approved annually by the Senate. From the moment of matriculation until the moment of examination, having fulfilled all the conditions of the programme, the student shall, in accordance with the aim, objectives and results of the study programme, acquire knowledge, skills and competences, obtaining a second

cycle higher education and a seventh level professional qualification, i.e. a Master's degree in Intercultural Communication and a professional qualification as a Strategic Communication Manager (see Annex 3.1).

The title of the study programme, the degree to be obtained, the professional qualification, the programme aim, the objectives are mutually consistent and ensure the achievement of the programme outcomes and the programme aim.

3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study programme, analysis of graduates' employment.

The master’s study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" is designed and implemented as a full-time study programme with the aim of providing highly qualified, creative and competitive specialists in the field of strategic intercultural communication in a multicultural society. Graduates of the programme obtain a second cycle higher education qualification and a seventh level professional qualification, i.e. a master's degree in Intercultural Communication and a qualification as a Strategic Communication Manager. The programme plays a key role in the training of high-level professionals.

In order to assess the validity and significance of the implementation of the study programme, as well as to provide a socio-economic assessment, the content and form of implementation of the study programme were initially compared with equivalent programmes in other Latvian and foreign higher education institutions.

For international comparison, the University of Jivaskil in Finland, which is rich in traditions and closest to the region, was selected for detailed comparison, and its programme in Intercultural Communication Studies provided an opportunity to compare the programme structure and course selection. The choice of programmes for comparison was based on the following considerations:

1. Jivaskil University in Finland is the closest university to the Baltic region with a strong intercultural communication programme.
2. Like in Latvia, it has developed as an international programme offering foreign students the opportunity to learn the national languages (Finnish and Swedish) at different levels.
3. The content of the study programme is very similar to the structure of the study programme chosen by Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, which, like Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, is 120 ECTS.
4. Similarly to Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, the study programme is interdisciplinary, as it includes not only intercultural communication aspects, but also political and business aspects.
5. The programme structure is similar to the one offered at the VUAS, comprising theoretical study courses and professional field study courses, and a final thesis for the master’s degree, as well as a professional internship.
6. The content of the Jivaskil programme includes similar subjects in terms of content and application: "Basic Aspects of Intercultural Communication", which corresponds to the course "Aspects of Intercultural Communication" offered by VUAS, etc.
7. The difference is that the programme offered by the VUAS includes language aspects in several dimensions, both as a means of communication and from the point of view of intercultural communication.
8. Both programmes offer methodologies for both research and theory.

9. After the comparison of the study programmes, it can be stated that the master's study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences is designed as a competitive higher education programme.

The programme implementation began in 2022. It is therefore difficult to assess the complete learning cycle of the study programme. The economic rationale for the study programme was assessed in the design of the programme. Looking at the period of implementation of the study programme, it can be said that the study programme is developing according to a defined plan and is economically justified, as the number of students in the groups is increasing. The programme has only 10 state-funded places, so students will be studying mainly with their own funds. The social relevance of the study programme is justified by the particular importance of intercultural education for the development of society:

1. Taking into account the 2022 report by the Ministry of Economy "Informative report on medium- and long-term labour market projections" it can be concluded that the demand for highly qualified specialists (managers, senior specialists, professionals) will only increase in the future. The report indicates that highly qualified professionals with knowledge, skills and competences in intercultural and communication management will be needed in all sectors. This is due to the development of modern technologies and the need for fast and professional communication. Such professionals play a key role in the development of enterprises, as also pointed out by employers.
2. As indicated in the OECD report on future skills development, the list of skills predicted and most in demand in the future includes communication skills and critical thinking, understanding multicultural societies and sustainable development.
3. The content of the study programmes is based on the implementation of the UN Sustainable Goals, preparing specialists who support the sustainable, responsible and ethical development of society.

Thus, it can be said that the study programme is competitive and the programme prepares top-level strategic communication managers to work in multicultural society, in organisations and companies in Latvia and internationally.

The study programme can also be analysed from the perspective of professional development and lifelong learning, as it is chosen by people of different ages who already have higher education and professional experience. These students indicate that the programme complements their existing skills and that they wish to develop their professional qualifications in intercultural communication.

Data on graduate employment is limited because it covers a very small period of the study programme implementation. Analysing the data on graduate employment, it can be argued that highly motivated people study the programme because they have already completed higher education and most of them have work experience. Master's students indicate that they are employed and hold leading specialist and middle management positions. These statements indicate a low risk of students losing their jobs and becoming unemployed upon graduation. Graduates are employed in both international and Latvian companies and institutions.

The study programme is implemented in accordance with the Development Strategy of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences 2021-2027. The goals and objectives set out in the VUAS Strategy contribute to both the development of study programmes and the development of the field of study as a whole. The strategic development goals of the VUAS are in line with the directions of action described in the Latvian Sustainable Development Strategy "Latvia 2030" and the strategic goals set out in the Latvian National Development Plan 2021-2027, where polycentric development is defined as a priority. Therefore, it can be established that the study programme plays an important role in the development of the region, as it increases the professional qualification of the region's

specialists and their competitiveness on the labour market.

The need for the study programme is determined by the economic development of the country and the region and by integration into the European Union and the global market. The Education Development Guidelines 2021-2027 set as one of their objectives the development of research-based study programmes that promote skills development, including the development of technological and digital skills. The Education Guidelines state that priority is given to study programmes leading to professional qualifications. The master's degree programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" is implemented as a second cycle higher education programme leading to a master's degree and a seventh level professional qualification. The acquisition of the highest level professional qualification contributes to the successful career development and competitiveness of graduates.

In summary, the study programme is economically and socially viable and plays an important role in the development of the entire region.

3.1.4. Statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down into different study forms, types, and languages.

The programme implementation began 2022. The programme is designed as a two-level study programme, whose implementation has different timing and scope:

1. implementation scope 120 CP – for graduates with first cycle higher education in other fields;
2. implementation scope 60 CP – for graduates with a first cycle higher education qualification and a sixth level professional qualification in related fields.

Following the changes, the programme's statistical indicators show that the programme has developed steadily and has gained an important place in the region in the training of highly qualified specialists. When collecting information on the number of students enrolled in the study programme, it is important to assess the number of students enrolled, the number of graduates, the number of interrupted enrolments or drop-outs.

The data show that the master's programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" is considered as a sequential continuation of the bachelor's programme "Intercultural Communication". The programme was started in 2022 and enrolled 12 students in the first year of implementation. In 2023, a total of 14 students are enrolled. It should be noted that 6 of the enrolled students are foreign students. A number of students were unable to join the programme in 2023 due to various restrictions related to obtaining and complying with visa and other travel documents. The matriculation of these international students has been postponed to the next academic year.

1. 12 students enrolled in the academic year 2022/2023:

- Study programme with a scope of 40 CP – 5 students.
- Study programme with a scope of 80 CP – 7 students.

1. 14 students enrolled in the academic year 2023/2024:

- Study programme with a scope of 40 CP – 3 students.
- Study programme with a scope of 80 CP – 11 students.

When analysing the enrolment data, it should be noted that in 2021/2022 the study programme did not start enrolment as it was significantly affected and delayed by the restrictions and distance learning conditions introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Comparing the number of students in equivalent study programmes at other universities in the country, it can be concluded that the significant changes made to the content of the study programme have been successful. This has contributed to the competitiveness and visibility of the study programme in the region.

When evaluating the data on drop-out from the master's programme, on average 7% (3 students) do not continue their studies. All students are given the opportunity to matriculate in the upper stages of the study programme and successfully complete the master's programme.

In terms of the use of state-funded budget places, on average 51% of students studied in state-funded places, while 49% of students studied at the expenses of natural or legal persons.

It is not possible to fully analyse the number of graduates from the programme as the information on the first graduates for the two-year programme will not be available until spring 2024.

When analysing the geographical composition of students, it should be noted that the study programme is chosen by those living and working in the Kurzeme region, indicating that they are interested in the study programme and the university is located closer to their place of residence. The data show that 75% of students are from Kurzeme and 25% are from other regions. Foreign students are from different countries. Students from Ukraine, Ghana, Senegal, Russia, India, Japan and other countries chose the study programme.

In order to fully assess the dynamics of the number of students studying in the study programme, a longer period of time is needed in which it would be possible to assess the trends in the number of students and to analyse students' evaluations of the study programme.

A full overview of the dynamics of student numbers is summarised in Annex 3.2.

3.1.5. Substantiation of the development of the joint study programme and description and evaluation of the choice of partner universities, including information on the development and implementation of the joint study programme (if applicable).

3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

3.2.1. Analysis of the content of the study programme. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators with the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study courses/ modules and compliance with the needs of the relevant industry, labour market and with the trends in science on how and whether the content of the study courses/ modules is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science.

Based on the requirements of the professional standard "Strategic Communication Manager", the main study outcomes of the study programme for the acquisition of knowledge, skills and professional competences were defined. The master's study programme meets the needs of the labour market by including study courses necessary for the development and improvement of professional skills. The content of the study courses is designed to provide students with the necessary knowledge of intercultural communication, helping them to acquire the skills and achieve the competence required in the profession of strategic communication manager, contributing to the competitiveness of students in the labour market. The courses of study included in the study programme are updated to include information on changes and current developments in the field, complementing them with both new theoretical approaches and current developments in the field of intercultural communication. The development of the study programme content and the provision of the study process take into account changes in the regulatory framework.

In accordance with Section 55, Paragraph 2, Subparagraph c of the Law on Higher Education and the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation of 13 June 2023 No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard of Professional Higher Education" (Available only in Latvian: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/342818-noteikumi-par-valsts-profesionalas-augstakas-izglitibas-standartu), the compulsory content of the master's study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" consists of:

- **Study courses that provide coverage of the latest developments in the theory and practice of the field**

(60 CP programme - 9 CP; 120 CP programme - 9 CP):

1. Theories and models of intercultural communication (3 CP);
2. Innovation and technology management in intercultural communication (3 CP);
3. Corpus-linguistic aspects of media language analysis (3 CP).

- **Research work, creative work, design work and management study courses** (60 CP programme - 9 CP; 120 CP programme - 39 CP):

    1. Linguistic Cultural Analysis (3 CP);
    2. Strategic Human Resource Management (3 CP);
    3. Organisation of scientific research (3 CP);
    4. The role of translation in communication (3 CP);
    5. Social media communication (3 CP);
    6. Intercultural aspects of marketing (3 CP);
    7. Managing digital culture (3 CP);
    8. Preparation and implementation of intercultural communication projects (3 CP);
    9. Record-keeping and financial planning and management in intercultural communication (3 CP);
    10. Crisis communication in an intercultural context (3 CP);
    11. Business English (3 CP);
    12. Business Ethics and Culture (3 CP);
    13. Societal sustainability in intercultural communication (3 CP).

- **Optional study courses (3 CP)**

(60 CP programme - 3 CP; 120 CP programme - 3 CP)

1. Optional study courses (3 CP).

- **Internship** (60 CP programme - 9 CP; 120 CP programme - 39 CP):
    1. Internship (9 CP);
    2. Professional internship (30 CP).
- **National examination, which includes the development and defence of a master's thesis (60 CP programme - 30 CP; 120 CP programme - 30 CP):**
    1. Master's thesis (30 CP).

The content of the study programme includes a course of study to be studied in addition if not previously studied (compliance with the requirements of the Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on Civil Protection and Disaster Management). The requirements of the Law on Environmental Protection and the Law on Civil Protection and Disaster Management are met by offering the course "Civil Protection and Environmental Sustainability" (3CP) if students have not completed a lower-level study programme.

The study plan provides for the acquisition of study courses that ensure the achievement of professional competence in entrepreneurship (innovation, organisation and establishment of enterprises, management methods, fundamentals of project development and management, record-keeping and financial accounting system, knowledge of the regulation of labour relations, including the establishment of social dialogue in society, as well as knowledge of other innovations in the management of a business or institution):

1. Innovation and Technology Management in Intercultural Communication (3 CP);
2. Strategic Human Resource Management (3 CP);
3. Digital Culture Management (3 CP);
4. Intercultural aspects of marketing (3 CP);
5. Preparation and implementation of intercultural communication projects (3 CP);
6. Record-keeping and financial planning and management in intercultural communication (3 CP);
7. Crisis communication in an intercultural context (3 CP);
8. Business ethics and culture (3 CP);
9. Societal sustainability in intercultural communication (3 CP).

The study programme has defined six main study outcomes, which are in interaction with the outcomes of the professional standard "Strategic Communication Manager". The objectives of the course are closely linked to the learning outcomes of the study programme and are clearly stated in the course description. The course descriptions of the study programme define the set of knowledge, skills and competences and their assessment system, and define the learning outcomes for the achievement of which credit points are awarded. The development of the study course content is carried out in accordance with the requirements set by the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences "Regulations on general requirements for the development and implementation of a study course at the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences" (available only in Latvian, in VUAS e-learning platform *Moodle*). In order to control the correlation between the results of the study course and the results of the study programme, each lecturer defines the results of his/her study course in the form of a study course description, aligning it with the results of the study programme. The content of the study courses is subordinate to and contributes to the achievement of the study programme outcomes. An annual audit of the content of the study courses helps to monitor and update the content of the study courses, to review the teaching methods and to update the learning outcomes. All study courses of the study programme are placed and available in the Latvian University Information System (LAIS), which is defined as the basic information system of the study process at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences. Additional lecturers use the

e-learning platform "Moodle" in order to provide students with information on the conditions of study course implementation, examinations, assessment procedures, thematic plan, calendar.

Taking into account that the students in the 60 CP program have obtained first-cycle higher education (bachelor's degree) and sixth-level professional qualification in the field of languages, culture or communications, the students already have the basic knowledge and experience to successfully achieve the requirements of the professional master's study program "Strategic Intercultural Communication" results and meet the standard of the "Strategic Communication Manager" profession. By additionally studying the 60 CP study courses specified in the program, in accordance with the developed Study Plan (Appendix 3.6), the graduate of the study program will have achieved the goals set in the program, and by acquiring the necessary knowledge, skills and competencies, corresponding to the mapping of the study program (Appendix 3.5). At the same time, students studying in the 120 CP program learn the same study courses that are fundamentally necessary for the profession as students studying in the 60 CP program are, thus achieving the results of the study program. Appendix 3.5. "Study program mapping" is developed on the basis of the professional standard "Strategic communication manager" (Available only in Latvian: https://www.visc.gov.lv/lv/media/22983/download?attachment) issued on February 28, 2020 and the professional competences and knowledge defined therein.

The achievable results of the study program are:

- SPSR 1: Gain an understanding and knowledge of strategic communication management in line with intercultural communication theoretical frameworks and recent findings
- SPSR 2: Knows how to set and ensure the organisation's intercultural communication development orientations and objectives
- SPSR 3: Know how to plan and manage effective strategic intercultural communication in an organisation
- SPSR 4: Is able to ensure and implement the organisation's corporate communication and day-to-day communication process
- SPSR 5: Is able to implement the organisation's practical activities and general tasks, use information technology for work, manage oneself and work in a team, represent the organisation in a professional environment, exercise social and civic skills for social dialogue
- SPSR 6: Is able to carry out public relations analysis and evaluation

In the short (60 CP) version of the program, the following study courses are studied, which include all the achievable results of the study program:

- Theories and models of intercultural communication (SPSR 1, SPSR 2, SPSR 4, SPSR 5, SPSR 6)
- Innovation and technology management in intercultural communication (SPSR 1, SPSR 2, SPSR 3, SPSR 4, SPSR 5, SPSR 6)
- Corpus-linguistic aspect of media language analysis (SPSR 1, SPSR 2, SPSR 3, SPSR 4, SPSR 5, SPSR 6)
- Strategic human resources management (SPSR 1, SPSR 2, SPSR 3, SPSR 4, SPSR 5)
- Linguistic cultural analysis (SPSR 1, SPSR 4, SPSR 5, SPSR 6)
- Scientific research organization (SPSR 1, SPSR 2, SPSR 4, SPSR 5)

Analyzing the Appendix 3.5. "Study program mapping", it is possible to conclude that the study courses studied by students in both programs cover all the achievable results of the study program, thus ensuring the requirements specified in the profession standard.

The content of the study programme is reviewed with the involvement of students and other stakeholders. Proposals for clarification of the study programme content are put forward by

lecturers of study courses, programme director, and employers' recommendations are evaluated. The assessment of the relevance of the content of the study courses and the relevance to the needs of the economy and the business sector and the labour market is carried out in several ways and stages:

1. The process of developing the annual self-assessment reports of the field of study and study programmes – statistical data were analysed, information obtained in student surveys was analysed, employers' suggestions were analysed, thus obtaining feedback on the implementation and quality of the study programme.
2. Annual process of development, coordination and approval of study plans – review of study courses, review of the literature to be used, updated alignment with the study outcomes of the study programme.
3. Study programme council meetings and faculty council meetings – discussion of study programme content, study programme, study course outcomes, research paper requirements, professional practice outcomes. At the meetings of the Council of the Study Faculty, the candidates for the position of the Director of the Study Programme, who ensures the management of the Study Programme, are discussed and proposals are made. Employers take part in the meetings of the Study Programme Council and give their recommendations for the development of the study programme.
4. In the process of implementation and defence of the professional internship – discussions on the experience gained in the internship, analysis of the feedback received by the study programme director from the company on the student's preparation and professional skills.
5. In the process of preliminary defence and defence of the master's thesis – the results of the master's thesis research are discussed and analysed, and conclusions on necessary improvements are given.
6. During the meetings of the State Examination Committee – with the participation of academic staff, employers, other cooperation partners, the achievements of students are analysed, the results of final examinations are discussed and evaluated, recommendations are given for the improvement of the master's thesis development process, the topicality of the research topics, with the aim to promote the quality of the study programme and the achievement of study results.
7. Academic staff meetings organised by the faculty – discussions are held on students' involvement in scientific research activities, possible participation in scientific conferences and research projects, problems of teaching study courses and material and technical support.
8. In the meetings of the decision-making bodies of the University, including the University Council, the Senate, the Board of Studies, the Scientific Council – the content of study programmes is discussed and evaluated, the study plan for the academic year is approved, proposals are made for making significant changes to study programmes and revising the achievable results of study programmes, professional and scientific achievements of academic staff are analysed, and students are involved in research activities. etc.

There is a strong focus on research, integrating research methods and results into the study process. The study programme gives graduates the opportunity to continue their professional education and to study for a doctoral degree.

3.2.2. In the case of master's and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation. In the case of a doctoral study

programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels (if applicable).

Arts and Humanities, where the humanities are divided into several sub-groups, including Languagies and Interdisciplinary programmes, which cover a wide range of fields, including communications and the study of cultural traditions in other countries. The master's programme can be considered as an interdisciplinary programme whose main objective is to train creative and competitive professionals who are able to navigate linguistic, cultural and intercultural communication issues and who have a thorough knowledge of the chosen language and the culture of the nation, taking into account relevant intercultural and interdisciplinary aspects.

The master's programme offers opportunities for study and research in intercultural communication. The research orientation of the programme is interdisciplinary, with cultural studies as its unifying element, and language and communication can be pursued in different fields. The final theses, master's theses, are developed by students on topical themes in the humanities. The themes of the master's theses defended during the reporting period are topical and relevant to the current issues and problems of cultural issues and communication. For example, "Ventspils municipality website as a public relations tool", "Borrowing traditions and festivals: Halloween in Latvian cultural space".

The research results of these master's theses can be considered as important for the enrichment of communication research and an important contribution to the improvement of intercultural communication management processes and the development of good practice. The study programme is designed in such a way that the student will be able to carry out independent research work under the supervision of a master thesis supervisor, and the research topics will be topical from the national, regional, as well as from the economic sectoral perspective.

Students' involvement in research project topics, developed competences in the management and execution of research projects, which are in accordance with the national classification framework corresponding to the European Qualifications Framework, as laid down in Cabinet Regulation No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education". The master's study programme corresponds to LQF level 7 and its study outcomes are defined in accordance with the descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 7.

Thus, the second cycle higher education at the end of the study programme, i.e. the master's degree in Intercultural Communication, is relevant and not in conflict with the Humanities sector and its sub-sectors.

3.2.3. Assessment of the study programme including the study course/ module implementation methods by indicating what the methods are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In the case of a joint study programme, or in case the study programme is implemented in a foreign language or in the form of distance learning, describe in detail the methods used to deliver such a study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The master’s study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" is implemented as a full-time programme, in compliance with the requirements set out in the laws and regulations of the VUAS, providing that 30% of the study programme volume consists of contact hours. The implementation of study courses is carried out in face-to-face classes and remotely, observing the regulation that the share of remote studies does not exceed 50% of the total number of contact hours in the programme. When approving the timetable for each semester, the organisation and implementation of the studies are clearly defined, indicating the planned classroom for face-to-face classes or the access link for remote classes.

The implementation of the study programme is carried out using various teaching and learning methods and forms, including lectures, seminars, discussions, practical classes, role-plays, literature studies, applied games, individual and group consultations, study visits, case studies, students' independent individual work, presentations, conferences, etc. The methods used by lecturers are varied, but interactive teaching methods predominate, which encourage students' active and conscious participation in the study process. Lecturers make extensive use of case studies based on practice. Lecturers' practical experience ensures synergy between theoretical knowledge and practical experience.

Depending on the aim and outcome of the course, students are given planned outcomes and forms of assessment at the beginning of the semester. All students organise their individual work independently in order to achieve the objectives of the study programme. The study process is guided and based on the analysis of problem situations. The lecturers involved in the study programme ensure that the methods of assessment of studies and knowledge are objective and consistently followed. The practical study sessions follow the principle of "learning by doing", actively use distance learning techniques, provide opportunities to study independently, planning their own time. The content and scope of each examination shall be as specified in the programme of the course of study. Individual counselling plays an important role in the study process in order to meet students' individual learning needs. The timetables for counselling are publicly available on the e-learning platform "Moodle". Communication between students and lecturers is via telephone, e-mail, *BBB* platform and e-learning platform.

The principles of student-centred education are taken into account throughout the entire study process. Students can participate in the improvement of the study process directly (personally) by expressing their wishes to the course lecturer, the study programme director, the dean, specialists of the study department, or through the Student Council, which is represented in the Study Programme Council, the Faculty Council and the Senate. In administrative matters, students are given the opportunity to meet with the Programme Director and the Dean of Studies to resolve individual issues. In case of problems, students are invited to discuss with the Dean of the Faculty. In this way, the quality of the study process is maximised and the information provided by students is responded to promptly.

Student surveys and course meetings, which are regularly organised at least twice a academic year, are of particular importance and objectively show the students' opinion on both a specific course of study and the organisation of the study process. At the end of each semester, student surveys are created in the electronic environment LAIS, in which students express their opinion on the implementation of a particular study course, the quality of the lecturer's work, the organisation of study processes and technical support are evaluated. The results of the surveys are summarised and discussed at the meetings of the Board of Studies, the Board of Study Programmes and the Faculty Council.

The principles of student-centred education can be summarised and are implemented in the study programme as follows:

1. study course lecturers take into account and respect the diversity of students and their needs by using different ways of delivering the programme, according to students' capabilities;
2. mutual respect between students and lecturers is fostered in the relationship between lecturers and students, creating a positive emotional background and creative cooperation;
3. the study courses are taught in the process of cooperation between students and teaching staff, where different teaching methods and forms of work are applied according to the situation;
4. students' independence is promoted by offering learning methods where students demonstrate their knowledge and skills individually or in a group;
5. pedagogical methods, ways of teaching, learning and assessment are regularly evaluated;
6. examination papers, assessment methods and criteria are published in advance, posted on Moodle together with the course description, and discussed in class;
7. students receive feedback; if necessary, lecturers provide support to improve the learning process, additional students can apply for individual counselling;
8. assessment provides students with the opportunity to demonstrate the extent to which they have achieved the expected learning outcomes;
9. assessment of learning outcomes is carried out by lecturers, the student (self-assessment), other students (peer assessment);
10. assessment is carried out in accordance with the requirements set by the University and is consistent, fair and applicable to all students;
11. the University has a procedure for handling student appeals.

The organisation and evaluation of the examinations is objective, taking into account both qualitative and quantitative indicators. The assessment is carried out in accordance with the Regulation "Regulations on the Procedure of Organising Examinations and Assessing Students' Knowledge at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences" (see Section 2.1.5).

The study process is carried out in classrooms with adequate technical support. The online programme *BBB* (BigBlueButton) is used for distance learning. E-learning environment for the study process the e-learning platform "Moodle" is used, where the course materials are placed, so that in addition to the lecture and lesson materials, the exchange of opinions and information between the lecturer and the students, and between the students themselves can take place in a forum mode. The use of "Moodle" is in accordance with the rules of the VUAS "Rules for the use of "Moodle" at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences". The availability of e-learning environment and online programmes became especially important during the Covid-19 pandemic, which allowed to ensure uninterrupted study process and study programme content learning. The experience was successful. Both lecturers and students acquired new digital skills, sought new ways of communication, and the teaching staff learned new teaching methods appropriate to the digital environment.

The study process in the various implementation options (short - 60 CP program and long - 120 CP program) does not differ. All students are provided with equal opportunities for learning study courses and defending final exams. The only difference in the two implementation options of the program is professional practice in the amount of 30 CP, which only 120 CP program students need to do, in addition to the 9 CP practice, which is done by students in both implementation options. Therefore, those studying in the 120 CP program should look for two internship places. Although two different internships is not a requirement, it is recommended to do internships in different workplaces to provide different work experience in the public relations and communication field. However, even in this case, the director of the study program can help with finding an internship place if the student is having any difficulties in finding one.

The study courses are expressed in CP, where 1 CP = 1 ECTS = 25 academic hours, based on the

Order No. 14 of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences vice-rector of studies Una Libkovska, issued on 02.02.2024.

3.2.4. If the study programme envisages an internship, describe the internship opportunities offered to students, provision and work organization, including whether the higher education institution/ college helps students to find an internship place. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how internship opportunities are provided in a foreign language, including for foreign students. To provide analysis and evaluation of the connection of the tasks set for students during the internship included in the study programme with the learning outcomes of the study programme (if applicable).

Internships are an essential part of a professional master’s study programme. The internship is carried out in accordance with the regulations approved by the meeting of the Faculty Council. The internship is implemented in accordance with the approved study plan.

In order to achieve the results planned in the study programme and to ensure the professional competence necessary for the manager of an organisation, the programme content includes an internship, which is divided into two parts:

1. internship of 30 CP and 9 CP - in a study programme of 120 CP;
2. internship of 9 CP - in a study programme of 60 CP.

The internship is related to the study programme, and the main aim of the internship is to use the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired in the study process to solve specific tasks in a practical environment in order to promote the development of students' professional knowledge, skills and competences in line with the qualification of strategic communication manager.

The internship regulations set out the objectives of the internship and define the conditions for the internship. The internship regulations are publicly available and can be consulted on the e-learning platform "Moodle" or at the faculty. The internship takes place in companies, state and municipal institutions, under the supervision of an internship supervisor appointed by the organisation. A tripartite contract is signed between the university, the student and the company at the start of the internship. The internship agreement is the basis for the student's placement. The internship supervisor appointed by the VUAS follows the progress of the intern and advises the intern in the internship company, following the fulfilment of the set tasks.

At the end of the internship, the student is required to produce and submit an internship report describing the internship, the tasks performed and the practical experience gained. The internship report is an independent work carried out by the student. The student shall present and defend the internship report, i.e. the tasks performed and the lessons learned during the internship, to the internship defence committee. The defence of the internship is public. The internship is assessed by a mark. The internship defence committee analyses and evaluates the performance of the tasks carried out during the internship.

Master's students can choose their internship placement independently or apply to the faculty for a recommendation. Information about the offer of internships is sent to students by e-mail. Analysing the concluded internship agreements, it can be concluded that master’s students prefer companies that are related to their professional activity and use and implement modern innovative solutions and technologies, as well as provide an appropriate working environment and are located closer to

their place of residence. The conclusions expressed in the internship reports and the analysis of the economic activity of the enterprises indicate the students' understanding of the business development trends. In order to facilitate students' successful acquisition of practical skills and abilities and to realise the study programme objectives, Ventspils University of Applied Sciences closely cooperates with employers. For these purposes, several cooperation agreements have been concluded on the provision of student internships.

The internship supervisor, appointed by the internship placement, provides feedback by completing a feedback form, giving an assessment of the intern's knowledge, theoretical background, communication skills, etc. This keeps the continuous close contact with the industry, thus enabling the learning programme to be developed and improved in line with the requirements of the labour market. Experience gained in cooperation with enterprises shows that companies are willing to sign internship contracts with master's students.

To provide students with international business experience, additional Erasmus+ mobility placements are offered to students in international companies. All students are informed about the mobility opportunities. Information on the Erasmus+ mobility programme activities is publicly available on the University's website and on the e-learning platform "Moodle".

Student surveys show that master's students are less likely to participate in mobility programmes because they are employed full-time and their workplace commitments do not allow them to be away from the workplace for long periods of time. Another important reason given by students was their family situation, indicating that families have children and need to provide educational opportunities and school attendance.

The implementation of internship does not differ for Latvian and English students. Students are provided with equal internship opportunities, the same amount of help in finding an internship place, and draft documents to be submitted are offered in both Latvian and English (internship contract, internship diary, etc. (available in the "Internship Regulations")).

3.2.5. Evaluation and description of the promotion opportunities and the promotion process provided to the students of the doctoral study programme (if applicable).

3.2.6. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the marks of the final theses.

The master's thesis is the final examination of the study programme. The master's thesis consists of three main parts - theoretical, analytical and practical. The parts of the master's thesis are interrelated and complementary. Stages of master's thesis development:

1. problem identification, formulation of research questions, objectives, hypothesis or research question;
2. problem analysis, selection of possible solutions;
3. practical implementation of the tasks using effective innovative research methods;
4. evaluation and conclusions of the results obtained in the master's thesis.

The master’s thesis is governed by the Regulations on the Procedure for the Development, Presentation and Defence of the master’s Thesis, which have been approved at the meeting of the Faculty Council. The Regulations define the content of the master’s thesis, its preparation and presentation. Before the master’s thesis is started, a meeting is held with the students to discuss the requirements for the thesis, and a pre-defence of the master’s thesis is held one month before the master’s thesis is handed in. The master’s thesis is recommended for defence before the national examination board only after a successful pre-defence.

The master’s degree and the professional qualification may be obtained if all study courses have been successfully completed, the internship report and the master’s thesis have been defended. Finally, the master’s theses are assessed by a national examination board composed of industry representatives. The assessment of master’s theses is complex. The final mark consists of the mark of the supervisor, the mark of the reviewer and a component of the mark for the presentation and defence of the thesis, which is determined by the members of the national examination board. The final mark is the result of a collegial decision of the national examination board.

Students have a right of appeal. Within three working days of the announcement of the grade, a motivated application must be submitted to the VUAS Study Department, which will set up an appeal committee to consider the specific application.

The choice and justification of the topic of master’s theses is often closely related to the students' professional activity. Students have the opportunity to choose their own research topic and supervisor. During the development of the master’s thesis, the topic is refined in order to align the title of the thesis with the aim of the research. In the master’s thesis, the student must demonstrate that they are able to navigate through the latest specialised literature and other sources, analysing them, using modern research and data processing methods, and working creatively to carry out a specific research.

Final theses (master's theses) are developed by students on topical themes in the humanities, including the study of cultural issues and intercultural communication. The topics of the master’s theses defended in the reporting period are topical and relevant to the current issues and problems of cultural issues and communication. For example, "Integration of the Ukrainians in Latvia (2022)", "The role of female gender managers in entrepreneurship", "Perception of Latvian literature and culture in Japan: translations from Latvian into Japanese".

It is not yet possible to fully assess the students' choice of the topic for their master’s thesis, as the first graduates for the two-year programme will not be available until spring 2024.

During the last academic year, 6 master’s theses with the following themes were developed and defended:

1. The role of female gender leaders in entrepreneurship
2. Integration of Ukrainians in Latvia (2022)
3. Adopting traditions and festivities: Halloween in Latvian cultural space
4. Archetypes in fairy tales as a reflection of intercultural communication
5. Perception of Latvian literature and culture in Japan: translations from Latvian into Japanese
6. Ventspils Municipality website as a public relations tool

The average score during the reporting period is 7.5 points, with one student obtaining the maximum score of excellent (10 points), see Table 3.3 for a more detailed overview.

Table 3.3.

Evaluation of the final theses of the study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" by years

Academic year	Score in points								
	4 (almost average)	5 (average)	6 (almost good)	7 (good)	8 (very good)	9 (outstanding)	10 (excellent)	Number of graduates	Average score
2022/2023	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	**6**	**7,5**
Total	**0**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**1**	**6**	**7,5**
% of total	0	16,66	16,66	16,66	16,66	16,66	16,66		

A high grade in the final examination paper indicates and allows to conclude that the students have achieved the objectives of the learning outcomes, acquired good theoretical knowledge, skills and competences.

3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

3.3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples.

Taking into account the specifics of the professional master's study program "Strategic Intercultural Communication" and the requirements of the "Strategic Communication Manager" profession, the resources provided for the study program provide all the opportunities for lecturers and students to learn the necessary material in the study courses and to communicate with each other conveniently and quickly. Students are provided with the opportunity to connect to meetings or lectures remotely, using VUAS's internal *BBB* network, which provides both lecture recording and all necessary functions for conducting lectures. There are 6 computer classrooms with 25-31 computer workstations each, and three with 16-24 workstations, as well as 3 laboratories with 10-13 computer workstations each. All auditoriums are equipped with computers and projectors, as well as the possibility to give audiovisual presentations, which are often necessary for specific courses in the professional master's study program plan.

The assessment of the adequacy of resources and provision for the implementation of the study and programme and the achievement of the learning outcomes is detailed in the information provided in: criteria 3.1-3.3 of Part II, Chapter 3; subchapters 3.1-3.3 of Part 2.

In addition to the University's databases, lecturers give students the opportunity to use the books and materials in their possession by copying and uploading them onto the *Moodle* platform. Evaluating the basic literature and supplementary literature indicated by the authors of the study courses, it is possible to conclude that it is mostly foreign literature written or translated into English, which can be explained by the specifics of the program to prepare graduates of the study program for today's dynamic, multicultural work environment, and also taking into consideration the fact that the studies are conducted in English.

3.3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific base support, including the resources provided within the framework of cooperation with other science institutes and higher education institutions (applicable to doctoral study programmes) (if applicable).

3.3.3. Indicate data on the available funding for the corresponding study programme, its funding sources and their use for the development of the study programme. Provide information on the costs per one student within this study programme, indicating the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between the specified items. The minimum number of students in the study programme in order to ensure the profitability of the study programme (indicating separately the information on each language, type and form of the study programme implementation).

When compiling the financial and actual resources required for the implementation of a study programme, the VUAS includes in the calculation the income and expenditure actually or proportionally corresponding to the study programme. The revenue includes the state subsidy for the study process (EUR 1630.10) as well as the revenue from tuition fees (The tuition fee for citizens of Latvia and the EU is 3000 EUR/year, the tuition fee for citizens of third countries is 3500 EUR/year). The proportion of expenditure is determined by aggregating the information obtained from two types of calculations:

1. 25% including deductions for each faculty (calculated from the state subsidy and tuition fee income approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia) are centrally determined for covering the general maintenance expenses of the VUAS;
2. For each study programme, a proportional share of the expenses is calculated from the general maintenance expenses of the VUSC calculated for the faculty or the expenses directly necessary for the operation of the specific faculty, taking into account the number of students in the specific programme.

There is no cost difference between Latvian and English language students in the implemented study programme.

General maintenance expenditure includes a deduction of 25% (set by the VUAS at the same level for all faculties) to cover VUAS maintenance expenditure:

1. utility costs - electricity, heating, water and sewerage services, waste collection services;
2. the cost of maintenance, including repair services, of the premises and the building;
3. IT system services;
4. marketing expenses;
5. expenditure on sports activities for VUAS students (local Olympic Centre gym

subscription);

6. general entertainment expenses (e.g. drinking water

provision of drinking water in VUAS premises);

7. partly administrative remuneration expenses;
8. general tax payments by the institution, etc.

The direct expenditure of the Faculty, which is necessary and identifiable as expenditure incurred directly by the Faculty, is allocated proportionally to the study programmes. Expenditure required, incurred and identifiable as expenditure for a specific study programme are included in the costs of that study programme. These above expenses include expenditure on the remuneration of the academic and general staff of the faculty, tax expenses, insurance and travel expenses, as well as expenditure on the purchase of fixed assets, inventory, teaching aids, etc..

Both income and expenditure are also reported on a per-student basis, per programme of study (usually for one calendar year), and the share of each group of expenditure in the total expenditure of the faculty or programme of study is determined.

Different calculation methods can be used to determine the potential "break-even point" of a study programme - increasing the number of students, increasing public funding per student or increasing tuition fees.

In 2023, 19 students are enrolled in the master’s study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication", which is 8% of the total number of students at the Faculty. The programme has a tuition fee of EUR 2270 per year. The average distribution of this revenue is as follows: state subsidy 51%, tuition fees 43%, other revenue 6%.

The eligible expenditure for the programme is broken down as follows: remuneration, including taxes, 94%, scholarships 5%, goods and services 1%, other expenditure 0.5%. Expenditure is divided into 4 main groups, with the average share of each expenditure item in total programme expenditure. Calculated at EUR 2958 per student. For the programme to reach breakeven (assuming constant expenditure), VUAS calculates that a minimum of 23 students would be needed. The programme is only in its second year, so a longer period is needed to ensure the stability of the programme and the corresponding increase in student numbers (see Annex 3.9).

3.4. Teaching Staff

3.4.1. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

In the implementation of the master’s study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" it is essential to combine academic knowledge with practical experience and practice, which is why the university's elected academic staff and guest lecturers with practical experience in the field are involved in the study work. The master’s study programme is implemented by highly qualified academic staff who provide students with the necessary research skills, theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and competences. The high qualification of the lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme ensures the achievement of the study programme aims and study results.

The qualifications of the dedicated staff involved in the programme meet the requirements of Article 39 (Academic Staff of Professional Study Programmes) of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. In the academic year 2021/2022, 13 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme, 53% of them are elected by the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, but 42% are specially invited highly qualified specialists. Seven lecturers have doctoral degrees.

Lecturers involved in the implementation of the study programme:

Name, surname of the teaching staff member	**Scientific degree**	**Position**	**Elected by VUAS**
Vita Balama	Dr. paed.	Lecturer	Yes
Kārlis Krēsliņš	Ph.D.	Professor	Yes
Guntars Dreijers	Dr.philol.	Associated professor	Yes
Una Libkovska	Dr. sc admin.	Professors	Yes
Egita Proveja	Dr.philol.	Lecturer	Yes
Inese Lūsēna-Ezera	Dr. sc admin.	Professors	No
Inta Ozola	Mg.	Lector	Yes
Uldis Drišļuks	Mg.	Lector	No
Aiga Veckalne	Mg.	Lector	Yes
Maija Cēbere	Mg.	Lector	No
Sandra Kubliņa	Ph.D.	Lecturer	No
Anastasija Vaska	Mg.	Lector	No
Inga Ieviņa	Mg.	Lector	No
Rūta Maltisova	Mg.	Lector	No

The full list of academic staff is summarised in Annex 2.8.

The choice of guest lecturers is based on their recognition in the professional environment, practical experience in intercultural communication in Latvia and abroad, which ensures close links with the sector. It is important to note that some of the invited experts are PhD students of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences (Inta Ozola, Uldis Drišļuks, Ivo Lemšs) who are successfully working in the field. The attraction of PhD students contributes to the development of academic staff and shows high motivation and experience in scientific activities. In this way, VUAS develops the new generation of academic staff by attracting master's graduates and doctoral students. The study programme is implemented by lecturers who have successfully worked in the sector, in the management of state and local government institutions, demonstrating excellent professional knowledge and management skills, such as:

1. Ivo Lemšs – Head of Kurzeme Region Environmental Service;
2. Maija Cēbere – Head of Project Department, Kurzeme Region, Accenture International;
3. Sandra Kubliņa – Senior Business Analyst, Latvian Branch of AS "Luminor Bank".

The lecturers involved in the study process are engaged in scientific research, practical entrepreneurship, international project management, continuously improving and improving their professional knowledge, including through the lecturer mobility programme ERASMUS+. It should be noted that international experience during the Covid-19 pandemic was limited. However, by continuing the already existing cooperation, the lecturers of the study programme had the opportunity to enrich their knowledge and share their experience at universities in other countries, e.g:

1. 2022/2023 academic year - Kārlis Krēsliņš, Vita Balama, Guntars Dreijers participated in ERASMUS+ mobility of academic staff, teaching at the University of Lorraine in France.
2. 2022/2023 academic year - Una Libkovska participated in ERASMUS+ mobility of academic staff, teaching at the University of Architecture, Civil Engineering and Geodesy in Sofia, Bulgaria.

The lecturers involved in the programme are actively involved in research activities, preparing scientific publications and co-publications published in journals and conference proceedings indexed in SCOPUS, Web of Sciences and EBSCO databases. The lecturers involved in the study programme are authors of textbooks and scientific monographs. The high professional qualification of the lecturers is confirmed by the right to carry out expert work in research. The right of expert of the Latvian Council of Science (LZP) was granted to the lecturers involved in the study programme:

1. Unai Libkovska – LZP expert (06.2026.);
2. Inese Lūsēna-Ezera – LZP expert (12.2024.).

The academic staff involved in the study programme carries out scientific research and implements a research-based study process, which is an integral part of the work of the University. The aim of scientific research carried out at the VUAS is to obtain scientific knowledge, to substantiate and further improve the scientific activity of the study process, and to solve topical tasks using research methods. In order to ensure the research-based study process, the lecturers involved in the programme were involved in research and development project programmes, such as:

1. K. Krēsliņš – activity in the ENDORSE project "Enhancing development of entrepreneurial strategies at university locations affected by brain drain (2022-2024)
2. U. Libkovska – activity in the project "Digitisation Initiatives for Improving the Quality of Studies in the Areas of Strategic Specialisation of Universities", FEM project (2022-2024)

For a full overview of the research activities of academic staff, see Annex 2.12.

The VUAS ensures that the qualifications of teaching staff and the courses they teach have a positive impact on the achievement and quality of study outcomes. After each course of study, students fill in evaluations for the course of study, which are sent to the teaching staff. Regular classroom visits are carried out to assess the professional qualification of lecturers in their daily work. In operational work, in case of problems in teaching a course of study, students express their opinion to the faculty administration already during the course of study.

Lecturers are responsible for their own professional development, which is reported on annually. The University promotes the professional development of its academic staff by offering methodological and professional orientation training seminars and internships in companies, thus improving their professional knowledge and skills. In addition, guest lectures are organised by lecturers from foreign and other universities on educational development trends, the latest learning

methods, and the introduction of technology in the study process. The academic staff policy of the University provides for an annual evaluation of the achievements of the teaching staff by assessing the results of their scientific research work, pedagogical and organisational achievements.

Recruitment of academic staff is carried out in accordance with the rules of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences "Ventspils University of Applied Sciences Academic Staff Selection Procedure", approved by the Senate of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences. The determining criteria for the selection of lecturers are the acquired education and qualifications, academic and scientific degrees, work experience, analysis of the results of scientific and research work, qualification upgrading and methodological developments. The qualifications of the study programme's teaching staff in accordance with the requirements laid down by the regulatory enactments can be found in Annex 2.9.

The level of knowledge of the English language of the teaching staff is confirmed by the certificate No./1-10.1/102 issued on December 12, 2023, regarding the English language proficiency level of all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the Master's study program "Strategic intercultural communication" (Appendix No. 2.11). The level of English language proficiency of the teaching staff can be seen in their CVs, which are attached to the self-assessment report of the study area (Appendix No. 2.9). The English language level of the teaching staff of the master's study program "Strategic intercultural communication" is C1/C2 (Guntars Dreyers, Vita Balama, Inta Ozola, Kārlis Krēsliņš, Rūta Maltisova, Aiga Veckalne, Maija Cēbere, Sandra Kubliņa, Anastasija Vaska) or B2 (Una Libkovska, Egita Proveja, Inese Lūsēna-Ezera, Uldis Drišlūks, Inga Ieviņa). Those whose English level is lower than C1/C2 teach study courses that are not related to the acquisition of English, such as scientific research methodology.

3.4.2. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

The Professional Master's study programme "Strategic Intercultural Communication" has been implemented at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences since 2022. In the reporting period 13 lecturers were involved in the implementation of the master’s study programme. Changes in the composition of the academic staff were influenced by long-term absences and retirements of several lecturers, termination of employment relations.

In the reporting period, only in some study courses changes of academic staff related to termination and retirement of employment and attraction of new lecturers were observed:

1. Changes have affected the implementation of the study course "Social Media Communication". Since 2023, the course is taught by Inta Ozola, a doctoral student of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, who also gained international experience studying at the University of Buffalo, USA. Lecturer Aija Sīle has stopped working at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, citing retirement as the reason.
2. In accordance with the requirements of the law, in order to ensure compliance of the study programme with the Law on Environmental Protection and Civil Protection, guest lecturer and doctoral student Ivo Lemšs, who has appropriate qualifications and experience, has been engaged to teach the study course "Civil Protection and Sustainability of Society". Ivo Lemšs is the Head of the Kurzeme Region Environmental Service and is a doctoral student at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences. The course is intended for students who have not completed the course at the previous educational level.

Thus, it can be stated that the changes made in the academic staff are not related to the quality of teaching of the study course and do not affect the quality of the study programme outcomes. The newly recruited guest lecturers are highly qualified specialists with experience in the field. The guest lecturers are doctoral students and actively participate in research, which contributes to the research orientation of the study process. The attraction of doctoral students contributes to the development of academic staff.

To ensure high quality studies, the programme is delivered by both academics and highly qualified professionals. The results of the student survey show that students highly value the involvement of industry experts in the learning process. The stability of the teaching staff has enabled the development of feedback between lecturers and students, thus increasing both the quality of studies and the students' ability to apply the acquired knowledge in the working environment.

Major changes are planned in the study programme. Significant changes are being made to the content of the study programme in order to provide students with the opportunity to study an individual free-choice part of their studies, as stipulated in Article 6, Part 4 of Paragraph 2 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions. The substantial changes in the division of the compulsory content of the programme will clarify the content of the study programme and the study plan. The composition of the academic staff will be adjusted in line with the changes in the study plan (see Annex 3.6). It can therefore be stated that no significant changes in academic staff are planned. The main criteria for the selection of lecturers are education and qualifications, academic and scientific degrees, work experience, analysis of the results of scientific research work, upgrading of qualifications and methodological developments.

3.4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals or peer-reviewed monographs may be additionally specified. Information on the teaching staff included in the database of experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the relevant field of science (total number, name of the lecturer, field of science in which the teaching staff has the status of an expert and expiration date of the Latvian Council of Science expert) (if applicable).

3.4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

3.4.5. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying

the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study programme and study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

Key criteria for the selection of academic staff are scientific and professional competence, potentially ensuring successful collaboration between academics.

Cooperation between the study programme teaching staff is promoted through both formal and informal events organised by the VUAS. Lecturers from different faculties are involved in the implementation of the study process, which provides a variety of experiences and promotes professional development. The cooperation between the teaching staff involved in the programme is essentially as described in Section 3.4.4 of the self-assessment report, which is common to the entire field of study. The successful cooperation of the study programme's teaching staff is demonstrated by a number of measures implemented and can be seen in:

1. Interdisciplinary cooperation of academic staff - for example, faculty members from different fields are involved in the study programme and are employed in the programme, and they can share their experience and discuss topical issues at the meetings of the Study Programme Council, Faculty Council meetings, seminars, meetings with employers, etc.
2. Joint research activities of academic staff - for example, joint research publications by academic staff involved in the study programme, which indicate both interdisciplinary collaboration and research and joint activities in related scientific fields. (e.g. joint publications of U. Libkovska and I. Lūsēna-Ezera; joint publications of I. Ozola and I. Lemšs; etc.).
3. Cooperation of lecturers in the development of the study programme content - when developing and improving the study programme content, lecturers carefully follow the thematic division of the study course, mutually coordinating the thematic areas and the assessment mechanism of the study results.
4. Teaching staff-student cooperation - for example, the study programme involves highly qualified and competent lecturers who provide students with the necessary research skills, theoretical knowledge, skills and competences. Lecturers carry out scientific research activities in parallel with the study process, which also involves students, thus ensuring the cooperation between lecturers and students. As a result of this cooperation, students have the opportunity to present their research work at the annual scientific conferences of VUAS and other universities.
5. Cooperation of teaching staff with other departments of the VUAS - e.g. involvement of teaching staff in project implementation and management. Examples include the activities of K. Krēsliņš in the National Research Programme "INTERFRAME-LV" (2019-2022), U. Libkovska in the project "Digitisation Initiatives for Improving the Quality of Studies in the Areas of Strategic Specialisation of Universities", FEM project (2022-2024), etc.
6. Cooperation of teaching staff with employers - a successful example of cooperation is a professional internship organised within the study programme. Students' internships are supervised by Ventspils University of Applied Sciences teaching staff and specialists with appropriate qualifications from the internship placement. During the internship there is cooperation and exchange of information between the internship placement, the university and the student. Representatives of companies also take part in the internship defence, which promotes closer cooperation and understanding of the necessary improvements in programme implementation, theoretical knowledge, skills and competences acquisition

according to the requirements of the modern labour market.

In addition, study programme staff are invited to participate in organised professional development and methodological seminars, courses and discussions. In the process of implementation of the study programme, there is close cooperation between the teaching staff, e.g. discussion of the quality of final theses at the meetings organised by the faculty, discussing the evaluation criteria and the possibilities of improving the quality of final theses. Teaching staff are also involved in mutual hospitalization of classes, where the application of psychological-pedagogical approaches and teaching methods are discussed afterwards. All the proposed activities are aimed at fostering cooperation between teaching staff, which would ensure the interconnection of study courses, research topics.

In the reporting period 2023, 19 students were enrolled in the master's programme. 13 lecturers provided the study process. The average faculty/teaching staff ratio shows that there are two students per one lecturer. The students are provided with quality studies and the possibility of individual approach during the study process.

Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	3-1_appendix_D_DP_ENG.pdf	3-1_pielikums_D_DP_LV.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	3-2_pielikums_Statistika_par_studejosajiem_LV (1).docx	3-2_pielikums_Statistika_par_studejosajiem_LV (1).docx
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	3-3_appendix_Atbilstiba valsts izglitibas standartam_EN.docx.pdf	3-3_pielikums_Atbilstiba valsts izglitibas standartam_LV.docx.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)	3-4_appendix_Atbilstiba profesijas standartam_EN.docx.pdf	3-4_pielikums_Atbilstiba profesijas standartam_LV.docx.pdf
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	3-5_pielikums_appendix_kartejums_mapping_LV_ENG.xlsx	3-5_pielikums_appendix_kartejums_mapping_LV_ENG.xlsx
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	3-6_appendix_studiju_programmas_plans.docx.pdf	3-6_pielikums_studiju_programmas_plans.docx.pdf
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	3-7_appendix_study_course_descriptions_ENG.pdf	3-7_pielikums_Kursu_apraksti_LV.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)	3-8_appendix_Prakses nolikums_ar pielikumiem_ENG.pdf	3-8_pielikums_Prakses nolikums_ar pielik_LV.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		

Intercultural Communication (42314)

Study field	*Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes*
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	*Intercultural Communication*
Education classification code	*42314*
Type of the study programme	*First cycle (professional bachelor's) study programme*
Name of the study programme director	*Rūta*
Surname of the study programme director	*Maltisova*
E-mail of the study programme director	*ruta.maltisova@venta.lv*
Title of the study programme director	*Mg.hrm.*
Phone of the study programme director	*26023914*
Goal of the study programme	*To train highly qualified specialists and European-level researchers in intercultural communication with the knowledge and skills to be able to use the acquired knowledge and skills in today's changing labour market conditions, to prepare students for future levels of education programmes, as well as for scientific activity in the field, developing and strengthening Latvia's scientific potential.*
Tasks of the study programme	*The objectives of the study programme are:* *1) to prepare competitive public relations managers;* *2) to ensure the achievement of study results (knowledge, skills and competences) in accordance with the requirements set for the study programme;* *3) to ensure the successful acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the professional standard for public relations managers;* *4) to develop students' analytical abilities, independent problem-solving skills, to facilitate their involvement in practical and theoretical problem-solving;* *5) to develop students' general skills and competences, promoting the development of communicative and digital skills, analytical and critical thinking, creativity, civil responsibility, the ability to successfully manage oneself and work in a team, to take responsibility for the results of performance, ensuring the development of a successful personality;* *6) to cooperate with other universities, institutions, organisations, employers, attracting highly qualified and professional teaching staff for the implementation of the programme in order to provide training that meets the requirements of the present times;* *7) to respond to the latest trends in the labour market, to modify the content and teaching methods of the programme in a timely manner in response to changes in the international labour market, and to correctly anticipate changes in the near and distant future;* *8) to prepare competitive professionals, to closely link the study process with real practice in multicultural enterprises.*

Results of the study programme	*Expected result: Public Relations Managers with a professional bachelor's degree in Intercultural Communication and appropriate knowledge, skills and competences at European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 6:* *1. understanding and knowledge of the theoretical frameworks and recent developments in intercultural communication;* *2. the ability to provide planning and management of intercultural communication processes in an organisation;* *3. the ability to ensure and implement day-to-day intercultural communication and public relations processes;* *4. the ability to analyse and evaluate the implementation of intercultural communication and public relations processes, resource planning and management in an organisation;* *5. the ability to implement practical communication activities and general task execution in an organisation.*
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	*Bachelor thesis*

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 4 years - english

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*4*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*english*
Amount (CP)	*240*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Secondary education and English language knowledge at least at level B2*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional bachelor's degree in Intercultural Communication*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Public Relations Manager*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

Full time studies - 4 years - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*4*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*240*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Secondary Education*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*Professional bachelor's degree in Intercultural Communication*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	*Public Relations Manager*

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme made since the issuance of the previous accreditation form of the study field or issuance of the study programme license, if the study programme is not included on the accreditation form of the study field, including changes planned within the evaluation procedure of the study field evaluation procedure.

The bachelor’s study programme "Intercultural Communication" was created following the major changes in the academic bachelor's study programme "Languages and Intercultural Communication". The changes were made in 2021. The following changes were implemented from autumn 2021, taking into account employers' needs and suggestions, students' recommendations, the recommendations of the previous programme evaluation committee and developments in the field:

1. the structure of the study programme has been changed: it has been transformed from an academic bachelor's study programme into a professional bachelor's study programme;
2. the title of the study programme has been changed to "Intercultural Communication" (previously: "Languages and Intercultural Communication");
3. the education classification code has been changed to 42314 (previously: 43222);
4. the duration of the study programme has been changed to 4 years (previously: 3 years);
5. the study programme volume has been changed to 160 CP (240 ECTS) (previously: 120 CP);
6. the degree and qualification to be obtained: Professional Bachelor's Degree in Intercultural Communication and Qualification of Public Relations Manager (previously: Bachelor's Degree in Humanities);
7. an additional language of the study programme to English and Latvian has been added (previously: English);
8. introduction of a compulsory internship of 20 CP (30 ECTS).

The study courses are expressed in CP, where 1 CP = 1 ECTS = 25 academic hours, based on the Order No. 14 of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences vice-rector of studies Una Libkovska, issued on 02.02.2024.

As a result of the significant changes, several study courses were improved, their content was updated and supplemented, their scope was changed, as well as new study courses were created, such as Language Technology, Communication Theories, Crisis Communication and Management, Image Building and Branding, Marketing Management, Marketing Communication, International Public Relations, Media Technology, Social Media Communication, Leadership, as well as Internship.

The changes, which are part of the evaluation procedure of the field of study, include the extension of the study course "Academic Writing" in the amount of 3 CP, i.e. the study course "Academic Writing I" in the amount of 3 CP is to be implemented in the 7th semester and the course "Academic Writing II" in the amount of 3 CP in the 8th semester in order to improve students' skills that are especially necessary for the successful development of the final examination - the bachelor thesis. The choice of languages offered has been changed: French, Russian and German were previously offered, and now French and Spanish are planned to be offered, with the possibility of offering Russian as well. The general education part of the courses is being expanded with three new courses: Foundations of the Enneagram in Professional Communication, Business Process

Simulation in Entrepreneurship and Digital Tools for Business Management (see course descriptions for details).

3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study programme compliance with the study field. Analysis of the interrelation between the code of the study programme, the degree, professional qualification/professional qualification requirements or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements. Description of the duration and scope of the implementation of the study programme (including different options of the study programme implementation) and evaluation of its usefulness.

The name, code, degree to be obtained, as well as the aim and objectives of the bachelor study programme "Intercultural Communication" of the study direction "Languages and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies and Language Programmes" comply with the Regulations "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education" (Cabinet Regulations No. 322, adopted 13.06.2017). The knowledge, skills and competences defined in this study programme correspond to the descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 6 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), as defined in the Regulation "Regulations on the Latvian Classification of Education". The bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication" and its objectives are in line with the mission and future vision of the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences approved in 2021 "Ventspils University of Applied Sciences Development Strategy 2021-2027". The study programme is implemented in Latvian and English in the form of full-time study format (4 years). Studies in Latvian language are carried out in order to ensure the opportunity for Latvian residents to study and obtain an education in Latvian language. Studies implemented in Latvian provide an opportunity to deepen the knowledge, skills and competences necessary for work in the field of public relations in the local labor market. On the other hand, the implementation of the study program in English gives foreign students the opportunity to study in the form of full-time studies. Current Erasmus+ project students from all the three faculties of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences can fit well into the English language stream. Providing studies in English also gives an opportunity for representatives of different cultures to cooperate, gaining immediate experience in solving aspects of intercultural communication, which is a fundamental skill in the field of public relations in the international labor market.

Analysis of the interrelationship between programme title, code, degree, professional qualification, aims and objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements.

The changes in the bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication" of VUAS are aimed at promoting the quality of higher education and ensuring the training of highly qualified, innovative and competitive specialists in the field of intercultural communication in a multicultural society. Analysing the requirements of the contemporary labour market, recommendations of cooperation partners and companies in the field, as well as using its own resources, VUAS FTS decided to make significant changes in the academic bachelor study programme "Languages and Intercultural Communication", further developing and implementing it as a professional bachelor study programme "Intercultural Communication".

The tasks, knowledge, skills and competences required of public relations managers are defined in the Occupational Standard for Public Relations Managers, approved by the Tripartite Cooperation

Sub-Council for Vocational Education and Employment at its meeting on February 28, 2020, protocol No. 2. The full text of the document is available at the following electronic link: https://registri.visc.gov.lv/profizglitiba/dokumenti/standarti/2017/PS-130.pdf. The occupational standard specifies that the occupational qualification of public relations manager corresponds to the seventh level of professional qualification (PKL 7) and the seventh level of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF 6).

The content and delivery of the study programme complies with code 42314. The first part of the code (42) indicates that the study programme provides first cycle professional higher education. The second part of the code (314) indicates that the content and delivery of the study programme correspond to the group of educational programmes - language studies and programmes.

Aims and objectives of the programme

The aim, objectives and study outcomes of the bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication" are defined in accordance with the national classification framework corresponding to the European Qualifications Framework set out in Cabinet of Ministers' Regulation No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education". The aim of the study programme is further subdivided into strategic and specific objectives.

The strategic objectives of the study programme are:

1. to achieve the study outcomes set out in the study programme in accordance with the description of knowledge, skills and competences at LQF level 6 and PKL level 6;
2. to provide professional studies that are relevant to the needs of the economy and society, based on the theoretical foundations of the sciences and applicable in practice;
3. to ensure the training of specialists in the specialisation in demand in the labour market for private economic structures for work in Latvia and other Member States of the European Union.

The specific objectives of the programme are:

1. to prepare qualified intercultural communication specialists for the requirements of the Latvian and EU labour markets by providing in-depth knowledge based on the latest scientific knowledge and acquiring the skills and competences required in their professional fields of activity;
2. to prepare specialists for qualified scientific work, who are able to continue higher level studies by pursuing research work. On the basis of the acquired educational and methodological base, as well as the acquired set of professional skills and competences, graduates should be able to compete in the labour market and to react promptly to changes in it, while also successfully pursuing further education in other educational institutions;
3. to provide students with a scientific basis for the provision of high-level intercultural communication services in areas of economic need, developing scientific analytical skills and the ability to solve problems independently, as well as preparing students for further scientific research studies;
4. to pursue advanced studies that enable them to independently develop research methodologies and to apply research methodologies in new and emerging fields, as well as to continue their studies to achieve a higher level of qualification;
5. to ensure that the quality of studies meets the level of Europe and other economically developed countries of the world by improving the methodological, scientific and material-technical support of the teaching process and promoting cooperation with other Latvian and foreign higher education institutions.

Study programme **objectives**:

1. to prepare competitive public relations managers;
2. to ensure the achievement of study results (knowledge, skills and competences) in accordance with the requirements set for the study programme;
3. to ensure the successful acquisition of professional knowledge, skills and competences in accordance with the professional standard for public relations managers;
4. to develop students' analytical abilities, independent problem-solving skills, to facilitate their involvement in practical and theoretical problem-solving;
5. to develop students' general skills and competences, promoting the development of communicative and digital skills, analytical and critical thinking, creativity, civil responsibility, the ability to successfully manage oneself and work in a team, to take responsibility for the results of performance, ensuring the development of a successful personality
6. to cooperate with other universities, institutions, organisations, employers, attracting highly qualified and professional teaching staff for the implementation of the programme in order to provide training that meets the requirements of the present times;
7. to modify the programme content and teaching methods in a timely manner in response to changes in the labour market as well as anticipating changes in the near and distant future;
8. to respond to the latest trends in the labour market, to modify the content and teaching methods of the programme in a timely manner in response to changes in the international labour market, and to correctly anticipate changes in the near and distant future;
9. to prepare competitive professionals, to closely link the study process with real practice in multicultural enterprises.

Study outcomes of the study programme

As a result of successful completion of the Bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication", the graduate of the program achieves the outcomes mentioned at the beginning of the study program report.

The study programme outcomes to be achieved are broken down into the following knowledge, skills and competences.

Knowledge:

1. understand the basic principles of intercultural communication according to the theoretical framework of intercultural communication;;
2. understand the trends in the development of intercultural communication processes in the world and the role of globalisation in the development of economic and political processes;
3. be able to administer content in the organisation's corporate digital communication channels;
4. be able to plan resources for intercultural communication and public relations work;
5. be able to plan and administer budgets for communication projects;
6. be familiar with the specifics of building relationships with different stakeholders in the public, non-governmental and private sectors;
7. be able to comply with the laws, regulations, standards, ethical norms, organisational ethics and internal rules applicable to the field;
8. be able to comply with civil protection, environmental protection legislation, labour legislation, labour protection requirements;
9. be able to use multimedia and information and communication technologies in the performance of their duties.

Skills:

1. be able to apply theoretical and practical knowledge of information analysis to the management of intercultural communication processes;
2. be able to plan, organise and manage organisational communication in accordance with the

organisation's vision, mission and objectives;
3. be able to manage and coordinate the monitoring of information from the internal and external environment of the organisation;
4. be able to participate in the planning and implementation of intercultural communication in public relations projects and campaigns;
5. be able to contribute to the public image and reputation of the organisation, ensuring understanding between the different stakeholders of the organisation;
6. be able to gather, process and communicate information in line with the organisation's interests and objectives;
7. be able to build relationships with media representatives and opinion leaders in the context of intercultural communication;
8. be able to use integrated marketing communication methods in professional work;
9. be able to involve different audiences in the implementation of intercultural communication processes;
10. be able to plan and manage cooperation with external consultants and outsourced communication service providers;
11. be able to manage the work of subordinate public relations specialists or teams;
12. be able to communicate in two foreign languages and the national language;
13. be able to use information technology for their work and develop media literacy;
14. be able to apply civil and environmental protection requirements.

Competences:

1. understand and be able to communicate internally and externally in a multicultural environment;
2. be able to integrate knowledge from different fields, contributing to the creation of new knowledge, research or the development of professional practice methods;
3. be able to plan, develop and maintain the organisation's external communication in line with the overall objectives of the organisation, proposing strategies and tactics with appropriate communication tools and channels;
4. be able to advise the management of the organisation in the decision-making process on intercultural communication;
5. be able to plan and organise intercultural communication and public relations activities for internal and external audiences;
6. be able to create and update a risk and crisis communication plan, anticipating potential crises and possible solutions for internal and external audiences of the organisation;
7. be able to monitor or prepare information materials for different audiences;
8. be able to ensure that public relations work is evaluated according to the specifics of intercultural communication;
9. be able to independently carry out research on the results of public relations work and analysis of digital communication results in an international cultural environment;
10. be able to prepare proposals for improving public relations activities;
11. be able to develop social and civil skills for interpersonal and intercultural dialogue, develop argumentation and problem-solving skills;
12. be able to carry out and publish research and develop conceptions in the relevant field and area of professional activity;
13. be able to represent and present the organisation, plan and implement professional development and develop critical thinking;
14. be able to learn independently, analyse, select and process the acquired information in the field of intercultural communication management;
15. be able to evaluate the impact of their professional activity on the environment and society.

Admission rules

The bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication" admits applicants according to the Admission Rules of the current academic year of the VUAS (available on the VUAS website (https://irp.cdn-website.com/9945ff8b/files/uploaded/Uznemsanas_noteikumi_arzemniekiem_ENG_2024-25.pdf).

Applicants for the bachelor’s degree programme "Intercultural Communication" must have a secondary education. Admission to the programme is by competitive examination based on the results of centralised examinations in mathematics, Latvian and English, for English language studies additional proof of English language knowledge and skills - a certificate from an international testing institution or a secondary school English subject assessment. Persons who have received their previous education abroad may apply for studies if their educational documents have been assessed by the Academic Information Centre in accordance with the requirements laid down in Article 83 of the Law on Higher Education The evaluation and alignment of the subjects presented in the educational document with the admission requirements of the VUAS is approved by the VUAS Admissions Committee. All admission results are approved by the VUAS Admissions Committee.

Admission requirements are governed by the VUAS "Admission Rules", which are approved annually by the Senate. From the moment of matriculation until the moment of examination, having fulfilled all the conditions of the programme, the student shall, in accordance with the aim, objectives and results of the study programme, acquire knowledge, skills and competences, obtaining a first cycle higher education bachelor’s degree in Intercultural Communication and a sixth level professional qualification of Public Relations Manager.

The title of the study programme, the degree to be obtained, the professional qualification, the aim and objectives of the programme are mutually consistent and ensure that the aim of the programme is achieved.

3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study programme, analysis of graduates' employment.

According to the State Employment Agency's occupational demand projections for Latvia (source: https://prognozes.nva.gov.lv/lv/profession , accessed: 10.09.2023), the demand for legal, social and cultural and related professionals is growing rapidly:

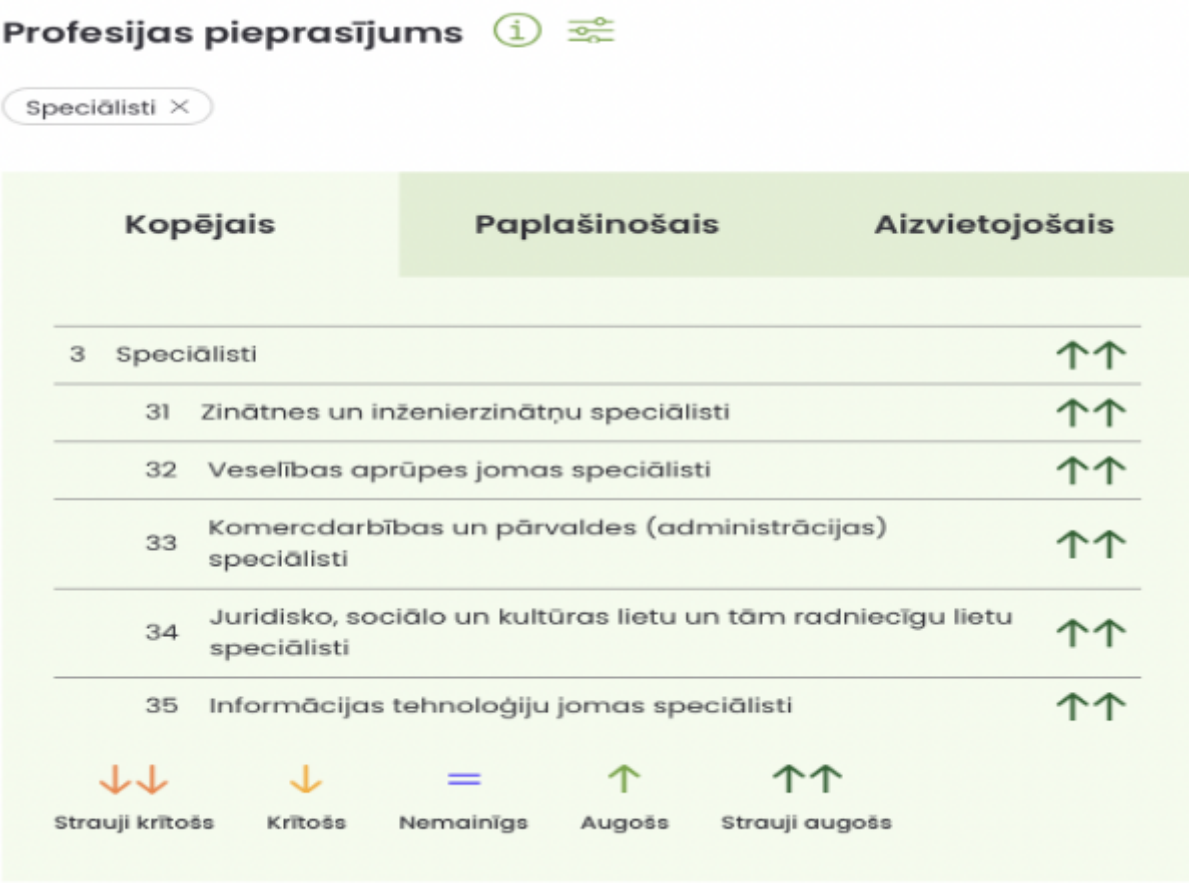


Image 3.1.

In the context of the European Union, there is a wide range of job opportunities in public relations, e.g. a LinkedIn search for "public relations in European Union" yields 153 927 results with potential job opportunities in European Union countries with competitive salaries (source accessed 10.09.2023).

For example, the demand for public relations managers in the United States is estimated to grow by 6% between 2022 and 2032, compared to an average growth rate of 3% per decade (source: https://www.bls.gov/ooh/management/public-relations-managers.htm , accessed 10.09.2023).

Therefore, it can be concluded that the qualification obtained by the graduates of the study programme "Intercultural Communication" - public relations manager - and the acquired skills and knowledge in culture, public relations, marketing and general education study courses are in demand in the local and international labour market according to the study programme plan. It should be mentioned that the study programme provides students with the skills and knowledge to work after graduation in both Latvian and international companies, mainly in the field of public relations, but the acquired knowledge can also be used in other related fields.

Objective data on student employment will be available from the 2023/2024 academic year onwards, as the first graduation is expected in June 2024 for students enrolled in the study programme "Intercultural Communication" after the substantial changes and who will be the first to obtain the bachelor's degree in Intercultural Communication as well as the qualification of Public Relations Manager.

3.1.4. Statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down into different study forms, types, and

languages.

Reasons for students' exmatriculation from the bachelor’s degree programme "Intercultural Communication" (formerly the academic bachelor's degree programme "Languages and Intercultural Communication") range from lack of motivation and family problems to students' perceptions of too high tuition fees.

More detailed information (statistical data on the number of students in the study programme) and a complete overview of the dynamics of the number of students is summarised in Annex No. 3.2.

Analyzing the dynamics of the students in the Latvian and English stream during the reporting period, it is possible to conclude that in 2018, 11 students started their studies in the Latvian stream, in 2019 – 8 students in the Latvian stream, in 2020 – 6 students in the English stream, in 2021 – 9 students in the English stream, incl. 1 foreigner, in 2022 – 5 students in the Latvian stream and 15 students in the English stream, incl. 4 foreigners and in 2023 – 14 students in the English stream, incl. 2 foreigners.

3.1.5. Substantiation of the development of the joint study programme and description and evaluation of the choice of partner universities, including information on the development and implementation of the joint study programme (if applicable).

3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

3.2.1. Analysis of the content of the study programme. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators with the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study courses/ modules and compliance with the needs of the relevant industry, labour market and with the trends in science on how and whether the content of the study courses/ modules is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science.

Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education" (13.06.2023) of the Republic of Latvia defines the compulsory content of the bachelor's study programme (Paragraphs 18-29 of the Regulation). The content, structure and layout of the bachelor's study programme are designed in compliance with all the requirements of the aforementioned Cabinet Regulations. The study courses are expressed in CP, where 1 CP = 1 ECTS = 25 academic hours, based on the Order No. 14 of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences vice-rector Una Libkovska, issued on 02.02.2024.

Study programme content

The programme consists of the following groups of study courses:

1. General study courses (at least 30 CP) 31 CP/ECTS
2. Basic theoretical courses and courses of information technologies (in field of professional activity) (at least 54 CP) 54 CP/ECTS
3. Courses of professional specialization (in field of professional activity) (at least 90 CP) 98 CP/ECTS
4. Optional study courses (at least 9 CP) 9 CP/ECTS
5. Internship (at least 30 CP) 30 CP/ECTS
6. National examination (at least 18 CP) 18 CP/ECTS

Total 240 CP

The first cycle of the higher vocational education programme basic theoretical courses and courses of information technologies (54 CP/ECTS), provide the latest developments in theory and practice in cultural studies, the role of language in multicultural societies, intercultural relations and communication, the importance of the development of the digital environment and information technologies today (Cultural Studies and Philosophy, Digital Culture Management, Language Contrasts in Cultural Perspectives, Language Technology, Media Communication in Multicultural Environments, Public Relations Strategies I, Public Relations Strategies II, Intercultural Communication, Information and Business Processes, etc.).

The courses of professional specialisation (98 CP/ECTS) contribute to the development of professional knowledge in the field of culture, raising its issues in today's multicultural society, expanding practical knowledge in the use of languages and the organisation and implementation of intercultural communication, as well as providing an understanding of economic and management processes (Diplomatic Protocol, Academic Writing I, Academic Writing II, Human Resources in a Multicultural Environment, EU Politics and Economics, International Commercial Law, Crisis Communication and Risk Management, etc.).

General (31 CP/ECTS) and optional study courses (9 CP/ECTS) - study courses that develop social, communicative, organisational and digital skills and competences, study courses for the development of professional business competence, management skills development; study courses that provide an understanding of sustainable development of society, green thinking and civil protection (Introduction to Intercultural Communication Studies, Project Management, Critical Thinking and Decision Making, Business Ethics, Organisational Behaviour, Interpersonal Psychology, Leadership, Societal Sustainability and Green Thinking, Civil Protection, etc.).

Internship (30 CP/ECTS) is a part of the study process integrating theoretical and practical knowledge. The internship is carried out in companies, institutions and organisations whose work is related to the field of culture and intercultural communication and relations (national societies, embassies and consulates, international companies and organisations, etc.), where students participate in research, planning, organisation and implementation of current intercultural communication issues. Professional internship is organised in accordance with the approved Internship Regulations.

Bachelor thesis (18 CP/ECTS) is an independent scientific and practical research devoted to solving a topical problem in the field of intercultural communication. The bachelor thesis must be of practical relevance to the problems of communication, intercultural communication and relationships, and the topic must be relevant. The bachelor thesis can be defended after successful completion of all the courses and the internship.

The content of the study programme is determined in accordance with the study programme plan

(available in Annex 3.6).

Relevance and updating of study programme content to labour market needs

The definition and implementation of the content of the study programme is carried out through the following measures, which ensure the involvement of employers' representatives in the definition and implementation of the content of the study programme. As a result, employers are involved in the evaluation of the study programme results and in the implementation of the necessary changes to ensure the relevance of the study programme to the needs of the labour market.

The content and implementation of the study programme is determined in accordance with the professional standard.

Given that the study programme is a first cycle professional higher education programme, its content is defined and implemented in accordance with the Professional Standard for Public Relations Manager. The content of the study programme is thus designed and implemented in accordance with current trends in the field and the needs of the labour market.

Representatives of companies from the industry are represented on the study programme council.

Three employer representatives (Vasili Ragačevičs (Skrivanek SIA), Māris Balčūns (Baltic-German Chamber of Commerce) and Mikus Brakanskis (Bucher Municipal SIA)) have been approved as members of the FTS study programme council. This gives employers the opportunity to be involved in decision-making on the content and implementation of the study programme, as well as to put forward their own proposals for changes.

Representatives of companies from the industry are represented on the bachelor thesis defence committee.

Employers' representatives are involved in the defence of bachelor theses as members of the National Examination Board. This gives employers the opportunity to assess the relevance of the students prepared within the study programme to the needs of the industry and the labour market. After the defence of the bachelor theses, discussions are held with employers' representatives, during which gaps in the achieved results and potential steps to improve the content of the study programme are discussed. This provides annual feedback from employers on the results achieved.
Representatives of companies from the industry are involved in the study process as teaching staff.

To ensure closer contact between students and the representatives of companies in the industry, several courses are delivered by employers' representatives. This gives employers' representatives the opportunity to shape the content of study courses in line with industry trends, as well as to assess the level of preparation of students and provide feedback to the study programme management on existing weaknesses. Employer surveys are organised.

Employer surveys gather the overall opinion of employers, which allows to identify gaps in the study programme and to plan necessary changes.

3.2.2. In the case of master’s and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation. In the case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels (if applicable).

3.2.3. Assessment of the study programme including the study course/ module implementation methods by indicating what the methods are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In the case of a joint study programme, or in case the study programme is implemented in a foreign language or in the form of distance learning, describe in detail the methods used to deliver such a study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

The implementation of the study process is based on the principles of student-centred education. For example, the study process ensures the diversity of students' needs, creating different ways and paths of learning that suit everyone. Lecturers are encouraged to regularly evaluate and improve teaching styles and methods, and to provide students with any additional guidance or other support they need to learn. At the end of each course of study in the bachelor programme, anonymous surveys are carried out in which students freely provide an evaluation of the course in question, thus providing feedback.

Lectures are delivered in traditional formats, with presentations and/or materials and explanations on the topic prepared by the lecturer, as well as including interactive work, where students engage as active participants in the lectures.

During the **practical classes**, students work on their practical projects (individually or in groups). During these classes, as well as during the seminars, discussions and exchanges of views on the aspects to be discussed take place. Practical training is one of the main teaching approaches used in the implementation of the study programme, as theory and practice must be closely linked in order to achieve the objective of producing qualified and competitive public relations managers and specialists.

During the study process, students develop three study projects, specifically in the study courses Cultural Studies and Philosophy, Fundamentals of Entrepreneurship and Image Building and Branding.

During **independent study**, the student studies the subject independently. Independent work can take place in classrooms, in the library (where free-access computers with internet access are also provided). All lecturers and students use the e-learning environment *Moodle*, in which course materials are uploaded so that, in addition to lecture and class materials, there can be a forum for the exchange of opinions and information between the lecturer and students, as well as between students themselves.

Optional study courses that can be taken by distance learning (e.g. Corpora in translation studies, Computer games localisation, Audiovisual Translation) are supervised by a lecturer who assesses the completion of assignments and the results of the final test. In addition to these courses, students have the possibility to take courses in any other study programme as optional study courses for which no prerequisites have been set.

The study programme "Intercultural Communication" is implemented in both Latvian and English. The level of Latvian and English language skills of the lecturers is confirmed by the attached CVs in Latvian and English respectively, which can be found in Annex 2.9.

3.2.4. If the study programme envisages an internship, describe the internship opportunities offered to students, provision and work organization, including whether the higher education institution/ college helps students to find an internship place. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how internship opportunities are provided in a foreign language, including for foreign students. To provide analysis and evaluation of the connection of the tasks set for students during the internship included in the study programme with the learning outcomes of the study programme (if applicable).

The aim of the internship is to use the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired in the study process to solve specific tasks in a practical environment in order to promote the development and improvement of students' professional knowledge, skills and competences in line with the qualification of public relations manager. In the 7th semester of the study programme "Intercultural Communication" an internship of 30 CP is foreseen in accordance with the study plan and the Regulation of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Latvia No. 305 "Regulations on the State Standard for Professional Higher Education", which stipulates a minimum internship of 30 CP. The Director of the Study Programme is responsible for the organisation and control of the internship in accordance with the duties set out in the job description of the "Director of the Study Programme" of the VUAS. The internships chosen by the students are evaluated and approved by the Faculty Council. The organisation of internship work is specified in the internship regulations of the study programme "Intercultural Communication" (hereinafter - the Internship Regulations, see Annex 3.8). The implementation of internship does not differ for Latvian and English students. Students are provided with equal internship opportunities, the same amount of help in finding an internship place, and draft documents to be submitted are offered in both Latvian and English (internship contract, internship diary, etc. (available in the "Internship Regulations")).

Aim and objectives of the internship

The aim and objectives of the internship are set out in the Internship Regulations in accordance with:

1. the duties and tasks of a public relations manager, as laid down in the professional standard "Public Relations Manager";
2. the learning outcomes of the study programme (hereinafter referred to as SPSRs) as specified in the "Mapping of Study Courses for the Achievement of the Learning Outcomes of the Study Programme" (hereinafter referred to as the "Mapping of Learning Outcomes", see Annex 3.5);
3. the course description of the study internship.

The following internship objectives are set out in the Internship Regulations:

1. independently carry out practical work in which the theoretical knowledge and practical skills acquired during studies are used to solve real public relations (including marketing, business and other) problems;
2. collecting materials for a bachelor thesis (which can be related to the internship topic);
3. learning record-keeping skills (facultative);
4. regular documentation and self-evaluation of the work in the internship diary;
5. preparation of an overview and report at the internship conference on the internship and the work done.

The link between the objectives and goals of the students' internship and the SPSRs is indicated in the Mapping of Learning Outcomes (see Annex 3.5) and in the description of the internship, which is presented in the same form as all course descriptions.

Internship opportunities

The internship opportunities used by students so far can be divided into three categories:

1. Internship in companies and organisations in Latvia;
2. Internship at VUAS;
3. Internship in companies, institutions and organisations abroad through the Erasmus+ programme.

Support provided by the university in finding and choosing an internship

The Programme Director provides support if students are unable to find an internship placement, but most of the time it is just a matter of advising on the most appropriate placement for the student in order to get the most valuable practical experience.

Erasmus+ internship support provided by the university

To facilitate student mobility and contribute to the achievement of the SPSRs, the study programme supports study placements abroad under the Erasmus+ programme. This support is carried out through the following activities, in consultation with the Study Programme Director, by the Erasmus+ Coordinator:

1. Discussions with students about potential internship abroad, individually assessing students' goals, abilities, competences and knowledge;
2. Finding an internship based on the contacts established at the VUAS during various international research projects;
3. Informal discussions with the potential internship placement about the tasks to be performed and the deadlines;
4. Support in document preparation (CV, motivation letter, etc.);
5. Providing guidance to students to fully prepare for internship interviews;
6. Guidance on finding accommodation.

All formal support and additional student assessment is provided by the staff of the VUAS Study Department.

Thus, every year several 4th year students of the study programme "Intercultural Communication" undertake internships abroad.In the academic year 2018/2019 one student has completed an internship at BBB Gestión Hotelera, Benidorm, Spain, performing hotel administration duties. During the two academic years under review (2019/2020, 2020/2021), no students underwent internships, while in the academic year 2021/2022, two students underwent internships: one performed customer service duties at Exterion Media in Spain and the other performed the duties of a public relations specialist at Ventspils University of Applied Sciences. 2023/2024: one student interns at the Museum of Living Art, Iceland, as a PR specialist, and another student interns at the Czech company Ascari S.R.O.

3.2.5. Evaluation and description of the promotion opportunities and the promotion process provided to the students of the doctoral study programme (if applicable).

3.2.6. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the marks of the final theses.

Students choose the topics of their final theses independently, in consultation with their scientific supervisors. These topics are usually related to research projects that students have been involved in during their studies, or for those students who have started their career, they relate their topic to current developments in their workplace.

There have been no graduates in the programme so far during the reporting period; the first graduates are expected in the academic year 2023/2024.

Analyzing the topics of the final thesis in the review period before making the significant changes in the study program, students conducted research on, for example, the influence of different cultures on young people, everyday life, household, education and work opportunities. Some of the topics on which the final theses were defended in 2019 are "The impact of cultural change on the personality of students: Latvian students abroad", "Cultural dimensions in Latvia: characteristics of Latvian and Russian cultures among urban youth", "Integration of Latvian students Work and travel visas program in the USA". In contrast, some of the topics on which theses are defended in 2020 are, for example, "Communication in multicultural companies: the impact of stereotypes", "Prospects of humanities graduates in the labor market: formal and real aspects", "Sexual harassment in the European Union: actions and their side-by-side comparison of effects'. Evaluations of students' final theses vary from average (4) to excellent (10) and the choice of the thesis topic is determined by the situation and current events in various areas of the world, Europe and Latvia. This is a trend that can also be observed in the selection of topics for final theses in the following years.

3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

3.3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples.

To ensure the implementation of the study programme, the study process is supported by the materialy technical and informational base of the VUAS: resources and provision described in the Self-assessment Report, Part II, Chapter 3, Subsections 2.3.1 - 2.3.3. No resources and provision specific to the study programme are required. Lectures, practical classes and examinations are held at the premises of the VUAS in Ventspils, Inženieru iela 101.

It can be rightly assumed that all the necessary conditions have been created for studies at the VUAS - new modern lecture rooms, computer classrooms, a modern library with a large reading room, etc. The study material and technical base allows to fully provide the conditions necessary

for the study programme study courses:

1. a multimedia projector and a computer in each study room;
2. interactive whiteboards in the conference rooms;
3. computer rooms are equipped with the necessary software;
4. students have the possibility to print their work and visit computer rooms for individual study.

In addition to the technologies, software and services available at VUAS, the Infrastructure Unit also maintains other necessary network services, such as the university's website. Other possible web services that could improve or better provide the functionality of VUAS IT resources are being explored, such as *WIKI*, network cluster file systems, server virtualisation, service backups, etc. The VUAS library has access to scientific literature on translation studies, language learning, including textbooks, intercultural communication, and various linguistic issues. Since the acquisition of foreign literature is limited in the post-crisis period, students have access to various databases, about which all students and lecturers are regularly informed by the library staff, who also offer training courses on how to use the databases. In addition to the University's databases, lecturers give students the opportunity to use the books and materials in their possession by copying and uploading them onto the *Moodle* platform. Evaluating the basic literature and supplementary literature indicated by the authors of the study courses, it is possible to conclude that it is mostly foreign literature written or translated into English, which can be explained by the specifics of the program to prepare graduates of the study program for today's dynamic, multicultural work environment. On the other hand, study courses in which Latvian language development trends or language technologies are studied various scientific sources in Latvian are being used, for example Beks K., Media and communication science, Turība: Rīga, 2021, Vasiļjevs, A. (2019) Latvian language, artificial intelligence and challenges for European multilingualism, //Language and state, volume 10, ed. A. Weisbergs, Riga: Science. 277-288. p., as well as various blogs of Latvian authors, such as Tilde's conversations//Company "Tilde" blog. (2023) Available: https://www.tilde.lv/par-tildi/tildes-sarunas . Study courses are also developed taking into account the legislation and the latest trends in Latvia and around the globe, therefore the basic literature and supplementary literature specified by the study course authors are mostly not older than 5-6 years. In conclusion, the implementation of the study programme "Intercultural Communication" will be provided with an adequate materialy technical base.

3.3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific base support, including the resources provided within the framework of cooperation with other science institutes and higher education institutions (applicable to doctoral study programmes) (if applicable).

3.3.3. Indicate data on the available funding for the corresponding study programme, its funding sources and their use for the development of the study programme. Provide information on the costs per one student within this study programme, indicating the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between the specified items. The minimum number of students in the study programme in order to ensure the profitability of the study programme (indicating separately the information on each language, type and form of the study programme implementation).

When compiling the financial and actual resources required for the implementation of a study programme, the VUAS shall include in the calculation the income and expenditure factually or proportionally corresponding to the study programme. The revenue includes the state subsidy for the provision of the study process (EUR 1630.11 per student, state budget subsidy for student scholarships and social needs EUR 251.98 per student), as well as the revenue from tuition fees (Study fees for citizens of Latvia and the EU - 2000 EUR, study fees for citizens of third countries - 3500 EUR). Revenue also includes funding from the local government to support the study process. The proportion of expenditure is determined by aggregating information from two types of calculations:

1. 25% deductions for each faculty (calculated from the state subsidy and tuition fee income approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia) are centrally determined for covering the general maintenance expenses of the VUAS;
2. For each study programme, a proportional share of the expenses is calculated from the general maintenance expenses of the VUAS calculated for the faculty or directly necessary for the operation of a specific faculty, taking into account the number of students in a specific programme.

General maintenance expenditure includes a deduction of 25% (set by the VUAS at the same level for all faculties) to cover VUAS maintenance expenditure:

1. utility costs - electricity, heating, water and sewerage services, waste collection services;
2. the cost of maintenance, including repair services, of the premises and the building;
3. IT system services;
4. marketing expenses;
5. general representational expenses;
6. partly administrative remuneration expenses;
7. general tax payments by the institution.

The direct expenses of the faculty, which are necessary and identifiable as expenses incurred directly by the faculty, are allocated proportionally to the study programmes, taking into account the proportion of the number of students studying in the programme to the total number of students in the faculty. The expenses foreseen, undertaken and identifiable as expenditure for a specific study programme shall be included in the costs of the specific study programme. These aforementioned expenses include the remuneration of the academic and general staff of the faculty, tax expenses, insurance expenses, as well as the purchase of fixed assets, inventory, books, teaching aids, etc. of the faculty. Both income and expenditure are also shown per student, per study programme (usually per calendar year), and the share of each group of expenditure in the total expenditure of the faculty or study programme is determined. Different calculation methods can be used to determine the potential 'break-even point' of a study programme, such as increasing the number of students, increasing public funding per student or increasing tuition fees. VUAS has so far used the former method - modelling the minimum number of students required - because, given the current economic situation as well as the financial situation of the local population, VUAS does not seek to increase tuition fees and instead focuses its resources on student recruitment measures. There is no cost difference between Latvian and English language students in the implemented study programme.

Currently, 44 students study in the bachelor’s study programme “Intercultural Communication”, which is 21.57% of the total number of students of the Faculty. The corresponding proportion is applied in the calculation of the municipal funding attributable to the study programme. The same proportion of 21.57% students is used to calculate the eligible expenditure for the programme. 57 students would be required for the programme to reach breakeven.

Given that the VUAS as a whole will also need to increase its expenditure in the future, an increase in the grant is necessary. Currently, the losses of the study programme are covered by the positive cash flow of other programmes in this study area.

For each programme, a direct cost calculation is made. Taking into account the costs directly affecting the implementation of the study programme, it is estimated that on average EUR 47736 is spent on remuneration of lecturers and general staff involved in the study programme, EUR 8077 on scholarships and EUR 264 on goods and services (see Annex 3.9 for a detailed calculation of the study programme's cost price).

3.4. Teaching Staff

3.4.1. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The professional bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication" is implemented by highly qualified academic staff with significant practical experience in both the private and academic sectors, which ensures that students acquire the necessary research skills, theoretical and practical knowledge, skills and competences (see Table 3.1).

Table 3.1.

Academic staff of the professional bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication"

No.	Name	Surname	Academic position	Scientific degree, qualification	Study courses taught
1.	Inga	Ieviņa	Guest lecturer	Master's degree in Intercultural Communication	Marketing communication; Media communication in a multicultural environment; Intercultural aspects of e-marketing International; Public Relations.

2.	Sandija	Skudra	Guest lecturer	Mg. translat., MA	Communication theories; Public Speaking and Presentation Skills; Intercultural communication; Latvian Language in Intercultural Communication; Introduction to Intercultural Communication Studies; English: Communication Skills I; English: Communication Skills II.
3.	Astra	Skrābane	Assoc. prof.	Doctoral degree in Philology	Second Foreign Language I (French I); Second Foreign Language II (French II).
4.	Guntars	Dreijers	Assoc. prof.	Doctor of Philology in Comparative and Contrastive Linguistics	Digital culture management; Diplomatic protocol; Language contrasts in cultural perspectives; Cultural Studies and Philosophy; Critical thinking and decision-making; Interpersonal psychology; Language for Applied Communication I; Language for Applied Communication II.
5.	Aiga	Bādere	Lecturer	Professional master's degree in Translation of Applied Texts	Language Technology

6.	Vita	Balama	Assistant professor	Doctoral degree in Education	Digital culture management; Diplomatic protocol; Human resources in a multicultural environment; Applied Research Methodology; Crisis communication and risk management; Economic and political aspects of entrepreneurship.
7.	Liene	Resele	Assistant professor	Doctoral degree in management studies, subfield of business administration	Strategic Management
8.	Dace	Štefenberga	Assistant professor	PhD	Leadership; Project management.
9.	Matīss Rihards	Ikše	Guest lecturer	MA	Public speaking and presentation skills; Image building and branding.
10.	Andra	Strautiņa	Guest lecturer	Mg.art.	Social Media Communication
11.	Laura	Asarite-Schmidt	Guest assistant professor	Dr.phil.	EU Politics and Economy
12.	Inta	Ozola	Lecturer	Professional master’s degree in management	Marketing
13.	Sintija	Ozoliņa	Guest lecturer	Professional master's degree in translation of legal texts	Latvian language in intercultural communication
14.	Jānis	Grasis	Guest Professor	PhD	International commercial law

15.	Inta	Santa	Guest lecturer	Professional master’s degree in psychology	Eneagram basics in professional communication
16.	Kārlis	Krēsliņš	Professor	PhD	Information and business processes
17.	Kristians	Jacevičs	Guest lecturer	Professional master’s degree in business management	Media Technology
18.	Sanita	Lasmane	Guest lecturer	Professional master’s degree in business management	Business process simulation in business
19.	Rafaels Martins	Kalvo	Assistant professor	Doctoral degree in Philology	Academic Writing I; Academic Writing II; Second Foreign Language I (Spanish I); Second Foreign Language II (Spanish II).
20.	Karina	Dinsberga	Guest lecturer	Mg. translat., MA	Business Ethics and Culture
21.	Ivo	Lemšs	Guest lecturer	Master of Science in Environmental Science	Civil protection and societal sustainability
22.	Baiba	Rozenberga	Guest lecturer	Bachelor's degree, Economics, Financial Analytics	Digital tools for business management
23.	Rūta	Maltisova	Guest lecturer	Professional Master’s degree in Human Resources Management	Public Relations Strategies I; Public Relations Strategies II.

Academic staff of the bachelor's study programme "Intercultural Communication"

The language skills of the lecturers of this study programme "Intercultural Communication" comply with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 733 of 2009 "Regulations on the Scope of Knowledge of the State Language and the Procedure for Testing Proficiency in the State Language for Professional and Official Duties". Information on the foreign language skills of the lecturers is summarised in the

lecturers' curricula vitae (CV) attached in the Annex. The qualifications of the teaching staff are in line with Article 39 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions concerning the academic staff of the relevant cycle of study programmes. There are 23 teaching staff involved in the implementation of the study programme, 9 of whom are VUAS elected lecturers.

The relatively high number of guest lecturers is due to the fact that teaching staff from other higher education institutions and industry companies are also involved in order to provide all the necessary competences to achieve the study programme results, as well as to facilitate cooperation with other higher education institutions and industry companies. Nine members of the teaching staff have doctoral degrees, and one member of the teaching staff (A. Bādere) is currently studying for a doctorate. Several of the lecturers involved in the study programme are also involved in companies in the sector alongside their teaching work. This promotes the link between the content and implementation of the study programme and the industry and its topical developments: For example, Inga Ieviņa is the Head of the Marketing and Development Department of Ventspils Freeport Authority and the Head of Public Relations, therefore she is able to work with such study courses as Media Communication in Multicultural Environment, International Public Relations, etc. in accordance with the latest developments in the industry, while Kristians Jacevičs has been employed for many years in Ventspils Digital Centre and Ventspils Education Authority, which allows him to teach such study courses as Media Technology to students of the "Intercultural Communication" study programme in high quality and in accordance with the latest trends.

Appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff to the study programme's outcomes and objectives.

The qualifications and professional activity of Vita Balama, Sandija Skudra, Guntars Dreijers, Aiga Bādere are directly related to intercultural communication and culture, thus the qualifications of these teaching staff directly correspond to the following study programme outcome:

SPSR 1: Understanding and knowledge of the theoretical frameworks and recent findings in intercultural communication.

In the implementation of the study programme are involved teaching staff (Inga Ieviņa, Matīss Rihards Ikše, Astra Skrābane, Rafaels Martins Kalvo, Karīna Dinsberga, Sintija Ozoliņa, Sandija Skudra, Kristians Jacevičs, Rūta Maltisova) who have long-standing experience in teaching courses that are directly related to the following study programme outcomes:

SPSR 3: Ability to manage and implement day-to-day intercultural communication and public relations processes;

SPSR 5: Ability to implement practical communication activities and general task completion in an organisation.

The implementation of the study programme "Intercultural Communication" involves teaching staff whose degrees and professional qualifications are related to social sciences (Dace Štefenberga, Vita Balama, Kārlis Krēsliņš, Laura Asarīte-Schmidt, Liene Resele, Jānis Grasis). The involvement of these lecturers helps to achieve the following achievable results:

SPSR 2: Ability to plan and manage intercultural communication processes in an organisation;

SPSR 4: Ability to analyse and evaluate the implementation, resource planning and management of intercultural communication and public relations processes in an organisation.

The level of knowledge of the English language of the teaching staff is confirmed by the certificate No./1-10.1/102 issued on December 12, 2023, regarding the English language proficiency level of all teaching staff involved in the implementation of the bachelor's study program "Intercultural

Communication" (Appendix No. 2.11). The English language level of the teaching staff of the Bachelor study program "Intercultural communication" is C1/C2 (Aiga Bādere, Aiga Veckalne, Anastasija Vaska, Andra Strautiņa, Baiba Rozenberga, Dace Štefenberga, Guntars Dreijers, Inta Ozola, Kārlis Krēsliņš, Karīna Dinsberga, Kristiāns Jacevičs, Laura Asarīte-Schmidt, Liene Resele, Matīs Rihards Ikše, Sandija Skudra, Sintija Ozoliņa, Vita Balama, Rafael Martins Calvo, Rūta Maltisova), or B2 (Inga Ieviņa, Astra Skrābane, Inese Lūsēna-Ezera, Inta Santa, Ivo Lemšs, Jānis Grasis, Una Libkovska). Those whose English level is lower than C1/C2 teach study courses that are not related to the acquisition of English, such as French language, scientific research methodology or business fundamentals.

3.4.2. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

During the reporting period, following the significant changes made in 2021, the teaching staff of the 'Intercultural Communication' study programme has attracted new highly qualified professionals, including from the industry, which improves and positively influences the quality of the study programme, including ensuring a generational change of lecturers.

For example, the course "Media Technology" is taught by Kristian Jacevičius, a lecturer working in the field, whose professional experience is detailed in the attached curriculum vitae (CV).

Following the significant changes, the introduced study course "International Public Relations" is taught by Inga Ieviņa, who works in the field and whose work responsibilities are closely related to the aspects covered in this study course, so that students have the opportunity to learn from professionals working in a real work environment, as well as to learn the latest developments in the field.

Two lecturers with practical experience in public speaking and event management, Matīss Rihards Ikše and Sandija Skudra, have been appointed to teach the course "Public Speaking and Presentation Skills". Following the significant changes, this course has not yet been taught, as its implementation is planned for later semesters.

The academic writing course was previously taught by Jānis Veckrācis, however, in order to balance the teaching load of lecturers at the faculty, it was decided to change the lecturer to Rafael Martin Calvo, who also obtained his doctoral degree at the end of 2022 and has a long experience in teaching academic writing-related courses in the first cycle higher education programme "Translation and Language Technology" implemented by the Ventspils University of Applied Sciences at FTS. The course was taught for the first time in the spring semester of the academic year 2022/2023. No complaints have been received from students, so it can be concluded that the quality has not been compromised by the changes.

The changes in the language study courses have not impaired the quality of studies: the study courses "Russian Language I" and "Russian Language II" were previously taught by guest lecturer Anastasija Vaska, who decided no longer to do so, so Karīna Dinsberga - a lecturer with a master’s degree and a proficiency level in Russian as a mother tongue - was recruited to teach this study course.

3.4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff

members, involved in the implementation of doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals or peer-reviewed monographs may be additionally specified. Information on the teaching staff included in the database of experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the relevant field of science (total number, name of the lecturer, field of science in which the teaching staff has the status of an expert and expiration date of the Latvian Council of Science expert) (if applicable).

3.4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

3.4.5. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study programme and study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

The most important criteria for the selection of academic staff are scientific and professional competence, which potentially ensures successful collaboration between teaching staff. Cooperation between the study programme teaching staff is promoted through both formal and informal activities organised by the VUAS. Lecturers from different faculties are involved in the implementation of the study process, which provides a variety of experiences and promotes professional development.

Evidence of successful collaboration between study programme teaching staff includes:

1. Interdisciplinary cooperation of academic staff - for example, faculty members from different fields of study are involved in the study programme and can share their experience and discuss topical issues at organised meetings of the Study Programme Council, Faculty Council meetings, seminars, meetings with employers, etc.
2. Cooperation of teaching staff in the development and improvement of the study programme content: lecturers carefully follow the thematic division included in the study course, mutually coordinating the thematic areas and the assessment mechanism of the study results.
3. Informal cooperation between teaching staff. Various activities are organised at the VUAS FTS to promote informal communication among the teaching staff. One of the examples is weekly coffee breaks, during which lecturers discuss current issues in an informal atmosphere, as well as share their experience in solving various problems. There is also a traditional

Christmas event and an end-of-semester event to give colleagues the opportunity to meet in a more informal atmosphere.

Currently, 22 lecturers are involved in the implementation of the study programme with various workloads, while 44 students are currently enrolled in the study programme. The ratio of students to lecturers is 44/21=2.09. The students are provided with quality studies and the possibility of individual approach during the study process. The calculations do not take into account that students from several study programmes of the VUAS participate in some study courses at the same time.

Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	3-1_appendix_D_DP_ENG.pdf	3-1_pielikums_D_DP_LV.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)		
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	3-2_pielikums_LV_EN_Statistika_par_studejosajiem_SK_LV (1).docx	3-2_pielikums_LV_EN_Statistika_par_studejosajiem_SK_LV (1).docx
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard	3-3_appendix_SK_Atbilstiba izglitibas standartam_ENG.docx.pdf	3-3_piel_SK_Atbilstiba izglitibas standartam_LV.docx.pdf
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)	3_4_appendix_SK_Atbilstība profesijas standartam_ENG.docx.pdf	3_4_piel_SK_Atbilstība profesijas standartam_LV.docx.pdf
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	3-5_appendix_studiju programmas kartējums_ENG.pdf	3-5_pielikums_studiju programmas kartējums_LV.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	3.6._piel_appendix_SK Studiju programmas plāns_LV un ENG.xlsx	3.6._piel_appendix_SK Studiju programmas plāns_LV un ENG.xlsx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	3-7_appendix_Studiju kursu apraksti_ENG.pdf	3-7_pielikums_Studiju kursu apraksti_LV.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)	3-8_appendix_Prakses nolikums_ar pielik_ENG.pdf	3-8_pielikums_Prakses nolikums_ar pielik_LV.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)		

Language and Literature Studies (51226)

Study field	*Language and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies, and Language Programmes*
ProcedureStudyProgram.Name	*Language and Literature Studies*
Education classification code	*51226*
Type of the study programme	*Third-cycle (doctor of philosophy) study programme*
Name of the study programme director	*Egita*
Surname of the study programme director	*Proveja*
E-mail of the study programme director	*egita.proveja@venta.lv*
Title of the study programme director	*Dr.philol., docente*
Phone of the study programme director	*29447896*
Goal of the study programme	*To train professional scientists in the field of linguistics, literary studies and translation studies with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research in the chosen sub-programme of the study programme, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of contemporary literary studies, linguistics and translation studies, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia; more broadly, it means participation in the formation of the Latvian and European intellectual elite, as well as the ability to influence the development directions and priorities of the above-mentioned fields of science.* *The aim of the sub-programme "Translation Science" is to train professional scientists in the field of translation science with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of contemporary translation science, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia.* *The aim of the sub-programme "Linguistics" is to train professional scientists in the field of linguistics with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of contemporary linguistics, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia.* *The aim of the sub-programme "Literary and Cultural Studies" is to train professional scholars in the field of literary and cultural studies with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of contemporary literary studies, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia.*
Tasks of the study programme	*Objectives of the study programme are:* *1. to provide qualitative knowledge of current theoretical and methodological problems in contemporary literary, linguistic and translation studies, integrating them into an interdisciplinary context;* *2. to develop the skills and competences of doctoral students, which will enable them to carry out independent projects and scientific research based on scientific knowledge and methods, producing new knowledge and achievements in line with international standards in the field of science;* *3. to provide qualified guidance for the scientific work of doctoral students, promoting the exchange of scientific work experience among academic staff, laying the foundations for the existence and development of a sustainable scientific school;* *4. to provide doctoral students with the opportunity to present the results of their scientific research and theoretical findings at international scientific conferences and to publish them in scientific journals;* *5. to promote doctoral students' understanding and competence in scientific and academic career development, focusing on cooperation with potential employers and entrepreneurs;* *6. to involve doctoral students in the internationalisation process by offering diverse opportunities for cooperation and mobility in Latvia and worldwide.* *All sub-programmes share the same objectives.*

Results of the study programme	*The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" corresponds to the eighth EQF level (Cabinet Regulation No. 322 Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education), which is the doctoral study level.* *1. Know and understand the regularities and main paradigms of the linguistic and literary process, current scientific theories and insights, master research methodology and contemporary research methods in the field of linguistics, literary and translation studies and at the interface between different fields.* *2. Understand the basic concepts of linguistics, literary studies and translation studies, fluently and productively use scientific terminology in Latvian, English and other languages related to the research; is proficient in specialised knowledge in the chosen field of research according to the specific subfield of science and the most important findings of the related subfields of the research topic.* *3. Understand the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and the social sciences and the economic and national economic context of the humanities.* *4. Independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem and issues, evaluate and select or independently develop methods and methodological strategies appropriate to scientific research, interpret results in a broader context, thus* *5. Contributing to the expansion of the frontiers of knowledge and/or giving new understanding to existing knowledge, its application in practice, carrying out original research, part of which is represented in internationally cited publications.* *6. Make scientifically based decisions in solving research problems, critically evaluate own and others' research, present and argue their opinions, communicate about their scientific activity (their field) with the wider scientific community and society at large, engage in research projects of international significance, collaborate effectively in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups.* *7. Integrate the results of scientific research in the university courses, in the management of the scientific work of students at different levels (Bachelor, Master), in the science transfer events.* *8. Publish the results of scientific research at national and international scientific conferences and seminars, and publish the results of their research in internationally recognised, including internationally cited, publications.* *9. Independently improve their scientific qualifications by exploring current trends in linguistics, literary and translation studies: propose innovative ideas for research projects, engage in project development and application to relevant programmes and funds, lead research assignments in organisations where extensive research knowledge and skills are required, thus continuing to develop progress in their chosen research field in academic and professional contexts.* *10. Independently manage a scientific team, working group in the relevant scientific sub-field, organise own research activities in accordance with the Code of Scientific Ethics, strengthen and independently improve digital competence.* *The target results of the sub-programme "Translation Science":* *Knowledge* *1. Be familiar with current theories and findings in translation studies, research methodologies and contemporary research methods in translation studies and at the interface between different fields.* *2. Understand the basic concepts of translation studies, operate fluently and productively with scientific terminology in Latvian, English and other languages related to the research; possess specialised knowledge in the chosen research field according to the specific subfield of science and the most important findings of the related subfields.* *3. Understand the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the economic and economic context of the humanities.* *Skills* *4 Independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem and issues, evaluate and select or independently develop a methodological strategy for their research, interpret the results in a broader context, carrying out original research, part of which is represented in internationally cited publications.* *5. Communicate about his/her field of scientific activity (his/her field) to the scientific community at large and to society at large, engages in research projects of international significance, collaborates effectively in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups.* *6. Integrate the results of scientific research into the courses of study at the university, in the management of scientific work of students at different levels (bachelor, master), in science transfer activities, in practical translation.* *Competences* *7. Publish the results of scientific research at national and international scientific conferences and seminars, publish the results of his/her research in internationally recognised, including internationally cited, journals.* *8. Independently improve his/her scientific qualification by studying current trends in translation studies.* *9. Independently lead a scientific team, working group in the relevant subfield of science, organise their research activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Scientists, strengthen and independently improve their digital competence.* *The target results of the sub-programme "Linguistics":* *Knowledge* *1. Know and understand the regularities and main paradigms of the linguistic process, current scientific theories and insights, and master research methodology and contemporary research methods in linguistics and at the interface between different fields.* *2. Understand the basic concepts of linguistics, fluently and productively use scientific terminology in Latvian, English and other languages related to the research; master specialised knowledge in the chosen research direction according to the specific subfield of science and the most important findings of the related subfields of the research topic.* *3. Understand the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the economic and economic context of the humanities.* *Skills* *4 Independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem and issues, evaluate and select or independently develop a methodological strategy for their research, interpret the results in a broader context, carrying out original research, part of which is represented in internationally cited publications.* *5. Communicate about his/her field of research (his/her discipline) to the scientific community at large and to society at large, engages in research projects of international significance, collaborates effectively in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups.* *6. Integrate the results of scientific research into the courses of study at the university, in the management of scientific work of students at different levels (bachelor, master), in science transfer activities.* *Competences* *7. Publish the results of scientific research at national and international scientific conferences and seminars, publish the results of his/her research in internationally recognised, including internationally cited, journals.* *8. Independently improve his/her scientific qualification by studying current trends in linguistics.* *9. Independently manage a scientific team, a working group in the relevant subfield of science, organises his/her research activities in accordance with the code of ethics of a scientist, strengthens and independently improves his/her digital competence.* *The target results of the sub-programme "Literary and Cultural Studies":* *Knowledge* *1. Knowledge and understanding of the patterns and main paradigms of the literary and cultural process, current scientific theories and insights, research methodology and contemporary research methods in literary studies and at the interface between different fields.* *2. Understand the basic concepts of literary and cultural studies, fluently and productively use scientific terminology in Latvian, English and other languages related to the research; master specialised knowledge in the chosen research direction according to the specific sub-discipline of science and the most important findings of the sub-disciplines related to the research topic.* *3. Understand the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the economic and economic context of the humanities.* *Prasmes* *4 Independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem and issues, evaluate and select or independently develop a methodological strategy for their research, interpret the results in a broader context, carrying out original research, part of which is represented in internationally cited publications.* *5. Communicate about his/her field of research (his/her discipline) to the scientific community at large and to society at large, engages in research projects of international significance, collaborates effectively in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups.* *6. Integrate the results of scientific research into the courses of study at the university, in the management of scientific work of students at different levels (bachelor, master), in science transfer activities.* *Competences* *7. Publish the results of scientific research at national and international scientific conferences and seminars, publish the results of his/her research in internationally recognised, including internationally cited, journals.* *8. Independently improve his/her scientific qualification by studying current trends in literary and cultural studies.* *9. Independently manage a scientific team, working group in the relevant subfield of science, organises own research activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics of a Scientist, strengthens and independently improves digital competence.*
Final examination upon the completion of the study programme	*doctoral examination in specialisation* *doctoral examination in English language*

Study programme forms

Full time studies - 3 years - latvian

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*3*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*latvian*
Amount (CP)	*180*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Master's degree in the humanities (linguistics and literary studies, translation studies, history, philosophy) or social sciences (intercultural relations, social anthropology, social psychology, etc.), or equivalent level 2 professional qualification in a relevant field*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*doctoral degree, Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Humanities and Arts*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

Full time studies - 3 years - english

Study type and form	*Full time studies*
Duration in full years	*3*
Duration in month	*0*
Language	*english*
Amount (CP)	*180*
Admission requirements (in English)	*Master`s degree in Humanities (Linguistics and Literary Theory, Translation Studies, History, Philosophy) or Social Sciences (Intercultural Relations, Social Anthropology, Social Psychology et c.) or equivalent Level 2 higher professional education in the relevant field of study, English language skills at least at level B2*
Degree to be acquired or professional qualification, or degree to be acquired and professional qualification (in english)	*doctoral degree, Doctor of Science (Ph.D.) in Humanities and Arts*
Qualification to be obtained (in english)	-

Places of implementation

Place name	City	Address
Ventspils University College	VENTSPILS	INŽENIERU IELA 101, VENTSPILS, LV-3601

3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme

3.1.1. Description and analysis of changes in the parameters of the study programme made since the issuance of the previous accreditation form of the study field or issuance of the study programme license, if the study programme is not included on the accreditation form of the study field, including changes planned within the evaluation procedure of the study field evaluation procedure.

The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is a new doctoral programme licensed in September 2022, so no changes have been made to the parameters of the programme. The decision of the Council of Higher Education on the implementation of the joint doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" of Daugavpils University, Liepaja University and Ventspils University of Applied Sciences can be found in Annex 3.11.

The study courses are expressed in CP, where 1 CP = 1 ECTS = 25 academic hours, based on the Order No. 14 of Ventspils University of Applied Sciences vice-rector of studies Una Libkovska, issued on 02.02.2024.

After Liepaja University joins the ecosystem of Riga Technical University, no changes are planned in the study programme parameters and implementation procedures. Currently, the process of signing a cooperation agreement between Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, Daugavpils University and RTU Liepāja Academy (previously signed with Liepāja University) on the implementation of the joint doctoral programme "Languages and Literature Studies" is underway.

3.1.2. Analysis and assessment of the study programme compliance with the study field. Analysis of the interrelation between the code of the study programme, the degree, professional qualification/professional qualification requirements or the degree and professional qualification to be acquired, the aims, objectives, learning outcomes, and the admission requirements. Description of the duration and scope of the implementation of the study programme (including different options of the study programme implementation) and evaluation of its usefulness.

The name, code, degree to be obtained, as well as the aim and objectives of the doctoral study programme "Language and Literature Studies" of the study field "Languages and Culture Studies, Mother Tongue Studies and Language Programmes" comply with the Regulations "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education" (Cabinet Regulations No. 322, adopted 13.06.2017). The knowledge, skills and competences defined in this study programme correspond to the descriptions of knowledge, skills and competences corresponding to level 8 of the Latvian Qualifications Framework (LQF), as defined in the Regulation "Regulations on the Latvian Classification of Education". The joint doctoral programme "Languages and Literature Studies" and its objectives are in line with the "Ventspils University of Applied Sciences Development Strategy 2021-2027", "Daugavpils University Development Strategy 2015-2020" and "Liepaja University Strategy 2016-2020" mission and vision of the future, approved in 202, as part of the implementation of a polycentric national development strategy, involving universities in the development of their

intellectual potential, offering a diverse range of study programmes at different levels and providing time-appropriate higher education and research. The study programme is implemented in Latvian and English (for foreign students) in the form of full-time studies (3 years).

Analysis of the interrelationship between programme title, code, degree, professional qualification, aims and objectives, learning outcomes and admission requirements.

Programme aims and objectives

The aim, objectives and study outcomes of the joint doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" are defined in accordance with the national classification framework corresponding to the European Qualifications Framework set out in Cabinet Regulation No. 322 "Regulations on the Classification of Latvian Education".

The doctoral study programme is a transitional stage between studies and independent research. The programme enables students to acquire knowledge and skills related to their chosen field, as well as to other related scientific fields and their research methodologies. One of the objectives of the doctoral programme is to prepare students for research-oriented work, either in the university or in society at large, and to equip them to fulfil a wide range of professional responsibilities and roles. Doctoral studies provide knowledge of research methods and scientific theories, which doctoral students use and update in their dissertations. On completion of their studies, doctoral students will be able to carry out their own research projects, formulating relevant problems and questions, analysing, processing and systematising data, as well as comparing them with previous scientific results.

The JDSP “Language and Literature Studies” is designed as an interdisciplinary programme comprising three sub-programmes: 'Translation Studies', 'Linguistics', 'Literary and Cultural Studies'. The three sub-programmes work both by focusing on the common specificity and the interdisciplinarity of the field, by developing specialised scientific competences and by giving students the opportunity to get acquainted with the basic elements of another specialisation. The synergy of the sub-programmes' objectives and deliverables allows the overall objective of the programme to be achieved.

The aim of the sub-programme "Translation Science" is to train professional scientists in the field of translation science with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of contemporary translation science, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia.

Knowledge

1. Be familiar with current theories and findings in translation studies, research methodologies and contemporary research methods in translation studies and at the interface between different fields.
2. Understand the basic concepts of translation studies, operate fluently and productively with scientific terminology in Latvian, English and other languages related to the research; possess specialised knowledge in the chosen research field according to the specific subfield of science and the most important findings of the related subfields.
3. Understand the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the economic and economic context of the humanities.

Skills

4 Independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem and issues, evaluate and select or independently develop a methodological strategy for their research, interpret the results

in a broader context, carrying out original research, part of which is represented in internationally cited publications.

5. Communicate about his/her field of scientific activity (his/her field) to the scientific community at large and to society at large, engages in research projects of international significance, collaborates effectively in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups.
6. Integrate the results of scientific research into the courses of study at the university, in the management of scientific work of students at different levels (bachelor, master), in science transfer activities, in practical translation.

Competences

7. Publish the results of scientific research at national and international scientific conferences and seminars, publish the results of his/her research in internationally recognised, including internationally cited, journals.
8. Independently improve his/her scientific qualification by studying current trends in translation studies.
9. Independently lead a scientific team, working group in the relevant subfield of science, organise their research activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics for Scientists, strengthen and independently improve their digital competence.

The aim of the sub-programme "Linguistics" is to train professional scientists in the field of linguistics with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of contemporary linguistics, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia.

Knowledge

1. Know and understand the regularities and main paradigms of the linguistic process, current scientific theories and insights, and master research methodology and contemporary research methods in linguistics and at the interface between different fields.
2. Understand the basic concepts of linguistics, fluently and productively use scientific terminology in Latvian, English and other languages related to the research; master specialised knowledge in the chosen research direction according to the specific subfield of science and the most important findings of the related subfields of the research topic.
3. Understand the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the economic and economic context of the humanities.

Skills

4 Independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem and issues, evaluate and select or independently develop a methodological strategy for their research, interpret the results in a broader context, carrying out original research, part of which is represented in internationally cited publications.

5. Communicate about his/her field of research (his/her discipline) to the scientific community at large and to society at large, engages in research projects of international significance, collaborates effectively in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups.
6. Integrate the results of scientific research into the courses of study at the university, in the management of scientific work of students at different levels (bachelor, master), in science transfer activities.

Competences

7. Publish the results of scientific research at national and international scientific conferences and seminars, publish the results of his/her research in internationally recognised, including internationally cited, journals.
8. Independently improve his/her scientific qualification by studying current trends in linguistics.
9. Independently manage a scientific team, a working group in the relevant subfield of science, organises his/her research activities in accordance with the code of ethics of a scientist, strengthens and independently improves his/her digital competence.

The aim of the sub-programme "Literary and Cultural Studies" is to train professional scholars in the field of literary and cultural studies with high research potential, who, by developing original and topical research, create new knowledge and productively use an interdisciplinary approach, are competent to raise and solve the most important problems of contemporary literary studies, developing and strengthening the scientific potential of Latvia.

Knowledge

1. Knowledge and understanding of the patterns and main paradigms of the literary and cultural process, current scientific theories and insights, research methodology and contemporary research methods in literary studies and at the interface between different fields.
2. Understand the basic concepts of literary and cultural studies, fluently and productively use scientific terminology in Latvian, English and other languages related to the research; master specialised knowledge in the chosen research direction according to the specific sub-discipline of science and the most important findings of the sub-disciplines related to the research topic.
3. Understand the interdisciplinary relationship between the humanities and the social sciences, as well as the economic and economic context of the humanities.

Prasmes

4 Independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem and issues, evaluate and select or independently develop a methodological strategy for their research, interpret the results in a broader context, carrying out original research, part of which is represented in internationally cited publications.

5. Communicate about his/her field of research (his/her discipline) to the scientific community at large and to society at large, engages in research projects of international significance, collaborates effectively in disciplinary and interdisciplinary research groups.
6. Integrate the results of scientific research into the courses of study at the university, in the management of scientific work of students at different levels (bachelor, master), in science transfer activities.

Competences

7. Publish the results of scientific research at national and international scientific conferences and seminars, publish the results of his/her research in internationally recognised, including internationally cited, journals.
8. Independently improve his/her scientific qualification by studying current trends in literary and cultural studies.
9. Independently manage a scientific team, working group in the relevant subfield of science, organises own research activities in accordance with the Code of Ethics of a Scientist, strengthens and independently improves digital competence.

Admission rules

Admission to the joint doctoral programme "Languages and Literature Studies" is based on the

admission procedures of each partner university. Admission to the VUAS is subject to the Admission Rules for the current academic year (available on the VUAS website: https://irp.cdn-website.com/9945ff8b/files/uploaded/Uznemsanas_noteikumi_arzemniekiem_ENG_2024-25.pdf).

The basic prerequisite for matriculation in the doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" is a master's degree in the humanities (linguistics and literary studies, translation studies, history, philosophy) or social sciences (intercultural relations, social anthropology, social psychology, etc.) or an equivalent 2nd level higher professional education in a relevant field. The entrance examination is designed as an integrated interview comprising two parts:

1. examination in linguistics/literary studies/translation studies, depending on the chosen sub-programme; discussion of the submitted research proposal - paper;
2. examination in a foreign language - English, German or French.

Matriculation process: the Entrance Examination Committee, which is established on the recommendation of the programme directors, agreed by the Faculty Council and approved by an order of the Rector, examines the scientific research proposal - the paper submitted by the applicant. The level of the applicant's knowledge in linguistics/literary science/translation studies, in the relevant subfield and in the foreign language, as well as the quality of the submitted research proposal (paper), are recorded during the interviews. The entrance examination board marks the entrance interviews and the submitted research proposal (paper). The decision on matriculation is taken by the Admissions Committee in a competitive procedure, based on the Committee's evaluation. The thesis topics and supervisors are approved at the Programme Board meeting, taking into account the doctoral student's research orientation, doctoral lecturers' specialisation and scientific competence indicators. The thesis may have an approved supervisor and advisor who are specialists in the relevant scientific fields. In certain cases, a suitably qualified specialist from another university may be invited to supervise the thesis.

From the moment of matriculation until the moment of matriculation, having fulfilled all the conditions of the programme, the student acquires the knowledge, skills and competences to successfully complete the research and start the doctoral dissertation process, in accordance with the aim, objectives and achievable results of the study programme.

The title of the study programme, the degree to be obtained, the aim of the programme and the objectives are mutually consistent and ensure the achievement of the aim of the programme.

3.1.3. Economic and/ or social substantiation of the study programme, analysis of graduates' employment.

The joint doctoral programme "Languages and Literature Studies" is designed and implemented with the aim of training professional scientists in the fields of linguistics, literary studies and translation studies. The doctoral programme is a transitional stage between studies and independent research. The programme enables students to acquire knowledge and skills related to their chosen field, as well as to other related scientific fields and their research methodologies. The programme plays an important role in the training of high-level researchers.

The development trends in the humanities in Europe are towards interdisciplinarity, the integration of different thematically distinct research areas, the application of sociological methodology, and the development of new methodologies. The challenge for the humanities is internationalisation

and practice-oriented professionalisation. In recent years, there has been a trend in Latvia to emphasise the priority of STEM. This trend is short-sighted in the eyes of foreign experts. The humanities play an important role in ensuring the existence of a critically thinking, educated, creativity-oriented society. The inability of a section of society to objectively perceive and evaluate the flow of information and the readiness to trust unverified sources of information were vividly revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to the situation in our country in Europe and the world, specialists in the humanities are in demand, and academic programmes in the humanities at all levels are fully competitive with other fields. The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" has been developed in line with the development trends in the field in Europe and the world, based on the study of the experience of universities in different countries (e.g. University of Verona (Italy), University of Helsinki (Finland), Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic), Vilnius University (Lithuania) and others), the acceptance of the topical issues of international conferences, as well as the objectives of the conceptual report *On the Introduction of a New Doctoral Education Model in Latvia* (Cabinet Order No.345)(Available only in Latvian: https://likumi.lv/ta/id/315685-par-konceptualo-zinojumu-par-jauna-doktoranturas-modela-ieviesanu-latvija).

The main focus of the study programme is language and literature studies and the synergy between language, literature and cultural studies. Such studies involve the use of different approaches (both traditional as well as new and interdisciplinary). The content of the doctoral study programme course content incorporates the latest trends in the field. Research in linguistics and literary studies is characterised by the importance of the socio-cultural context, hybrid genre research, intercultural, functional and applied aspects of languages, as evidenced by recent scholarly publications and conference proceedings. In translation studies, the use of technology in translation practice and related research is gaining increasing importance alongside classical areas of research. These trends are reflected in the joint courses of the doctoral study programme.

Current doctoral programmes vary considerably, not only between countries but also between universities. The main difference is that some universities have lecture and seminar-style programmes, while in others doctoral students work more independently on a set programme, with meetings between doctoral students and lecturers mainly reduced to consultations. Finally, there are universities that combine the two types of doctoral training, with contact sessions organised mainly as theoretical seminars on issues related to the doctoral student's chosen research field. The content of the JDSP "Linguistic and Literary Studies" at VUAS, DU and LiepU integrates research in linguistics, literary studies and translation studies. This reduces division and fragmentation and increases the quality of the doctoral programme by providing in-depth knowledge in the humanities with specialisation in linguistics, literary studies and translation studies, as well as facilitating the development of skills and competences for research careers in Latvia and abroad.

In order to assess the validity and relevance of the study programme implementation, as well as to provide a socio-economic assessment, the study programme content and delivery format were compared with equivalent programmes in other higher education institutions. Comparing the VUAS, DU and LiepU the VUAS JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" with programmes abroad, it should be noted that similar study programmes are also offered in Europe - integration of two or more disciplines or sub-disciplines is common, for example, Vilnius University DSP "Philology" focuses on linguistics, literary studies, translation studies; The University of Helsinki's DSP "Language Studies" focuses on linguistics and its sub-fields, while literary studies is part of another DSP ("Philosophy, Arts and Society"). The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is similar to the DSP programme "Philology" at Vilnius University in that it integrates the study of different languages in several sub-disciplines, in both synchronic and diachronic aspects, and includes research in literary studies and translation studies.

Similar doctoral study programmes offered at the University of Helsinki have a strong focus on the dissertation (~ 200 ECTS / 130 CP), and students choose their courses (mainly in seminar format) according to the specifics of the dissertation topic.

All compared doctoral study programmes include an internationalisation component and research approbation, which is in line with the provisions of the Conceptual Report on the Introduction of a New Doctoral Model in Latvia (Cabinet of Ministers Order No. 345 (25.06.2020, protocol No. 41, § 54) On the Conceptual Report "On the Introduction of a New Doctoral Model in Latvia". https://likumi.lv/ta/id/315685-par-konceptualo-zinojumu-par-jauna[1]doctoral-model-introduction-in-latvia) Subsection 2.1..

Similar interdisciplinary programmes integrating three disciplines or sub-disciplines are also offered elsewhere in Europe and beyond, such as the doctoral study programme "Philology, Literature and the Performing Arts; Foreign Literature, Languages and Linguistics" at the University of Verona (Italy) and "English Literature, American Literature, Book History, Modern Languages, Digital Humanities" at the University of London (United Kingdom).

Language and literature studies are the cornerstone of all sub-programmes, on the basis of which specialisation is developed. These facts also determine the choice of the Vilnius University DSP "Philology" and the University of Helsinki DSPs "Language Studies" and "Philosophy, Arts and Society" for a more detailed comparison. This reveals that the joint doctoral study programme of VUAS, DU and LiepU offers approximately the same level of training as in other European countries. It should be stressed that the humanities, and in particular the field of linguistics and literary studies, are responding flexibly to the latest trends, maintaining both classical priorities (philological fields) and engaging in modern contexts (interdisciplinary approach, *Digital Humanities*).

The field in which the doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" is included is conceptually linked to the priority policy segment of the country, namely culture. In the most important policy documents of Latvia (Latvia's Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030), culture is considered to be an essential basis for the existence and development of the country, which shapes national identity, promotes national belonging and participation, provides opportunities for individual development of the citizens and, as a result, drives the economic growth of the country, as well as being the basis for the internal political stability and external security of the country.

The labour market for doctoral study programmes in the humanities is primarily oriented towards academia. Jobs are related to literary studies, linguistics, translation studies, cultural studies in Latvian HEIs: Ventspils University of Applied Sciences, University of Latvia, Daugavpils University, Liepaja University, Rezekne Academy of Technologies, Latvian Academy of Culture and others; scientific institutes (LU Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, LU Institute of Latvian Language, Humanities Institute of Kurzeme in Liepaja University; HEIs abroad, museums and libraries. These institutions have close and systematic cooperation with the departments of the VUAS, DU and LiepU in scientific projects, scientific conferences, preparation and implementation of science communication tools.

The implementation of the study programme started in 2022, so it is difficult to assess the full cycle of the study programme. The economic rationale for the study programme was assessed in the development of the programme. In the evaluation of the period of the study programme implementation, it can be stated that the study programme is developing according to a defined plan and is economically justified, as the number of students interested in the doctoral programme at VUAS was positive.

In summary, the study programme is economically and socially viable and plays an important role in the development of the region.

3.1.4. Statistical data on the students of the respective study programme, the dynamics of the number of the students, and the factors affecting the changes to the number of the students. The analysis shall be broken down into different study forms, types, and languages.

There are currently 6 students studying at the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies" at VUAS. One doctoral student (currently in the 3rd year of study) has been enrolled in the new study programme from the previous inter-university study programme "Linguistics" of VUAS and LiepU as a result of equalization of previously acquired study results.

In 2023, the VUAS announced the admission to the new JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies". Five applicants successfully passed all entrance examinations and have started their doctoral studies in the autumn semester of 2023.

The students can freely choose the partner institutions of the JDSP “Languages and Literature Studies”, with no restrictions on sub-programmes. For example, three of the first-year PhD students in the joint programme at VUAS have chosen the sub-programme in translation studies, and two have chosen the sub-programme in linguistics. In total, four PhD students are currently studying in the translation studies sub-programme (language of implementation - Latvian), two PhD students are studying in the linguistics sub-programme, where specialisation courses are provided by University Liepaja.

Table 3.4.

Number of students enrolled

Academic year and study year	VUAS	DU	LiepU	Total
2022/2023				
1. study year	0*	5	2	
2. study year	1	6	2	
Tota;	**1**	**11**	**4**	
2023/2024				
1. study year	5	4	1	
2. study year	0	5	2	
3. study year	1	6	2	
Total	**6**	**15**	**5**	

Table 3.5.

Total number of students

Academic year and study year	VUAS	DU	LiepU	Total
2022/2023				
1. study year	0	5	2	
2. study year	1	6	2	
Total	**1**	**11**	**4**	
2023/2024				
1. study year	5	4	1	
2. study year	0	5	2	
3. study year	1	6	2	
Total	**6**	**15**	**5**	

* In the academic year 2022/2023, due to the transition process, no admission to the doctoral study programme was announced at the VUAS.

In the academic years 2022/2023 and 2023/2024, studies are conducted only full-time in Latvian. No student in the new study programme have obtained a doctoral degree by December 2023.

3.1.5. Substantiation of the development of the joint study programme and description and evaluation of the choice of partner universities, including information on the development and implementation of the joint study programme (if applicable).

The joint doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" was developed within the FEM project No.8.2.1.0/18/A/019 "Reduction of fragmentation of study programmes and strengthening of resource sharing at Daugavpils University". DU, LiepU and VUAS have signed a tripartite cooperation agreement on the basis of which a joint doctoral study programme "Philology" is being developed (updated title "Languages and Literature Studies"). The main prerequisites for the establishment of the programme and the choice of partner universities are:

1. nowadays, the trend towards interdisciplinarity in the field of humanities is becoming more prominent, as evidenced by the classification of degrees approved in Latvia (Doctor of Humanities in Linguistics and Literary Studies);
2. the cooperation of the three universities in the implementation of the programme will contribute to the competitiveness of the programme in Latvia and abroad;
3. each partner university has its own unique institutions, which will productively complement each other (VUAS - applied linguistics and translation studies; DU - school of literary studies, contrastive approach in linguistics; LiepU - regional studies in linguistics and literary studies,

comparative and contrastive linguistics, applied linguistics, sociolinguistics);
4. modern technological developments allow mobility and exchange issues to be addressed quickly;
5. since 2020, the Linguistics and Literature Studies Promotion Board, composed of LiepU and VUAS Latvian Council of Science experts, has been functioning at DU. Since 2020, LiepU has a Promotion Board for Linguistics and Literary Studies (formerly the Promotion Board for Linguistics), which is composed of LiepU and VUAS Latvian Council of Science experts in the field.

The scientific potential of the academic staff involved was also an important factor in the choice of partner universities for the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies". Its scientific and creative activity is characterised in several directions:

1. participation of academic staff in local and international scientific conferences;
2. publishing monographs and scientific publications indexed in *Scopus*, *Web of Science, Erih Plus, Ebsco* and other databases;
3. VUAS researchers conduct research in translation studies, including literary translation (Professor Jānis Sīlis, Associated Professor Guntars Dreijers, Associated Professor Jānis Veckrācis, Associated Professor Astra Skrābane, Lecturer Egita Proveja), terminology (Lecturer Silga Sviķe), language contact (Lecturer Egita Proveja) and scientific discourse research in an intercultural context (Lecturer Egita Proveja), language learning, including the development and practical use of modern digital tools (Lecturer Silga Sviķe); these areas are also linked to the research projects of the VUAS FTS and the research directions approved in the VUAS strategy;
4. DU HF since 1991 annually organizes an international scientific conference "Scientific Readings", where the papers are published in EBSCO indexed article collections "Literature and Culture: process, interaction, problems" (responsible editors Maija Burima, Rudīte Rinkeviča), "Cultural Studies" (responsible editor Anita Stašulāne), "Language in the Context of Various Languages" (responsible editor V. Šaudiņa);
5. the international scientific conference organised by LiepU HMSF and Kurzeme Humanitarian Institute lecturers and researchers and the follow-up publications "The Word and its Research Aspects" (responsible editor Linda Lauze), "Current Problems in Literature and Culture Research" (responsible editor Anita Helviga), "Language Learning: Problems and Perspective" (scientific editor Diāna Laiveniece), as well as the humanities and arts journal "Scriptus Manet" of HMSF;
6. participation in projects and project management: the EEZ FI project Academic Writing in the Baltic States: rhetorical structures in cultural and linguistic aspects (2020-2024), where LiepU cooperates with the University of Tartu (lead institution), Vilnius University and University of Bergen; the Ministry of Education funded project Explanatory online dictionary of educational terms (2021-2023), where LiepU (lead institution) cooperates with the University of Latvia and Riga Stradins University;
7. systematic maintenance of popular scientific and creative activities, promoting the transfer of knowledge to society.

The aim of the joint doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" is to train highly qualified specialists - literary and linguistic scholars with doctoral degrees - who are able to raise and solve topical problems of contemporary philological science and to present Latvian science at the European and world level, participating in important research and international projects and creating innovative intellectual products.

In the development of the JDSP strategy and programme, representatives of all stakeholders (VUAS, DU and LiepU management, academic staff, employers, graduates and students) have participated,

who have made a significant contribution to defining the vision and strategic approach. During the development process, both national and regional higher education and scientific policy planning documents have been taken into account, as well as the current situation in the sectors, their future development potential and trends in the global science space.

The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" was licensed in September 2022. It is now being implemented in all three partner universities. The Joint Doctoral Programme Board, established and approved in 2022 in all three partner universities, is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the programme and is composed of three representatives from each partner university.

The three partner universities have set up a joint programme council to ensure and evaluate the quality of the implementation of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies". The Council is composed of nine representatives, three from each university, including the Programme Director appointed by each party. According to point 2.5.3 of the tripartite cooperation agreement on the development and implementation of the joint DSP "Languages and Literature Studies", the joint council is responsible for establishing a joint quality assurance system for the joint DSP "Languages and Literature Studies". Work is currently underway to develop such a system.

3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof

3.2.1. Analysis of the content of the study programme. Assessment of the interrelation between the information included in the study courses/ modules, the intended learning outcomes, the set aims and other indicators with the aims of the study course/ module and the aims and intended outcomes of the study programme. Assessment of the relevance of the content of the study courses/ modules and compliance with the needs of the relevant industry, labour market and with the trends in science on how and whether the content of the study courses/ modules is updated in line with the development trends of the relevant industry, labour market, and science.

The detailed content of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies", which is revealed in the course descriptions, was developed on the basis of the aims, objectives and achievable results of the programme, accepting the expert opinion of the working group, experience, normative documents, international research, recommendations, recommendations of employers, professional organisations, survey results, the latest theoretical findings, as well as the comparison with the offer of other foreign universities and current educational developments.

The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" has been developed with a student-centred approach, which has been respected in the formulation of the programme's aim and objectives and in the definition of the learning outcomes. The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is designed as an interdisciplinary programme comprising three sub-programmes: "Linguistics", "Literary and Cultural Studies", "Translation Studies". The three sub-programmes work both by focusing on the common specificity and the interdisciplinarity of the field, by developing specialised scientific competences and by giving students the opportunity to get acquainted with the basic elements of another specialisation. All sub-programmes have a common minimum of 16 CP, the possibility to choose courses from other sub-programmes/specialisations (5 CP), and a research component which has a

common structure for the whole programme, but is aligned in content with the research topic of each doctoral student.

The structure of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is subject to the Cabinet of Ministers' Order No.345 *on the Conceptual Report "On the Introduction of a New Model of Doctoral Studies in Latvia*", which determines the division of CP for research work (~ 70% of full-time study time) and study courses (~ 30% of full-time study time); research - 84 CP, study courses - 36 CP.

The research includes the *development of the Doctoral Thesis - 60 CP* and *Internationalisation and validation of the research - 24 CP*. The development of the thesis is the main task of the doctoral student, to which the entire research and study process is subject. The doctoral thesis is developed simultaneously with the theoretical research. The doctoral research process starts with the approval of the thesis topic, the doctoral candidate and the supervisor's joint work plan. The last academic year is essentially devoted to the completion and defence (or submission and defence) of the doctoral thesis. The Research section of the programme focuses on the development and validation of the thesis.

Internationalisation and research validation is based on activities that will facilitate the inclusion of students in the international research process, as well as promote the programme's visibility abroad, with the aim of making the programme attractive and accessible to potential students outside Latvia. "Internationalisation and research validation" includes various types of activities (see Table 3.6) oriented towards the identification, analysis and competence development of international doctoral programme experiences and scientific innovations, as well as providing opportunities for both academic and non-academic careers. The content of internationalisation includes balanced academic mobility, the development of widely applicable skills (conference organisation, project development, science communication) and the presentation of research results.

Table 3.6.

Internationalisation and research validation content

No.	Title	CP per study course	Total number of CPs
1.	Participation in an international scientific conference at a partner university or scientific institution abroad	3+3+3	9 CP
2.	Participation in the organisation of the conference		3 CP
3.	Preparation of publications (3 publications): - individual publication in the proceedings of an international scientific conference / in an international peer-reviewed journal		9 CP
4.	Internal mobility (lecturing at partner universities)		3 CP
5.	External mobility (guest lecture at a foreign higher education institution)		3 CP
6.	Entrepreneurship internship		3 CP

To achieve visibility, the programme structure includes:

1. to offer a broad range of topics in the humanities;
2. support interdisciplinarity;
3. to offer the possibility to conduct research in English;
4. to offer a course in Latvian for foreigners.

The completion of study courses include three parts: *the General Interdisciplinary Courses* (10 CP), *the Doctoral Colloquium* (6 CP) and *the Sub-programme Specialised Courses* (20 CP). The *Common Interdisciplinary Courses* focus on theoretical knowledge in the humanities in the context of other fields (social sciences, IT, etc.). The content of the courses ensures the acquisition of up-to-date theoretical knowledge and usable skills, as well as the study of academic/scientific ethics. *The Doctoral Colloquium* aims to foster collaboration of doctoral students and supervisors, between doctoral students and with academic staff. The Colloquium is designed as a three-part event, based on a scientific discussion on the topics to be studied by doctoral students. The Colloquium is organised as a mini-conference: presentation, defence and extended academic discussion of different aspects of the topic with the participation of all doctoral students, supervisors and other academic staff. *The specialised courses of the sub-programme* include three modules which will be implemented in parallel in each sub-programme: Compulsory specialisation course (10 CP), Compulsory elective course (5 CP), Optional study course (5 CP). The compulsory elective course provides the methodological basis for the specialisation. The compulsory elective course is specifically dedicated to the methodological specificities of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies". Doctoral students will be able to choose either a course from their specialisation or a course from another specialisation as a optional study course.

The study process at the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is conducted in accordance with the approved study plan. The study plan of the programme is designed taking into account the sequence of acquisition of academic knowledge, continuity and interrelation of study courses.

Course title	CP	Form of examination
Research - 123 CP		
Dissertation - 90 CP		
Internationalisation and research validation - 33 CP		
Completion of study courses		
General Interdisciplinary Courses - 15 CP		
Interdisciplinary aspects of the humanities	9 CP	exam
Social ontology: information and global processes	6 CP	exam
Doctoral Colloquium - 9 CP		
Sub-programme Specialised Courses – 33 CP		
Compulsory specialisation course – 15 CP		

Paradigms of literary theory and cultural process	15	exam
Diachronic and synchronic studies of the language system	15	exam
Theoretical and applied aspects of translation studies, history of the discipline	15	exam
Compulsory elective course – 9 CP		
Professor E. Fjodorov Methodological School Seminar	9	exam
Comparative and contrastive linguistics	9	exam
Interdisciplinary aspects of translation theory and practice	9	exam
Optional study course – 9 CP		
Interdisciplinary aspects of literature and culture	9	test with a mark
Applied Linguistics	9	test with a mark
Cultural and receptive aspects of translation studies	9	test with a mark

The study content is designed in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No. 1001 of 27 December 2005 on *the Procedure and Criteria for the Granting of the Scientific Doctorate Degree* (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/124787-zinatniska-doktora-grada-pieskirsanas-promocijaskartiba-un-kriteriji), as well as taking into account the Ministry of Education and Science Conceptual Report on *the Introduction of a New Doctoral Model in Latvia*, adopted in June 2020.

Relevance of the content of the study programme to labour market and scientific development trends

The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" was developed with the involvement of academic staff, doctoral students, graduates and employers from the three partner universities.

The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is designed with employers' views and demand in mind. Employers from translation companies, Latgale Planning Region, SIA LatInSoft, Riga City Council, publishing house "Mansards" and others were involved in the development of the programme. During the development of the programme, consultations were held with representatives of the Latvian Language Institute of the University of Latvia and the State Language Centre. The involvement of professional associations in the development of the study programme was also essential. The involvement of professional associations in the field not only provides an opportunity to identify the needs of the labour market, but also to receive additional information on the development trends in the scientific disciplines of the specific sub-programmes, as both the Latvian Association of Translators and Interpreters and the Latvian Association of Applied Linguistics bring together not only members of the profession, but also researchers.

Representatives of potential employers are represented on the study programme board

To regulate the joint programme, a Joint Doctoral Programme Board has been set up to manage the

work of the programme in collaboration with the programme directors at each partner university. The Council is composed of nine representatives, three from each partner university, including a programme director appointed by each party. In addition to the doctoral students, the Joint Doctoral Programme Council also includes employer representatives (currently Liene Markus-Narvila, representing the Institute of Latvian Language at the University of Latvia as a prospective employer of graduate-researcher-employees of the Joint Doctoral Programme). By participating in the work of the study programme council, employers will take part in solving various important issues related to the implementation and development of the programme. The following are some of the important areas of cooperation with employers: improvement of the implementation of the study programmes and the quality of the study courses, taking into account employers' suggestions on the content and format of the study courses; involvement in joint activities such as scientific and practical conferences, science communication events, etc.; employment of students and graduates in enterprises or scientific institutions. Employers' evaluations and feedback on graduates are important, as these evaluations and feedback may lead to certain adjustments in the implementation of the study programme. This gives employers the opportunity to be involved in decision-making regarding the content and implementation of the study programme and to make their own proposals for changes.

Students' understanding of the labour market and commercialisation potential of research results

In order to promote the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" understanding of the modern working environment and entrepreneurship, a course "Entrepreneurship Internship" is included in the "Internationalisation and Approval" section of the study offer. It aims to develop doctoral students' entrepreneurial skills and their understanding of the commercialisation of research results, based on concrete business experience. By observing the activities of an entrepreneur in the research transfer process and by developing a project concept related to their research topic that could be of interest to the entrepreneur, doctoral students are encouraged to consider the potential results of their research and their potential for commercialisation in a commercial context.

3.2.2. In the case of master’s and doctoral study programmes, specify and provide the justification as to whether the degrees are awarded in view of the developments and findings in the field of science or artistic creation. In the case of a doctoral study programme, provide a description of the main research roadmaps and the impact of the study programme on research and other education levels (if applicable).

The JLSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is designed as an interdisciplinary programme comprising three sub-programmes: "Linguistics", "Literary and Cultural Studies", "Translation Studies". The three sub-programmes work both by focusing on the common specificity and interdisciplinarity of the field, by developing specialised scientific competences, and by giving students the opportunity to become acquainted with the basic elements of another specialisation.

Gradually, the research topics/research profiles offered by inter-university DSPs are gradually crystallising and the development of research areas relevant to Latvian linguistics that are under-represented in other Latvian universities. Researchers at the VUAS conduct research in translation studies, including literary translation studies, terminology, language contact, scientific discourse studies in intercultural contexts, language learning, including the presentation and practical use of modern digital tools. These areas are also linked to the VUAS FTS research projects and the

research lines approved in the VUAS strategy. Daugavpils University has developed an authoritative school of literary studies, which plays an important role in the Latvian scientific space and is known and accepted beyond the borders of the Baltic States. The scientific research activities of the faculty members of the Liepaja University correspond mainly to the field of humanities and arts, linguistics and literary studies, but the research activities of several lecturers relate to interdisciplinary research. The topics of the research correspond to national priorities (national research programmes), internationally topical research directions in the field of humanities and arts, as well as to the needs of the region's development (in cooperation with creative organisations in the region and local authorities).

Based on this interdisciplinary orientation of the programme, students are expected to produce innovative research of an interdisciplinary nature in their chosen sub-field. For example, VUAS doctoral student Aiga Bādere is developing a methodological model of post-editing in her research. This is a very important issue in translation science and practice, given the increasingly rapid introduction of technology and artificial intelligence solutions into the professional everyday life of translators (and also interpreters). Doctoral students Elizabete Kadakovska and Agnese Lukevica are researching medical and financial terminology and texts, which in the Latvian context still opens up a very wide field of activity and allows us to hope that the research results can be successfully used also for the needs of the labour market.

The academic staff of VUAS actively cooperates with the students of the VUAS Master's study programme "Applied Translation", motivating them to continue their studies in the next cycle of education - the joint doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies".

3.2.3. Assessment of the study programme including the study course/ module implementation methods by indicating what the methods are, and how they contribute to the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study courses and the aims of the study programme. In the case of a joint study programme, or in case the study programme is implemented in a foreign language or in the form of distance learning, describe in detail the methods used to deliver such a study programme. Provide an explanation of how the student-centred principles are taken into account in the implementation of the study process.

According to the 2015 Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area 1.3, universities/colleges (http://www.aic.lv/portal/content/files/AIC%20ESG2015%20int-1_2.pdf) should ensure that programmes are implemented in a way that motivates students to actively participate in the learning process and that the assessment of student performance is consistent with this approach. The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is designed and implemented with respect for doctoral students and their diversity of needs, offering the most appropriate modes of study. In the course of the programme implementation, doctoral students are offered a variety of study methods, including the possibility to partially study the study content remotely, by means of video materials, the possibility to receive tutorials, etc., thus adapting the programme implementation to the requirements of the students.

The study programme develops doctoral students' skills to work independently by offering guidance and support from a faculty member and by fostering mutual respect between doctoral students and faculty members. In the future course of the programme, it is planned to pay special attention to

the involvement of doctoral students in joint inter-university projects, closer interaction between doctoral students and thesis supervisors, jointly presenting research results in public. In this way, doctoral students' research contacts are built up and research skills are developed.

The implementation of the study programme is carried out using various forms of study, formal and non-formal education methods and methodological approaches, as well as e-studies for the organisation of students' independent work. The study programme uses a variety of forms of teaching: lectures (including interactive lectures by experienced professionals, guest lectures by foreign professors), seminars, practical classes, and forms of work - consultations, individual and group work, discussions; interactive forms of work will be practised alongside traditional ones: field trips, analysis of audiovisual material, practical workshops, etc. The use of modern technical tools and digital solutions will ensure the clarity of theoretical and practical learning.

Study methods are selected according to the content and specificity of study courses, the achievable study results, as well as the organisation of the study process. Much attention is paid to the independent work of doctoral students, which is focused on the development of a doctoral thesis. The studies are based on the student's independence, while at the same time doctoral students are guided and supported by lecturers - the description of each study course specifies the scope and content of students' independent work, as well as the methods of its assessment. Doctoral students' independent work includes a variety of activities:

1. studying sources and preparing for seminars;
2. participation in international scientific conferences;
3. preparation and presentation of projects, reports;
4. collecting information, researching databases;
5. attending exhibitions, seminars and workshops.

In addition to the above, doctoral students are given the opportunity to discuss the findings of their research in a group setting at joint inter-university seminars (e.g. in the course "Doctoral Colloquium I/ II/ III"). In this way, students develop the ability to independently formulate and critically analyse a research problem, make scientifically sound decisions, argue and participate in scientific debate.

The implementation of the quality system based on the results of studies involves both study programme directors and lecturers of study courses, in the case of doctoral studies - mainly the Doctoral Programme Board. The specific forms of assessment of students' knowledge and skills are specified in the course description of each study course. When starting a new course, the lector in charge shall inform students of the assessment requirements and the conditions for the final assessment. Tutorials are provided before each examination. Examinations shall be written or oral. The form of the written examination shall be determined by the lecturer of the course concerned, depending on the specific nature of the course.

To regulate the joint programme, a Joint Doctoral Programme Board has been set up to manage the work of the programme in collaboration with the programme directors at each partner university. The members of the Council shall be appointed by each Party in accordance with the procedures laid down by the Council. Decisions of the Council will be taken on a collegial basis. The Joint Programme Board shall establish common requirements for the implementation of the programme. Based on the experience gained in the implementation of the programme and taking into account the quality assurance aspects of the studies, the Programme Board shall evaluate the progress and results of the study process and recommend measures to improve the programme and integrate the latest findings into the study content and process.

The JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is based on the principles of student-centred

education, focusing on increasing doctoral students' motivation, self-realisation and engagement in the study process. The programme follows the basic principles of student-centred education:

1. constant reflection;
2. a personal approach for doctoral students: there is no one-size-fits-all solution;
3. taking into account that doctoral students have different learning styles, requirements, interests, backgrounds and prior knowledge;
4. doctoral students' knowledge, skills and abilities are not only assessed by academic staff, but they also have to have self-control over their studies;
5. doctoral students are given the opportunity to learn on their own;
6. continuous cooperation between students and academic staff.

3.2.4. If the study programme envisages an internship, describe the internship opportunities offered to students, provision and work organization, including whether the higher education institution/ college helps students to find an internship place. If the study programme is implemented in a foreign language, provide information on how internship opportunities are provided in a foreign language, including for foreign students. To provide analysis and evaluation of the connection of the tasks set for students during the internship included in the study programme with the learning outcomes of the study programme (if applicable).

3.2.5. Evaluation and description of the promotion opportunities and the promotion process provided to the students of the doctoral study programme (if applicable).

As the implementation of the JLSP "Languages and Literature Studies" started in autumn 2022, when the programme licence was obtained, it is not yet possible to provide information on the evaluation of the dissertation process.

As VUAS does not have its own doctoral dissertation council, all doctoral degree candidates (including those matriculated from the previous joint doctoral study programme "Linguistics" of VUAS and LiepU) have the opportunity to undergo the doctoral dissertation process in the doctoral dissertation council of partner universities - Liepāja University or Daugavpils University - in accordance with the Cabinet of Ministers Regulation No.1001 "Procedure and Criteria for the Award of the Scientific Doctoral Degree (Doctoral Dissertation)". After the accreditation of the joint doctoral study programme, VUAS and partner universities will apply to the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania with a request to allow the establishment of a joint doctoral dissertation council in the humanities in order to provide doctoral dissertation opportunities in the humanities to the candidates of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" at VUAS in cooperation with partner universities.

3.2.6. Analysis and assessment of the topics of the final theses of the students, their relevance in the respective field, including the labour market, and the marks of the final theses.

As the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is a new doctoral programme licensed in September 2022, all three partner universities have started the study process but have not yet defended their doctoral theses. However, it is already evident at this stage that most of the students' research is not only in the humanities, but also in relevant and contemporary issues in their respective economic sectors. For example, Aiga Bādere, a third-year doctoral student at VUAS, is developing a methodological model of post-editing in her research. This is a very important issue in translation science and practice, given the increasingly rapid introduction of technology and artificial intelligence solutions into the professional everyday life of translators (and also interpreters). Elizabete Kadakovska and Agnese Lukevica, 1st year doctoral students at the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies", are researching medical and financial terminology and texts, which in the Latvian context still opens up a very wide field of activity and allows us to hope that the research results can be successfully used also for the needs of the labour market.

3.3. Resources and Provision of the Study Programme

3.3.1. Assessment of the compliance of the resources and provision (study provision, scientific support (if applicable), informative provision (including libraries), material and technical provision, and financial provision) with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the learning outcomes to be achieved by providing the respective examples.

To ensure the implementation of the study programme, the study process is supported by the material, technical and informational base of the VUAC: resources and facilities described in Part II, Chapter 3, Subsections 2.3.1-2.3.3 of the Self-assessment Report. No resources and facilities specific to the study programme are required. Lectures, practical classes and examinations are held at the premises of the VUAC in Ventspils, Inženieru iela 101.

It can be rightly considered that all the necessary conditions for studies at the VUAS have been created - new modern classrooms, computer rooms, a modern library with a large reading room, etc. The material and technical base of the studies allows to fully provide the necessary conditions for the study programme:

1. a multimedia projector and a computer in each study room;
2. interactive whiteboards in the conference rooms;
3. computer rooms are equipped with the necessary software;
4. students have the possibility to copy their work and visit computer rooms for individual study.

In addition to the technologies, software and services available at VUAS, the Infrastructure Unit also maintains other necessary network services, such as the university's website. Other possible web services that could improve or better provide the functionality of VUAS IT resources are being explored, such as *WIKI*, network cluster file systems, server virtualisation, service backups, etc. The VUAS library has access to scientific literature on translation studies, language learning, including textbooks, intercultural communication, and various linguistic issues. The available literature meets

the needs of both the joint programme and the sub-programme. Since the acquisition of foreign literature is limited in the post-crisis period, students have access to various databases, about which all students and lecturers are regularly informed by the library staff, who also offer training courses on how to use the databases. The compulsory literature is almost identical for both Latvian and English students, as the study courses mostly include theoretical literature in English, available in libraries and databases. In conclusion, the implementation of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" will be provided with an adequate technical and material base.

3.3.2. Assessment of the study provision and scientific base support, including the resources provided within the framework of cooperation with other science institutes and higher education institutions (applicable to doctoral study programmes) (if applicable).

The material and scientific base of the VUAS, DU and LiepU is used for the implementation of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies". The study process is sufficiently provided with material reproduction equipment, audio and video equipment, visual presentation equipment.

The material and technical facilities of the partner universities (Daugavpils University and Liepaja University) are available to the students of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies".

The DU library provides students with access to high-quality information relevant to their field of study by offering information resources for study and research purposes, as well as by ordering them from other libraries. The DU library is open 9 hours a day, 45 hours a week. The reading room is open on weekdays from 9.00 to 20.30 and on Saturdays from 10.00 to 17.00. The Bibliography and Information Sector is open on weekdays from 9.00 to 17.00. Books can also be returned outside the library's opening hours using the book drop-off facilities at the teaching blocks at Vienības iela 13 and Parāde iela 1. The library has a total area of 1000 m2, a reading room with free access to the collection, two subscriptions, the Bibliography and Information Sector, 20 computers, three multifunctional devices, two copiers, two printers, Internet access, including wireless Internet access, at the students' disposal. The library offers the following services: home delivery of books; use of literature, databases, e-catalogues and other resources in reading rooms; electronic ordering and reservation of books for home delivery, renewal of use; use of computers and Internet; remote use of *EBSCO*, ScienceDirect and Scopus databases; remote use of final theses produced by DU; consultancy in searching information in e-catalogues and databases; interlibrary loan services; training of students in the use of e-catalogues and databases; copying, printing and scanning services. The "Library" section of the University's website provides "Links" to e-resources, including a link to the Latvian National Digital Library (books, periodicals, and other e-resources), remote access to theses and dissertations, final theses using a DUIS password, an "Internet Resources" section, and the electronic catalogue, which, if a publication has an e-version, is attached to the description of the publication. Those who have obtained passwords for *Cambridge Journals Online, EBSCO, ScienceDirect, Scopus* and *Web of Science* databases from the Library can use them remotely

Daugavpils University offers computers equipped with the relevant software (*Cubasis, Sibelius, Sound Forge, Sonor* and others) for the development of dissertation theses. Doctoral students have access to several databases:

1. *Cambridge University Press* – humanities and social sciences;
2. database of full electronic texts *EBSCO Publishing* (contains eight databases: *Academic Search Elite*, *Business Source Premier*, *MasterFILE Priemer, Newspaper Source, ERIC,*

Business Wire News, MEDLINE, Health Source – Consumer Edition, Agricola);
3. *Elsevier* Multidisciplinary Bibliographic and Citation Information Database *Scopus*;
4. multidisciplinary database *Web of Science*;
5. *Science Direct – Elsevier's* database in the humanities and social sciences, containing information on thousands of journals and books published by *Elsevier*. DU has access to around 2,650 full-text journals, mainly published from 2002 to the latest issue of the journal, as well as more than 350 e-books;
6. *Education and Culture* - e-newspaper covering everything important in education, providing information support for university staff and students, management and administration;
7. *Letonika* - a reference and translation system whose main purpose is to provide systematic, encyclopaedic reference and translation information. *Letonika* offers the possibility to search and work with information from 11 encyclopaedias and other reference resources, 13 dictionaries (translating, explanatory, terminology), as well as collections of 10 000 images, audio recordings and videos. The database also includes a Latvian literature library with 200 full-text literary works and a language support repository with supporting materials for the Latvian language. *Letonika.lv* serves as a guide to Latvian culture, history, language, nature and literature;
8. *LETA* - news and archive - offers the possibility to quickly search for published news, photos, videos, press releases, articles from Latvian press, statistics and other information.

The library offers interdisciplinary scholarly publications relevant to the DSP "Languages and Literature Studies".

Liepaja University's material and scientific base is available for students and teaching staff of all study programmes. In Liepaja University study buildings at 14 Lielaja iela and 13 Kūrmājas Prospectas there are 320 computers, 23 video projectors, seven interactive whiteboards, six copiers, 11 cameras, seven video cameras. Each of the studio buildings has a free-access wireless network (a total of 36 wireless network access points have been installed). A workstation virtualisation solution has been implemented and three computer classrooms are equipped with workstation clients (63 workstations in total). Students have their own virtual PC, which is not attached to a workstation. This solution ensures mobility and security of the study process. Modern network hardware has been installed to virtualise the computer network and a CAMPUS computer network connection has been established between all study blocks.

Interdisciplinary study opportunities are provided by the material and technical facilities of the Art Research Laboratory of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, as well as the Media Library - a specialised library of art and culture publications and CDs. The Speech and Voice Research Laboratory of the Speech Therapy Centre of the Faculty of Education and Social Work is also available for specialised interdisciplinary research.

The methodological and scientific support of the joint study programme is supplemented by the resources of the Liep University library, as well as the collections of the Faculty of Humanities and Arts and the branch libraries of the Kurzeme Humanities Institute (linguistics, literary studies, English, French, Russian, German language methodological and philological publications). The LiepU library has one copy of each defended doctoral thesis, as well as digital copies are available on the LiepU website www.liepu.lv under Science, research, innovation → Doctoral theses.

LiepU library electronic catalogue (http://alise.liepu.lv) and University and Special Libraries Catalogue (http://alise.liepu.lv/Alise/lv/federatedsearch.aspx) are available remotely - both on computers and mobile devices. The library offers free use of databases for both students and faculty, organising access to subscribed, trial and open access databases on and off the LiepU computer network. Students and faculty have access to online databases such as "Letonika",

"EBSCO eBooks Academic Collection", "EBSCO Academic Complete", "ScienceDirect", "Cambridge Journals Online", "Scopus" and "Web of Science". The Academic Staff Publications Database, the Doctoral Theses Database and the Final Theses Database. The Library provides training, reference and advice on the use of information resources and services.

3.3.3. Indicate data on the available funding for the corresponding study programme, its funding sources and their use for the development of the study programme. Provide information on the costs per one student within this study programme, indicating the items included in the cost calculation and the percentage distribution of funding between the specified items. The minimum number of students in the study programme in order to ensure the profitability of the study programme (indicating separately the information on each language, type and form of the study programme implementation).

When compiling the financial and actual resources required for the implementation of a study programme, the VUAS shall include in the calculation the income and expenditure actually or proportionally corresponding to the study programme. The revenue includes the state subsidy for the provision of the study process (EUR 1630.11 per student per budget place, the state budget subsidy for student grants and social needs EUR 996.01 per student per budget place), as well as the revenue from tuition fees (according to each study programme actually). Revenue also includes funding from the municipality to support the study process. The proportion of expenditure is determined by aggregating information from two types of calculation:

1. 25% deductions for each faculty (calculated from the state subsidy and tuition fee income approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Latvia) are centrally determined for covering the general maintenance expenses of the VUAS;
2. For each study programme, a proportional share of the expenditure is calculated from the general maintenance expenditure of the VUAS calculated for the faculty or directly necessary for the operation of the specific faculty, taking into account the number of students in the specific programme.

General maintenance expenditure includes a deduction of 25% (set by the VUAS at the same level for all faculties) to cover VUAS maintenance expenditure:

1. utility costs - electricity, heating, water and sewerage services, waste collection services;
2. the cost of maintenance, including repair services, of the premises and the building;
3. IT system services;
4. marketing expenses;
5. general representational expenses;
6. partly administrative remuneration expenses;
7. general tax payments by the institution.

The direct expenditure of the Faculty, which is necessary and identifiable as expenditure incurred directly by the Faculty, is allocated proportionally to the study programmes, taking into account the proportion of the number of students studying in the programme to the total number of students in the Faculty. Expenditure which is intended, incurred and identifiable as expenditure for a specific study programme shall be included in the costs of that study programme. These aforementioned expenses include the remuneration of the academic and general staff of the Faculty, tax expenses, insurance expenses, as well as the purchase of fixed assets, inventory, books, teaching aids and other expenses of the Faculty. Both income and expenditure are also shown per student, per study

programme (usually per calendar year), and the share of each group of expenditure in the total expenditure of the faculty or study programme is determined. Different calculation methods can be used to determine the potential so-called break-even point of a study programme, such as increasing the number of students, increasing public funding per student or increasing tuition fees. The VUAS has so far used the former method - modelling the minimum number of students required - because, given the current economic situation as well as the financial situation of the local population, the VUAS does not seek to increase tuition fees, instead directing resources to student recruitment measures. There is no cost difference between Latvian and English language students in the implemented study programme.

Joint Doctoral Study Programme in "Languages and Literature Studies" Programme Director, docent Egita Proveja

The fee for JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" for Latvian and English language students is currently 5601 EUR per year.

Currently, 6 students are enrolled in the VUAS doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies", which is 2.94% of the total number of students at the Faculty. The corresponding proportion is applied in the calculation of the municipal funding attributable to the study programme. The same proportion of 2.94% students is used to calculate the eligible expenditure for the programme. For the programme to reach the break-even point, 10 students would be required.

For each programme, a direct cost calculation is made. Taking into account the costs directly affecting the implementation of the study programme, it is estimated that on average EUR 47 736 is spent on remuneration of lecturers and general staff involved in the study programme, EUR 8077 on scholarships and EUR 264 on goods and services (see Annex 3.10. for a detailed calculation of study programme costs).

3.4. Teaching Staff

3.4.1. Assessment of the compliance of the qualification of the teaching staff members (academic staff members, visiting professors, visiting associate professors, visiting docents, visiting lecturers, and visiting assistants) involved in the implementation of the study programme with the conditions for the implementation of the study programme and the provisions set out in the respective regulatory enactments. Provide information on how the qualification of the teaching staff members contributes to the achievement of the learning outcomes.

The new joint doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" was developed by recruiting academic and scientific staff in accordance with the requirements of the Law on Higher Education Institutions, including the provisions of Article 55.1 (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/37967-augstskolu-likums) and the Law on Scientific Activities (https://likumi.lv/ta/id/107337-zinatniskas-darbibas-likums).

According to the concept of the three sub-programmes of the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies", the faculty members of VUAS are specialised in translation studies, DU - in literary studies

and LiepU - in linguistics research.

In order to ensure high-quality and innovative implementation of the joint DSP "Languages and Literature Studies" of VUAS, DU and LiepU, it is essential to attract highly qualified teaching staff - recognised specialists with innovative capacity, including the ability to use modern working methods, and leadership competence. Several criteria have been used to select the faculty members to be involved in the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies":

1. the qualifications of the teaching staff meet the requirements of the laws and regulations (doctoral degree in the field of the course to be taught or in a related field);
2. the research field/interest is relevant to the study programme/course content;
3. active scientific activity ensuring quality teaching of the courses;
4. experience in teaching courses at doctoral and master's level, as well as in supervising doctoral theses, participation in international and national research projects;
5. adequate knowledge of the national language and of foreign languages.

The following key criteria are set out in the framework for evaluating the performance of teaching staff:

1. excellence - sustainable and continuous development through process and resource management;
2. the ability to make effective use of academic freedom - to choose freely the directions and methods of academic activity, to create and publish new knowledge, to debate its content openly, and to seek opportunities to put it into practice;
3. academic culture - collegial cooperation with students and other teaching staff, based on the principles of academic ethics, in an atmosphere of mutual respect, demandingness, commitment and support;
4. accountability for their work to society and the state, in accordance with the quality management systems and quality culture of higher education institutions.

One of the most important quality assurance factors in the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" is the teaching staff. The qualifications of the academic staff involved in the implementation of the study programme are appropriate to the specifics of the study programme and the conditions of its implementation, as well as to the requirements of normative acts in the field of education. Teaching staff are professionals in their field of study, have demonstrated their competence in research and the use of e-environments in the study process, and have participated in research, including international projects, developed internationally citable publications, monographs and popular science materials.

Table 3.7.

Academic staff involved in the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies"

University	VUAS	DU	LiepU
Professors	2	4	3
Associated professors	3	2	2
Lecturers	3	9	2
Leading researchers			1

The joint doctoral study programme of VUAS, DU and LiepU involves nine professors (VUAS - 2, DU -

4; LiepU - 3), seven associated professors (VUAS - 3, DU - 2; LiepU - 2), 14 lecturers (VUAS - 3, DU - 9; LiepU - 2) and one leading researcher (LiepU). All lecturers involved in the programme have doctoral degrees (1 - Dr. habil. philol., 28 - Dr. philol., 1 - Dr. paed. and 1 - PhD). This confirms that, in view of the specific nature of the academic doctoral programme, teaching staff with the appropriate qualifications have been selected.

The teachers involved in the implementation of the study programme have at least B2 level of English language skills, i.e. they are able to teach study courses in English. The number of teaching staff and their qualifications confirm that the doctoral programme has the number of teaching staff with the appropriate qualifications for the implementation of the doctoral programme as laid down in the regulatory enactments.

The relevance of the qualifications of the teaching staff to the study programme's outcomes and objectives.

The academic staff involved in the JDSP "Languages and Literature Studies" ensure the achievement of the objectives and results of the study programme. The study courses are taught by academic staff who are professionals in their field, thus:

1. strengthening, in accordance with the sub-programme, the students' knowledge of current scientific theories and knowledge, and strengthening their understanding of the basic concepts and terminology of translation studies, linguistics and literary studies;
2. in synergy with the three sub-programmes, raising students' awareness of the importance and possibilities of interdisciplinarity in research, and of the economic and national economic context of the humanities.

The skills and competences to be acquired in the joint study programme are ensured in particular by individual consultations with supervisors, individual research work and cooperation between students in various forms (e.g. conference organisation).

When assessing the adequacy of the qualifications of the teaching staff to the conditions for the implementation of a quality study programme, which is widely reflected in the descriptions of the qualifications, experience, achievements, expertise of the teaching staff, it can be concluded that the lecturers of the joint DSP provide a practical and high level of expertise in their respective fields, both in specific study courses and in the study programme as a whole. For more detailed information and examples of individual faculty representation in the fields of study and international research collaboration, see also the CVs of the faculty members (Annex 2.9).

3.4.2. Analysis and assessment of the changes to the composition of the teaching staff over the reporting period and their impact on the study quality.

As the implementation of the JLSP "Languages and Literature Studies" started in autumn 2022, there have been no changes in the composition of the teaching staff.

3.4.3. Information on the number of the scientific publications of the academic staff members, involved in the implementation of doctoral study programme, as published during the reporting period by listing the most significant publications published in Scopus or WoS CC indexed journals. As for the social sciences, humanitarian sciences, and

the science of art, the scientific publications published in ERIH+ indexed journals or peer-reviewed monographs may be additionally specified. Information on the teaching staff included in the database of experts of the Latvian Council of Science in the relevant field of science (total number, name of the lecturer, field of science in which the teaching staff has the status of an expert and expiration date of the Latvian Council of Science expert) (if applicable).

The scientific research activities of the lecturers involved in the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies" are carried out both individually and in research groups. In the field of translation studies, attention is paid to the study of translation aspects in different discourses in Latvian/English/German and other languages, the study of literary translation, terminology and other issues. In linguistics, it is concerned with the study of different languages: general linguistics, comparative and comparative linguistics, sociolinguistics, stylistics, lexicology, phraseology, terminology, discourse analysis and pragmatics, language acquisition, cognitive linguistics and corpus linguistics. In the field of literary studies, research activities are developed in comparative literary studies, Anglophone literary studies, literary history and literary theory, and postcolonial studies. All the teaching staff have experience in their fields, which confirms their suitability for the programme. The scientific capacity of the teaching staff is demonstrated by the number of publications indexed in *Web of Science, SCOPUS* and other databases, monographs and teaching materials published, the number of bachelor's, master's and doctoral theses and dissertations supervised, annual collections of scientific articles published by the universities, local and international conferences organised, participation in and supervision of international and local projects.

In the reporting period, the teaching staff of VUAS, DU and LiepU involved in the implementation of the JDPS "Language and Literature Studies" have 95 scientific publications in publications indexed in *Scopus, WoS CC, ERIH+* databases, including reviewed monographs.

Table 3.8.

Teaching staff included in the Latvian Council of Science's database of experts in the relevant field of science

Expert	Scientific discipline of the Latvian Council of Science expert	Term
Burima Maija	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	06.05.2021 - 05.05.2024
Dubova Agnese	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	01.07.2021 - 30.06.2024
Helviga Anita	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	02.11.2023 - 01.11.2026
Isajeva Elvīra	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	08.09.2022 - 07.09.2025

Kupšāne Ingrīda	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	04.11.2021- 03.11.2024
Laiveniece Diāna	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	02.03.2023 - 01.03.2026
Lauze Linda	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	05.01.2023 - 04.01.2026
Markus Dace	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	07.04.2022 - 06.04.2025
Meškova Sandra	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	07.10.2021 - 06.10.2024
Ozola Ieva	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	02.02.2023 - 01.02.2026
Sviķe Silga	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	08.06.2023 - 07.06.2026
Vasiļjeva Elīna	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	03.11.2022 - 02.11.2025
Veckrācis Jānis	Humanities and Arts - Linguistics and Literary Studies	13.07.2023 - 12.07.2026

3.4.4. Information on the participation of the academic staff, involved in the implementation of the doctoral study programme, in scientific projects as project managers or prime contractors/ subproject managers/ leading researchers by specifying the name of the relevant project, as well as the source and the amount of the funding. Provide information on the reporting period (if applicable).

The teaching staff of the JDSP "Language and Literature Studies" from VUAS, Daugavpils University and Liepaja University are actively involved in the implementation of various projects. In total, at least 20 different projects have been implemented with funding from the European Union Structural Funds, the EEA Financial Mechanism, the Norwegian Financial Mechanism and other foreign research programmes. In addition to the above, the teaching staff also participates in projects funded by the Republic of Latvia (about 35 different projects). The sources of funding are diverse: partner universities (VUAS and Daugavpils University), as well as various national research programmes. The most important of them are: the national research programme "Letonika for the Development of Latvian and European Society", the national research programme "Latvian Language", the national research programme "Letonika", the national research programme "Letonika - Latvian History, Languages, Culture, Value". In these national research programmes, as well as in foreign (EU, EEA and others) funding projects, JDSP "Language and Literature Studies"

faculty members have been involved both as project and/or sub-project leaders, as well as lead researchers, researchers and experts.

Table 3.9.

An overview of the participation of VUAS teaching staff in projects is given below:

Teaching staff	Project, position	Implementation period
Dreijers Guntars	Researcher of the research group "Latvian Language in Translation" of the National Research Programme "Latvian Language"	01.01.2018 – 30.06.2021
	Teachers in the Distance https://sites.google.com/view/teachersinthedistance Erasmus+ (No. 2018-1-EE01-KA204-047114) transnational project for the development of a methodological tool "Development of online digital tools for foreign language learning" (Partner countries: Finland, Czech Republic, Poland)	01.11.2018 – 31.05.2021
	Legal Systems: Translation/ Interpreting (French: Systèmes juridiques et l'évolution d'un métier: traduire et interpréter dans la diversité), Latvian: Tiesību sistēmas un profesijas evolūcija: tulkot daudzveidībā http://lstiproject.eu/ Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership (KA2) 2018-1-LV01-KA203-046965 (Partner countries: Portugal, Spain, France, Czech Republic, Romania, Slovakia)	2018 – 2021
Kārlis Krēsliņš	Participation in the European University Initiative project "COLOURS".	2024 – 2027
	Participation in the ENDORSE project launch meeting in Krems, Austria (7-9 March).	2022 – 2024
	Participation in a national research programme "INTERFRAME-LV"	2019 – until now
	National Research Programme EKOSOC 5.2.3 "Processes and opportunities of rural and regional development of Latvia in the context of the knowledge economy", project leader and lead researcher from VUAS	2014 – 2018
	International project "SmartCommunity – advancing the Central Baltic Region rural areas' performance in non-technological innovation by increasing the capacity of regional community and creative enterprises" preparation, member of the working group from the VUAS	2014 – 2015

Proveja Egita	„Germanistik Digital“ (GEDI), Erasmus+, leading researcher	2021 – 2022
	Latvian Council of Science research project "Latvian Language of Science in Intralingual Aspect" (No. lzp-2018/2-0131), leading researcher	12.2018 – 11.2020
	VUAS project "Language and Structure of Scientific Introductory Texts" (ZIVS), leading researcher	09.2017 – 12.2017
	ESF project No 8.3.1.1/16/I/002 "Competence-based approach to teaching" sub-project "Adaptation of teaching aids in easy language", text adaptor	09.2021 – 12.2023
Sīlis Jānis	Letonika for the Development of Latvian and European Society Principal Investigator of the National Research Programme "Letonika for the Development of Latvian and European Society" project "Development of the Latvian Language in Time and Space" (No. VPP-LETONIKA-2021/4-0003) cooperation partner (VUAS) and leading researcher on the topic "Latvian translation language in Latvian translatology (2015-2024): historiographical analysis in the context of European research".	01.02.2022 – 30.12.2024
	Head of the VUAS research group and leading researcher in the research topic "The influence of intralingual, extralingual and intercultural factors of source languages of translations on the development of modern Latvian language in a multilingual environment" of the subproject "Translation Science and Contact Linguistics" of the National Research Programme "Latvian Language" (No. VPP-IZM_2018/2-0002) (Head of the research group Academician Andrejs Veisbergs)	01.11.2018 – 30.11.2021
	Letonika - History, Languages, Culture, Value of Latvia The project "Latvian Language Studies in the Context of 21st Century Science" of the National Research Programme "Letonika - History, Languages, Culture, Value of Latvia" (led by academician Ilga Jansone) sub-project "Historiography of Latvian Translation Science and History of Latvian Language Terminology in the 20th and 21st Century", head and leading researcher. Research directions of the sub-project: research on the historiography of Latvian translation science (J. Sīlis)	2014 – 2017
Skrāban e Astra	Researcher of the research group of the National Research Programme "Latvian Language" (No. VPP-IZM_2018/2-0002) sub-project "Translation Science and Contact Linguistics" (head of research group academician Andrejs Veisbergs) in the topic "The influence of intralinguistic, extralinguistic and intercultural factors of source languages on the development of modern Latvian language in a multilingual environment"	01.11.2018 – 30.11.2021

Sviķe Silga	"Smart Biology Special Vocabulary Information Systems Complex for the Study and Preservation of Linguistic Diversity", project leader	01.01.2021 – 31.12.2023
	"Distance learning for language teachers", project leader	01.11.2018 – 31.05.2021
	Mobile app "English-Latvian-English translator and glossary of medical terms", project leader	15.07.2019 – 31.12.2019
	"Latvian-German-Latvian Glossary of Legal Terms in Contract Law", project leader	01.07.2018 – 31.12.2018
Jānis Veckrācis	National Research Programme "Latvian Language", researcher	2019 – 2021
	"Smart Biology Special Vocabulary Information Systems Complex for the Study and Preservation of Linguistic Diversity", researcher	01.01.2021 – 31.12.2023

For more detailed information and examples of individual teaching staff participation in various projects and international research collaboration, see also the CVs of teaching staff (Annex 2.9).

3.4.5. Assessment of the cooperation between the teaching staff members by specifying the mechanisms used to promote the cooperation and ensure the interrelation between the study programme and study courses/ modules. Specify also the proportion of the number of the students and the teaching staff within the study programme (at the moment of the submission of the Self-Assessment Report).

The key criteria for selecting academic staff are scientific and professional competence, which potentially ensures successful collaboration between academics. During the development of the programme, the academic staff of the partner universities worked closely together in the selection of the programme concept, as well as in the preparation of innovative courses involving the teaching staff of all partner universities. As the joint doctoral study programme "Languages and Literature Studies" was licensed in autumn 2022, the cooperation model between the partner universities is currently being validated and embedded.

Currently, eight lecturers with different workloads are involved in the implementation of the joint doctoral study programme at VUAS, while six students are currently studying at the university. Thus, the student-lecturer ratio is: 6/8=0.75 students per lecturer. Taking into account the specificity of doctoral study programmes, students are provided with an individual approach during the study process. The calculations do not take into account that some courses are attended by students from partner universities and some courses are taught by teaching staff from all partner universities at the same time in a content-divided manner.

Annexes

III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.1. Indicators Describing the Study Programme		
Sample of the diploma and its supplement to be issued for completing the study programme	3-1_appendix_D_LV-ENG_VLS.pdf	3-1_pielikums_D_LV-ENG_VLS.pdf
For academic study programmes - Opinion of the Council of Higher Education in accordance with Section 55, Paragraph two of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	3-2_pielikums_AIP atzinums.docx	3-2_pielikums_VLS_LV_EN.edoc
Compliance of the joint study programme with the provisions of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (table) (if applicable)	3.3.pielikums_LV_EN_atbilstība Augstskolu likumam.docx.pdf	3.3.pielikums_LV_EN_atbilstība Augstskolu likumam.docx.pdf
Statistics on the students in the reporting period	3-4_appendix_studējošo statistika_ENG.pdf	3-4_pielikums_studējošo statistika_LV.pdf
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.2. The Content of Studies and Implementation Thereof		
Compliance with the study programme with the State Education Standard		
Compliance of the qualification to be acquired upon completion of the study programme with the professional standard or the requirements for professional qualification (if applicable)		
Compliance of the study programme with the specific regulatory framework applicable to the relevant field (if applicable)		
Mapping of the study courses/ modules for the achievement of the learning outcomes of the study programme	3.5.appendix_Mapping.docx.pdf	3.5.pielikums_studiju kursu kartējums.pdf
The curriculum of the study programme (for each type and form of the implementation of the study programme)	3-6_appendix_VLS_plāns_EN.xlsx	3-6_pielikums_VLS_plāns_LV.xlsx
Descriptions of the study courses/ modules	3-7_appendix_Kursu apraksti_EN_precizēti.pdf	3-7_pielikums_Kursu apraksti_LV_precizēti.pdf
Description of the organisation of the internship of the students (if applicable)		
III - Description of the Study Programme - 3.4. Teaching Staff		
Confirmation that the academic staff of the doctoral study programme includes not less than five doctors, of which at least three are experts approved by the Latvian Council of Science in the branch or sub-branch of science in which the study programme intends to award a scientific degree (if applicable)	3-8_pielikums_KSP atbilstība AL prasībām (tabula).pdf	3-8_pielikums_KSP atbilstība AL prasībām_LV_EN (tabula).edoc
Confirmation that the academic staff of the academic study programme complies with the requirements specified in Section 55, Paragraph one, Clause 3 of the Law on Higher Education Institutions (if applicable)	3-9_appendix_Latvijas Zinātnes padomes apstiprināti eksperti_ENG.pdf	3-9_pielikums_Latvijas Zinātnes padomes apstiprināti eksperti_LV..pdf